



Breach of embankment at Daulatpur in Nilganj union of Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district has caused flooding in six villages. The photo was taken yesterday.

# Most Ashrayan project houses lie abandoned

Random stealing turns them virtually useless

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Over 900 houses of 17 Ashrayan projects in Amtali and Taltali upazilas under Barguna district have become unfit for use due to lack of proper maintenance. Materials including CI sheets, iron angles, doors, windows, and partitions are being stolen from different Ashrayan projects in the two upazilas. Construction of houses for rehabilitation of landless ultra poor people, and river erosion victims under Ashrayan project started in 1991 with a special project funded by the Prime Minister's Office and later the Japanese government

provided fund for the purpose after the onslaught of super cyclone Sidr in 2007, Amtali upazila land office sources said. With both the funds, eight Ashrayan projects were completed in Amtali and nine in Taltali upazila, comprising a total of 1,510 houses in 298 barracks. At least 577 families including 343 in Amtali and 234 families in Taltali upazila are living in as many houses of these projects while the other houses have become unfit for use, sources said, adding that those were built with low quality materials. Consequently, the allottee families left the

houses, said several residents of these Ashrayan project. A gang is involved in stealing different materials from the houses for long but the police have not taken any effective step regarding the matter, sources said. Visiting Jugia Ashrayan project in Arpangashia union, Chaula project in Atharogachia union, Kalibari project in Chaura union, Kalagachia project in Gulishakhali union under Amtali upazila, many houses were seen left with only concrete pillars and iron structures as the CI sheets and other materials had been stolen. Recently a gang took away CI sheets from some houses and locals informed secretly to police who recovered 12 CI sheets from a house of Kalibari village. Md Israfil Hossain, Amtali upazila project implementation officer, said, houses have been built under our supervision but local land office should maintain it properly. Sukumer Roy, OC of Amtali police station, said, "After getting information from local people we recovered some CI sheets that were allegedly stolen from Kalibari Ashrayan project. If anyone files cases in this regard we will take lawful step."



Locals form a human chain in Khagrachhari town yesterday demanding smooth power supply in the area.

## CASES FOR TORCHING POLLING CENTRES

# Charges pressed against 7,500 BNP-Jamaat men in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Charges have been pressed against 7,500 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men in the cases for torching polling centres and the houses of Hindus and AL men in 11 upazilas of the district during the parliamentary elections held on January 5, 2014. As many as 256 charge

sheets in 128 cases were submitted to Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court and Sessions Judge's Court in Dinajpur until June 20 this year. Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) advocate Saiful Islam said police submitted two charge sheets in each case—one under the Anti-Terrorism Act and another under the Explosive Substances Act. Police have so far arrested 3,500 of the accused while the rest are still at large, the APP said. In a bid to foil the 10th parliamentary elections across the country, Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men torched polling centres and looted the houses of Hindus and ruling party men in 11 out of 13 upazilas in the district on January 5 last year. After the incidents, 128 cases were filed with the respective police stations, accusing 28,000 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men. Of the accused, around 25,000 were unidentified, police said. After investigation, police submitted charge sheets against 7,500 men in 128 cases to the courts in the last eight months since November last year.

# Trafficked Feroz back home after a 4-month ordeal

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Feroz Kha of Mollikpur village in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah had left home in late February to seek his fortune abroad. His relatives paid local manpower broker Delwar Tk 15,000 to send him to Malaysia. Around a month later, the 29-year-old phoned his mother Sufia from Chittagong and asked her to send money for saving his life. "I thought Feroz had reached Malaysia in the meantime. But brokers had abducted him and demanded ransom for his release," said Sufia. Delwar later demanded Tk 1 lakh more for sending Feroz to the Southeast Asian country. Accordingly, the money was paid to him. Within a few days, the broker went into hiding. It was only in the last week of May when the victim's parents came to know that their son was rescued in Malaysia along with some other Bangladeshis. Feroz was among 61 trafficking victims who returned home on June 18 night by a Biman flight after they had gone through a four-month ordeal. The following day, he was reunited with his family members at his village home. Sufia became ill thinking of his son's fate. The middle-aged woman couldn't control her emotions and started crying to see Feroz. "My dearest son came back home alive. I just can't express my gratitude enough to almighty Allah," Sufia told The Daily Star at her home. **Terrible Ordeal** Feroz said he fell sick as traffickers beat him up repeatedly for ransom. "We suffered a lot due to shortage of food and water during the journey through

the Bay of Bengal. We could hardly sleep as there was not enough space on the ship. Sanitation arrangements were also very bad," he added. Nahid Hossain of Borobamundia village under Courtchandpur upazila in the district also returned home from Malaysia on the same flight. In Jhenidah, a total of 22 trafficking victims returned home from Malaysia between May 27 and June 18. They had been missing for several months. However, the families of 23 other victims are still waiting to see their near and dear ones back home.

