



PHOTO: STAR  
Mung dal plants at a field under the seed farm of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation in Dashmina upazila under Patuakhali district got damaged as saline water from the nearby Tentulia River entered the area in absence of any protection embankment.

# Country's largest seed farm at risk

Frequent flooding by saline water, erosion cause the menace

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Flooding and erosion threatens the country's largest seed farm covering 1,044 acres of land in Dashmina upazila under the district. Two hundred and eighty acres of land of the farm set up by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) including its office building and godown there went into the bed of the Tentulia River in last three years, officials said. This year 137 acres of land of the farm was brought under cultivation, including mug bean on 50 acres, pulses on 35 acres, potato on 20 acres, wheat on

20 acres, til on five acres, sunflower on five acres, and soya bean on two acres. But due to lack of a protection embankment, tidal water from nearby Tentulia River entered the farm, forcing the authorities to collect potato early. Visiting the farm a couple of days ago, this correspondent found mung bean plants rotting as the fields remained under saline water. "Tidal surge easily enters the farm in absence of a flood control embankment on the Tentulia River. And so, green crops are rotting due to water logging," said Md Saiful Islam, assistant director of BADC (Seed). The farm meant for pro-

ducing salinity tolerant and hybrid varieties of crop seeds covers 1,044.36 areas of land at Char Botham, Char Fatima, Char Hyder, Char Shahjalal, Char Saimon, Char Borhan and Char Bansbaria in Dashmina upazila, BADC sources said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Tk 250-crore project on March 19 in 2013 and the authorities concerned started cultivation to produce seeds there. They built several concrete structures like godown building, office, and residential houses for staff and bought a good number of agricultural tools for the farm but serious river ero-

sion soon affected the farm, said BADC officials. With the help of Bangladesh Navy, the Tentulia River was dredged in 2014 to change its course but in vain, they said. Most of the farmland is flooded by saline water from the river during high tides influenced by the new moon and the full moon, said Md Mirajul Islam, assistant engineer of the farm. Contacted, Alamgir Hossain, project director, said they have informed the higher authorities to take immediate steps for constructing a flood control embankment with concrete blocks to protect the farm.



PHOTO: STAR  
Locals form a human chain on the Tentulia River in Baufal upazila under Patuakhali district yesterday demanding building of an embankment to save Char Wadel and Char Diara areas of Chandradwip union in the upazila from erosion by the river.

## 50 Indian cows seized in Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 50 Indian cows worth Tk 13 lakh from Sikarpur and Salkona border areas in Sharsha upazila of Jessore district on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of border guards conducted a drive in the areas at noon and seized the cattle. Smugglers fled the areas, sensing the presence of BGB men.

## Build dyke, save villages from erosion

Demands human chain on Tentulia River bank in Patuakhali's Baufal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Several hundred people of two villages under Baufal uazila of the district formed a human chain on the bank of the Tentulia River at Char Wadel yesterday, demanding construction of a dyke to save their houses and farmlands from erosion. The programme started at about 10:00am and lasted for

an hour. The people of Char Barret and Char Diara-kachua of Chandra Dweep union took part in the programme. Abul Hasem, 50, of Char Wadel said the river has already devoured the home-steads of 300 families and several thousand acres of agricultural land. Belal Majhee, one of the participants, said the people of the two villages are ready to help the local administra-

tion build an embankment to save their houses, orchards and farmlands from the onslaught by the river. Newly elected UP chairman Md Anamul Huque said both villages would soon go into the river if an embankment is not constructed. "We urge the government to take immediate steps to build a dyke along the river bank to save the villages from erosion," the chairman.

# MMCH fails to provide ambulance for patients

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Believe it or not, 1000-bed Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) virtually fails to provide ambulance services for patients, even for the critical ones who require shifting to capital Dhaka. Of the two functional ambulances of the hospital, one has remained engaged to regularly carry meals three times to Surya Kanta Hospital, a diarrhoea ward of MMCH at Boro Kalibari in the town, for the last three months, said hospital sources. The other one is often 'reserved' for doctors and

staff of the hospital, said a few hospital employees seeking anonymity. On an average, 2400 to 2500 patients remain admitted to MMCH and of them seven or eight critical patients are referred to specialised hospitals in Dhaka every day but they have to travel by private ambulances, hospital sources said. Strangely, the hospital does not have any ambulance with cardiac support facilities, they said. Taking advantage of the situation, owners of private ambulances are doing good business, keeping the vehicles in front of the hospital's emergency gate.

