

233 TREES TO BE CUT FOR WIDENING ROAD

Woman dies as log falls on her

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A woman pedestrian was killed as a log fell on her when workers were cutting roadside trees near Tangon Bridge on Railway Station Road in the town yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Nurun Nahar, 38, wife of Bablu of Collegepara in the municipality area, was crossing the point around 2:30pm when a log of a tree fell on her, witnesses said.

Locals brought the seriously injured woman to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Doctors referred her to Rangpur Medical College Hospital but she died on the way.

Contractor Dipak Kumar Roy engaged workers for cutting the roadside trees after winning a tender bid of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

He could not be contacted immediately.

"Police went to investigate the matter after getting information. Three people have been arrested in connection with the incident," Abdul Latif Mia, officer-in-charge of Thakurgaon Police Station, said over cell phone.

At least 233 roadside trees, including mahogany, shishu, rain-tree and jackfruit, along the 4.34-km-long road from the town to the railway station in the municipality area, are being cut down for widening the road.

The RHD floated tender on September 6 for

widening the road under the project 'Improvement of important regional highways to appropriate standard and width (Rangpur Zone),' at a cost of Tk 63 crore, said Joy Prokash Chowdhury, district sub-divisional engineer of RHD.

To implement the project, the RHD in Rangpur gave orders for cutting the trees to two contractors, who won the bid by offering the highest rate for the trees.

During a visit to the spot on Monday, this correspondent saw workers chopping down the trees.

"Spreading branches of the trees on both sides of the road served as a beautiful canopy over the road. Many trees could have been saved if the trees on one side were kept," said Principal Ataur Rahman, who lives near the road in Gobindanagar.

Local cultural activist Ahmed Raju said the felling of trees should be discouraged to protect natural beauty and environment.

Executive Engineer of Local Government Engineering Department Kanteswar Barman said the road will be widened in such a way that many trees will be saved.

"The RHD planted the trees after constructing the road in 1988. Over 1,000 trees will be planted alongside the road after completion of the widening work. It is risky to plant large trees in the middle of the road," Joy Prokash said.



PHOTO: MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Workers cut down trees beside Railway Station Road in Thakurgaon town on Monday as the authorities concerned gave orders for felling 233 roadside trees as preparation to widen the 4.34-km-long road from the town to the railway station.



The playground of Popular High School in Raypasha Karapur union under Barisal Sadar upazila remains under water as the authorities arranged fish farming, blocking the stagnant water, left during the last flood, from flowing out.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fish farming on school ground

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Fish farming on the waterlogged playground of a secondary school in Raypasha Karapur union in Sadar upazila of the district is depriving the students of a place to play.

Teachers and students of Popular Secondary School said the headmaster started fish farming on the school ground two months ago by blocking the stagnant water, left by the flood, from flowing out, as a result, the ground has become like a pond.

"Water has remained stagnant on a portion of the school ground and some fish entered the place from the adjacent pond. We kept the fish for selling," Headmaster Farid Uddin said.

"We found that fish had entered the waterlogged portion of the school ground. The Committee decided to sell the fish and deposit the money to the school fund," School Managing Committee President Anisur Rahman Dulal said.

"We have not been informed about the matter," District Assistant Education Officer Delowar Hossain said.

Alimuzzaman, a guardian, said the students cannot play on the school ground due to waterlogging.

The students said they want removal of the fish farm and opening of the playground.

Oman expat laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A man, who died after falling from a four-storied under-construction building in Oman on October 4, was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Barguna yesterday.

The deceased was Md Eusuf Khan, 40, of Baraitala area in Pathorghata municipality. His body reached Dhaka from Oman on Tuesday.

Md Ibrahim Hawlader, brother-in-law of the victim, said Eusuf fell from a four-storied under-construction building in Muscat, the capital of Oman, where he worked as construction worker. He died on the spot.

Cops foil Noakhali BNP rally, 20 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 20 people were injured as police foiled an attempt to bring out procession in the district town by opposition BNP yesterday.

The law enforcers arrested district Jubo Dal President Mahbub Alamgir Alo and Sadar upazila BNP General Secretary VP Jasim.

BNP was scheduled to bring out the procession protesting arrest warrant against party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other leaders.

Police and BNP men chased each other, injuring at least 20 leaders and activists.

Police and witnesses said the BNP men ransacked the vehicle of the officer-in-charge of Sudharam Police Station and another vehicle.

When the protesters pelted brickbats at police, the law enforcers fired rubber bullets and charged batons.

Officer-in-Charge Anwar Hossain of the police station confirmed the incident.

Hydroponic grass to meet nutrition needs for livestock

SHYKH SERAJ

Dear readers, during the past couple of weeks I have been writing articles on the advancements of farming at home and abroad. It's well known that greenhouse technology is expanding and the change is going to make a big impact across the country. This technology is now being used to produce nutritious green grass for livestock animals.

A few days back, I went to Dhaka's BCSIR (Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research). They're running a project, titled, 'Centre for Technology Transfer and Innovation', under which grass is being produced on water without soil beneath. This is an experimental project. Those who raise cattle, fatten cows, rear cows for producing milk etc, often depend on grass for feeding the animals. Sometimes they get it easily, sometimes they don't. For the lack of raw (green) grass, the production of milk and meat gets decreased. Many other problems occur. On the other hand, cultivable lands are decreasing gradually. Even though we produce many kinds of Napier grass, now due to the lack of lands, we are not being able to produce what we need. Thus, this project has been brought for producing huge amount of grass in a controlled environment. Moreover, the grass produced by this project contains the highest amount of protein. This grass can be produced from wheat seeds.