A devastated Feroz Kha, who returned home from Malaysia after four months of ordeal in the hands of traffickers, is seen with his parents and fellow villagers at Mollikpur in Kaliganj upazila under Jhenidah district a few days ago.



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## Arms, ammo seized, 2 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Law enforcers in separate drives seized firearms and ammunition and arrested an alleged arms peddler in Shibganj upazila of the district on Tuesday. The arrestee is Ahsan Ali, 45, son of Mansur Morol, a resident of Raninagar-Hatatpara village in the upazila. Sources said members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) conducted a drive at Raninagar village around 3:00pm and arrested Ahsan from there. The elite force members also seized two pistols, four magazines and six bullets, meant for selling, from his possession. Rab later handed him over to Shibganj Police Station and filed a case in this connection. In another drive, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized a pistol and two magazines from a graveyard at Baliadighi village in the upazila in an abandoned condition. Major Nazmul Alam, deputy commanding officer of BGB 9 Battalion, said a team of the border guards raided the area around 8:30pm and seized the firearms and ammunition. None was arrested in this connection, the official added. Away in Moulvibazar, police arrested an alleged member of a robbers' gang and seized a pistol and six bullets from Bachhirpur village in Juri upazila of the district on Tuesday, reports our correspondent. Police suspected that the firearm and bullets were looted from a businessman's house in Tongi area of Gazipur district a few days ago. Police arrested one of the alleged robbers following a case filed with Tongi Police Station the same day. Later, according to his confessional statement, a police team from Juri Police Station, raided the area early in the morning and recovered the pistol and bullets from the village, MA Bashar, assistant sub-inspector of the Juri Police Station, said.

# Growers happy with good prices of haribhanga mango

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Cultivation of Haribhanga mango has brought windfall profit to the growers as it is being sold at expected prices in the local markets in Lalmonirhat. The growers are happy with bumper production and expected prices this year, and many of them are planning to grow this variety on more land next season, growers said. Haribhanga mango is selling at Tk 50 to Tk 55 per kg, while other varieties are selling at Tk 35 to Tk 40 per kg in the local market. Haribhanga mango costs more because of its better taste. Nurul Haque Sarker, a farmer at Haribhanga village in Lalmonirhat sadar, said he is happy as he is getting expected production and prices. "Eight years ago I planted 252 trees of Haribhanga mango on my 2 acres and 13 decimals of land, and I have been getting mangoes for the last four years," he said, adding that he uses vermicompost in the mango orchard. "I got 30 kg mango from each tree this year, and the production will increase next year," he said, adding that many growers are now growing Haribhanga mango after taking technical advice from him. Abdur Rahim, a farmer at Bamonerbasa village of Aditmari upazila, said he has been growing Haribhanga mango on eight bighas of land for the last three years, and he is getting expected prices. "There is high demand for Haribhanga mango, so I don't face any problem selling my produce," he said. He uses compost fertiliser and waters the mango trees during flowering stage, he added. "I cultivate spices, ginger and turmeric in my mango orchard and get expected output. Cultivation of Haribhanga mango gives me more profit than from other crops," said mango grower Hari Ram Barmon of Baninagar village under Kaliganj upazila. Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Lalmonirhat said there are 90 Haribhanga mango orchards in five upazilas of the district. About 900 to 1,200 tonnes of Haribhanga mango are produced in these orchards every year. Rafique Miah, a fruit trader at Uttasaptana village in Lalmonirhat sadar, said they purchase one kg of Haribhanga variety mango at the rate Tk 44 to Tk 46 from the grower, and make a profit Tk 4 to Tk 6 per kg in the local market. "We can sell Haribhanga mango quickly," he said. Dulal Chandra Roy, a local residence at Thana para in Lalmonirhat town, said he purchased one maund of Haribhanga mango and sent them to his relatives in the capital Dhaka in the last week. He always purchases this variety of mango for his family members, he said.



Famous haribhanga mango is being sold at an orchard of Haribhanga village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.