The patients' attendants have to pay Tk 5000 to Tk 6000 to rent a private ambulance for a trip to Dhaka while it would take Tk 2400 to Tk 2500 if the arrangement was made by the hospital authorities, sources said. Bir Protik Taramon Bibi, who was admitted to MMCH's Coronary Care Unit on February 15, was referred to Dhaka on February 17 but her relatives had to manage a private ambulance to take her there. Rashedul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Trishal, died in a road accident there on March 29 and the body was brought to

MMCH. But no ambulance service from the hospital was available to carry the body to his Lohagacha village home in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur district, sources said. The 1000-bed hospital must be equipped with all modern amenities including new ambulances on an urgent basis, said Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association's Mymensingh unit. MMCH Director Brig Gen Nasir Uddin Ahmed said steps have been taken to procure more ambulances to support the critical patients.



PHOTO: STAR  
Private ambulances wait for 'profitable trips' just beside the emergency gate of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital that virtually lacks ambulance services for the patients. Inset, a hospital ambulance lying inoperative for five years.

## Boiler blast kills 2 rice mill workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two rice mill workers were killed and five others injured as a boiler blasted at the mill in Rameshwargati village under Raiganj upazila of Sirajganj district yesterday. The deceased are Nasiruddin, 25, son of Altaf Ali, and Idris Ali, 24, son of Nasim Sheikh, of the village. Officer-in-Charge of Raiganj Police Station Rashedul Islam said when the victims were boiling rice at the mill around 7:00am, the boiler suddenly exploded. Nasiruddin and Idris died on the spot, said the OC. The injured were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital, he said.

## ADAMDIGHI IN BOGRA

# Drumstick growers happy with good yield

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Drumstick (Bangla term sajna) growers in Adamdighi upazila under the district are happy with bumper yield of the summer vegetable amid favourable weather this year. From the upazila, the nutritious vegetable is supplied to different markets of the district as well as other places of the country including the capital and it is now selling in local wholesale markets at Tk 1,200-1,300 per maund (40 kg), traders said. A drumstick tree yields

around 6-8 maunds a season. "I plucked around 28 maunds of drumsticks from five trees and earned Tk 20 thousand," said Abdul Hai Siddiki, of Shariada village of the upazila. The soil of the upazila is very suitable for drumstick cultivation and many people are gaining solvency through its cultivation on commercial basis, said Md Shahaduzzaman, upazila agriculture officer of Adamdighi. Tasteful curry is prepared

with the vegetable and it is very popular in different areas. Drumstick is rich in calcium, minerals, iron, protein, carbohydrate and different vitamins and these are helpful especially for pregnant women and mothers of newborn babies, said nutritionist Golam Kabir. It serves as a herbal medicine to prevent and cure different diseases like stomach problems, high blood pressure, blood dysentery, and heart disease, he added.

## Drug peddler arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Law enforcers seized 1,295 bottles of contraband Indian phensidyl from different places in Sadar and Shibganj upazilas of the district yesterday. They also arrested a drug peddler in Amnura Bazar of Sadar upazila at around 10:30am. The arrestee is Lal Mohammad, 22, son of Abdul Hannan of Uttar Ujirpur village in the upazila. Hamidur Rashid, inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, said a DB team went to Chhatrajitpur area of Shibganj upazila at around 8:30am and intercepted a covered van in front of Keya filling station. They found 1,025 bottles of phensidyl inside the van. Lal Mohammad was arrested with 100 bottles of phensidyl.



PHOTO: STAR  
Drumstick trees with ripe vegetables at Shantahar in Adamdighi upazila under Bogra district.