



Sunflower plants get virtually destroyed in absence of irrigation amid the ongoing dry summer during the harvesting period, giving a typical picture of the sunflower fields in different areas of Patuakhali district.

PATUAKHALI

# Rotting disease frustrates sunflower growers

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Sunflower growers in the district are facing losses this season as the plants are rotting during the ongoing harvesting period.

"I cultivated sunflower on three bighas of land at a cost of Tk about 15,000 this year. It is now harvesting season but the plants are rotting as the stems started rotting two weeks ago. Besides, sizes of flowers are very small this year," said Habib Howlader of Ballavpur village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

"Last year I made a profit of Tk over 10,000 by selling sunflower after meeting family need for the whole year but this season I lost all. I brought the seeds from Patuakhali Sadar upazila agriculture office. I think the seeds were of low quality," he said.

Kabir Matubbor, another farmer of nearby Karomjatala village, said he cultivated local variety of sunflower on one and a half acres of land this year but the flowers grew very small and most plants have already rotted.

Visiting the sunflower fields in different villages yesterday, this correspondent found many other sunflower growers including Ohab Gazi, Nurul Islam Matubbor and Abu Hanif also in the same boat.

Farmers cultivate sunflower to meet their yearly family demand of edible oil as well as on commercial basis as it sells for good prices in the market.

Abdul Awal, deputy assistant agriculture officer of Patuakhali Sadar upazila,

said sunflower cultivation requires much irrigation but farmers were waiting for rain that remained much less than expected this season.

In absence of rain and irrigation, salinity increased in the field and the sunflower plants started rotting, causing poor yield this season, he said.

In Patuakhali district, 530 hectares of land was brought under sunflower cultivation this year, said sources of district agriculture extension office.

PHOTO: STAR

## Murder case accused beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A local Jubo Dal activist, also a murder case accused, was killed allegedly by rival party men in Ishwardi upazila town of the district on Friday night.

The deceased is Md Bishal Hossain, 30, of Fatemohammadpur area in the town. He was prime accused in Jubo Dal leader Murad Hossain murder case, said police.

The men of Murad beat up Bishal mercilessly, leaving him critically injured when he was roaming in the area alone around 9:00pm, said Islam Hossain, sub-inspector of Ishwardi Police Station.

He later died on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital around 11:00pm.

On May 31 last year, Murad was killed allegedly by the men of Bishal.

## 14 held while going to India illegally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel detained 14 people while they were going to India illegally through Boro Anchara border under Benapole Port Police Station early yesterday.

Nayek Subedar Gias Uddin of BGB 26 Battalion in Benapole said a patrol team of the border guards, acting on a tip-off, arrested five women and nine men while they were crossing the border without necessary documents around 4:30am.

The detainees are from different upazilas of Narail, Khulna and Faridpur districts, added Gias Uddin.

They were later handed over to Benapole Port Police Station. A case was filed against them yesterday noon.

# Clash over stalking leaves 20 hurt in Habiganj

## Stalker jailed in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over stalking girls at a marriage ceremony in Habiganj Sadar upazila on Friday afternoon.

Police and witnesses said Shamim Miah, 25, son of Abdul Hye, and Saiful Islam, 18, son of Joynal Miah of Bhatpara village, stalked some girls who came to Bajid Ullah's house at the village to attend his daughter's marriage ceremony.

An altercation took place between two groups of villagers over teasing the girls and at one stage, they attacked each other, leaving at least 20 from both sides injured.

On information, police rushed to the spot, fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

Of the injured, 10 were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital while the rest were given first aid at local health complex.

A case was filed with Habiganj Police Station yesterday. No one was arrested as of filing of this report at 5:00pm.

Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station said police have been deployed in the area to avert further untoward incident.

A mobile court in Borolekha upazila of Moulvibazar yesterday sentenced a young man to

one month's imprisonment for stalking a schoolgirl.

The convict is Sumon Ahmed, 25, son of Monir Miah of Hatbandha village in the upazila.

Court and victim's family sources said Sumon had been stalking a Class IX student of Borolekha Girls' High School for a long time.

Yesterday, locals caught him while he was stalking the girl on her way to the school at Borolekha town at around 1:00pm and informed the police.

Police arrested Sumon and produced him before the court in the afternoon. After hearing, SM Abdullah Al Mamun, upazila nirbahi officer, pronounced the verdict.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals observe a three-hour-long programme, halting Parbatipur-Chilmari mail train at Kurigram Railway Station yesterday to press for their demand to introduce an intercity train on Dhaka-Kurigram-Chilmari route.



PHOTO: STAR

Children join a human chain in Railway Bazar area in Lalmonirhat town yesterday demanding protection of Driverpara playground cum eidgah from land grabbers allegedly backed by a section of railway officials.

## Schoolgirl commits suicide in Satkhira

UNB, Satkhira

A schoolgirl reportedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan of her room at Deyara village in Kalaroa upazila on Friday evening.

Abu Saleh Md Masud Karim, officer-in-charge of Kalaroa Police Station, said Soma, a Class III student and daughter of Shahidul Islam, hanged herself from the ceiling fan of her room as her mother scolded her for watching Indian TV serials in the evening.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to a hospital morgue for an autopsy.

# Move to build market on playground protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Local people formed a human chain and held a rally in the district town yesterday, demanding cancellation of the decision of building a market on Driverpara playground cum eidgah at Railway Bazar in the town.