For those who are raising cattle or producing grass on lands commercially, this project might be more useful. This is the first-ever initiative of producing grass inside a greenhouse for livestock animals. Today, you'll get to know how they're producing it, using hydroponic culture, in a greenhouse.

I talked with a researcher working inside about the production stages of the grass.

"We use a tray first where the seeds will be soaked with hydrogen peroxide for six to eight hours and we set it the way it is needed for aeration," says the researcher.

"What are these seeds?" I asked.

"We use wheat and barley seeds," he

replied.

They are using a modern tray aeration system, but farmers usually do not have these resources.

"What would an ordinary farmer do?" I asked.

"It is possible without aeration as well. However, aeration makes it more complete," he replied.

"Can a farmer use tray?" I asked him.

"Yes, he can but he needs to soak the seeds for six to eight hours," he confidently replied.

"This is mainly used to germinate the seeds. The germination rate is 80%-90%," says BCSIR's Chief Scientific Officer Rezaul Karim, also director of this project.

"So, what are you going to do with the germinated seeds now?" I asked Rezaul Karim.

"We are going to keep them on different trays for seven days," he replied.

Then, seedlings start growing fast from the germinated seeds. The wheat seedlings start turning green in the controlled environment of the greenhouse. It is a totally pure and nutritious food ingredient for the livestock ani-

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Shykh Seraj sees hydroponic grass at a greenhouse of BCSIR in the capital.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

any other feed or general grass we see on the vast lands.

Readers, let me tell you, this greenhouse technology and infrastructure has been adopted from an American company named 'FodderTech'. Along with technical support, they have also sent an officer to help run the greenhouse on commercial basis. Russell Black is working here as manager of operations. He explained the multi-purpose usage of this greenhouse technology.

You might know that FodderTech Company has been working worldwide for producing modern and nutritious cow feed including hydroponic grass. They think about the agriculture of the future. What is prioritized the most here is the matter of nutritious feed for the livestock.

"We aim to turn the grain seeds to green, fresh and nutritious feed. We create the production systems one by one, through which you can harvest grass throughout the year, every day of the 365 days," says Russell.

"There is no alternative to such project considering the future," adds Russell.

Rezaul Karim says, if the people doing large-scale farming undertake such a project commercially, they will be benefitted in various ways and can also provide assistance to small farmers. Such kind of grass producing system will help boost production of cow milk and meat.

They have imported the nutrient which is adjusted and balanced, consisting 24 different minerals that help the growth of grass and by eating it the animals get the necessary minerals.

Rezaul Karim is working with this project for many days. He pinpointed the project cost details and management.

"How much does this technology cost?" I asked him.

"The big one which can produce 450 kg to 500 kg grass in a day, will cost Tk 7.7 lakh to assemble, including trays and others," he replied.

"And the small one will cost 4.5

lakh taka," added Karim.

"What about the electricity cost?" I asked.

"It needs very small amount of power. We need around 500W in total. We need electricity mainly for the water and the AC. The LED lights run on batteries. So, we don't require much electricity," he replied.

"From every 2.5 kg of grass, we are getting one kg of milk. Moreover, from every four kg of grass, we get one kg of solid meat. It is very clear. It also increases the weight rapidly," says Karim.

Rezaul Karim says, "If you can get certified seed of wheat for 25 taka and the germination rate is 90%, then you're getting 6 kg of grass. You can get maximum 9 kg. This project will run for 5 years."

They will arrange demonstration. Moreover, they will go for large-scale production so that the cost gets decreased.

"The hydroponic grass is nutritious, safe and hygienic. The grass we see

farmers buy or grow in open fields for our animals sometimes causes diarrhoea and other diseases to the animals," pointed out Rezaul.

BCSIR Chairman Faruque Ahmed talks about how much realistic and essential this grass producing greenhouse technology is.

This is for those who commercially produce grass, especially those who have 100-200 cows in their farms.

"Such farmers can invest 4-5 lakh taka for this," says Faruque Ahmed.

"We have targeted industrial entrepreneurs along with some financially well-established large-scale farmers. We need to consider the reality of our country and the financial state of our entrepreneurs and farmers as well," adds Faruque Ahmed.

"We are getting Vitamin A from the top of the grass, at the same time, from the bottom, we are getting Vitamin E. These things altogether makes the reproductive system strong," says the BCSIR chairman.

Dear readers, agriculture based food production system is changing and evolving. Now there is shortage of cultivable lands. On the other hand, there is scope for crop production in a calculated manner in a controlled environment. Already, we can see high activities of greenhouse agriculture in many places of Europe and Asia. In this case, this controlled environment is being considered worldwide for producing nutritious feed for domestic animals. The reason is grazing grounds and natural sources of grass are decreasing day by day due to urbanisation. At the same time, we are expecting high level of cow's meat and milk production. Considering all these, this grass producing greenhouse technology could be a permanent and effective infrastructure. Those who have established large-scale cow farms can take technical support from BCSIR and build such permanent infrastructure. At the same time, the farmers can take this infrastructure as an example and figure out how to decrease the cost, yet produce grass the same way. I hope even that won't be hard for our farmer brothers.