The speakers at the rally alleged that land grabbers in collusion with some unscrupulous railway officials have made preparations to build the market on the playground evicting 150 landless families on railway land beside the field.

Aminul Islam, 44, a local of Driverpara area, said railway authorities concerned has taken decision to build a market on the playground without exchanging any views with the local people.

"We have been living on railway land beside the playground for the last 30 years. Where will we go, if we are evicted?" said Irin Begum, 48, a landless woman of the area.

Secretary of Driverpara Playground cum Eidgah Field Protection Committee Rafiqul Islam said a group of land grabbers with the help of some unscrupulous railway offi-

cial have been trying to build a market on the field removing landless people's houses there.

They will go for a tougher movement if the demand for cancelling the decision is not met immediately, said Bakul Miah, president of the platform.

Railway Divisional Estate Officer DEO in Lalmonirhat Railway Division Mohammad Ohidunnabi said, following higher authority's decision they have made preparations to build a market there as the area is a commercial area situated in the main town.

## 18 sued over Laxmipur double murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Eighteen people have been sued on charge of killing two Awami League activists in Laxmipur Sadar upazila early Friday.

Abdullah Al Mamun Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said Morshed Alam, brother of slain Ismail Hossain Manik, filed the case with the police station on Friday night, accusing 10 named and eight unnamed people.

Police yesterday arrested Mohammad Belal, 32, one of the named accused, from North Mojujur village in the upazila.

Ismail Hossain Manik, 35, son of late Sekendar Hossain of Bangakha village, and Kamrul Islam, 28, son of Shamsul Karim of the same village, were hacked and shot dead by a gang at Rajibpur village in the

upazila.

They were active activists of Awami League, said Belayet Hossain, president of Bangakha union unit of the party.

Quoting the victim families, police said Ismail and Kamrul received phone calls and

went out of their houses around 11:30pm on Thursday. They had been missing since then.

Their bodies were found in a field at Rajibpur village Friday morning. On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Police said they suspected that Manik and Kamrul had been killed over an internal feud of a gang of drug peddlers. The victims were accused in several criminal cases, including for drug peddling and robbery, they added.

## Man takes own life after killing ex-mother-in-law

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man allegedly committed suicide after killing his ex-mother-in-law at Shindurkhan area under Srimangal upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The deceased are Kamal Khan, 30, and his mother-in-law Mursheda Begum, 40, of the village.

Police, quoting Moni Miah, 45, father-in-law of Kamal, said Kamal married Mukta Begum, 23, of the village ten months ago. The couple often used to quarrel over trifling matter, so Mukta divorced Kamal a few days ago.

As a sequel to that, Kamal locked in an alterca-

tion with the family members of Mukta at around 6:30am yesterday. At one stage, he hit Mukta's mother with a sharp weapon, leaving her dead on the spot.

As Mukta, her father and her younger brother Tamim tried to stop him, Kamal also hit them with the weapon, police said. The injured were admitted to Srimangal Upazila Health Complex.

After stabbing them, Kamal took poison. Neighbours took him to Srimangal Upazila Health Complex where he died soon after admission.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, the OC said.

## SNIPPETS

### AL activist dies of 'heatstroke'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An activist of Awami League died of 'heatstroke' in the town's Station Road area yesterday. The dead is Kala Miah, 57, of Rouha village in Shaltia union under Gafargaon upazila of the district. Kala Miah came to Mymensingh with a procession in support of Fahmi Golandaz Babel, a lawmaker from Gafargaon, to join the AL's council at Circuit House ground yesterday, sources said. When Kala Miah along with the procession reached Station Road area, he fainted due to severe heat around 12:30pm. He died on the way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, the lawmaker said. The body was taken to his village for burial.

### Man killed over trivial matter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly man was beaten to death, four people were injured, and a house was torched during a clash between two groups of villagers in Kalai upazila of Joyruphat district yesterday. The deceased is Solaiman Ali, 75, of Gopinathpur village under the upazila. Kalai police, quoting witnesses, said Rafiqul Islam of Gopinathpur village dug a drain near his house and put the dug out earth near Solaiman's house. Solaiman told Rafiqul to put the earth on both sides of the drain. Hearing that, Mahfuzar Rahman, elder brother of Rafiqul Islam, allegedly hit Solaiman on the head with a stick. Locals immediately rescued Solaiman, but he died on way to hospital. Hearing the news of Solaiman's death, villagers torched the house of Mahfuzar Rahman. They also axed two litchi trees. Fire-fighters from Joyruphat doused the fire in two hours. Later, Mahfuzar's men and Solaiman's men engaged in a clash, which left four people of both groups injured.

### Man dies falling from tree

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A man died falling from a rain tree at Parsaturiya village in Kawkhali upazila of the district yesterday. The deceased is Hemayet Uddin Fakir, 50, a resident of the village. Locals and witnesses said Hemayet climbed on the tree for cutting its branches yesterday noon. At one stage, he fell down from the tree and sustained critical injuries. He was rushed to Kawkhali Upazila Health Complex first and then referred to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. He died on the way to the hospital.

### 2 Jamaat men among 72 held

UNB, Rangpur

Police in separate overnight drives yesterday arrested 72 people, including two Jamaat-Shibir men from different upazilas of the district. Police conducted drives in different areas of eight upazilas and arrested two activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir on various charges from Friday night till yesterday morning. They were later produced before a court that sent them to the jail.