



A canal at Char Kawa reserve forest in Kuakata of Patuakhali has been blocked by a grabber to make a fish farm. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

# Kuakata canal turns AL man's fish gher

Mahbubur Rahman grabs the water body in reserve forest area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A canal through Char Kawa reserve forest in Kuakata area has been turned into a fish gher, blocking natural flow of water into and from the Bay.

Dhulashar union unit Awami League (AL) Vice-President Mahbubur Rahman Hawlader allegedly turned the canal into a fish farm around a month ago by grabbing it with the help of his sons Sohel, Bahadur and Jewel.

Locals said several hundred fishermen cannot fish in the canal, which has many

species of fish, while over 300 acres of cultivable land in the area cannot be irrigated due to the dam.

The three-km-long canal, about six km east of Kuakata Zero Point, is used by fishermen as an emergency shelter during stormy weather in the Bay, they said.

Md Elias, a local fisherman, alleged that the occupier built the cross dam on the canal and stopped natural water flow from the Bay. "We used to catch fish in the canal round the year, but now we have been deprived of that opportunity," he added.

"Earlier, we used the canal to go to the

Bay by boat from our village, but now we have to walk about three km to go there, which is very hard for us," Elias said.

Locals said the area is getting water-logged, which affects agricultural land and trees in the reserve forest. No one in the forest department and land office is taking any step over the matter, although natural canal and forest land are being grabbed, they alleged.

The dam should be demolished immediately to solve the problem, they suggested.

Forest department's Beat Officer Md

Harun said he also demanded breaking of the dam.

Alleged occupier Mahbubur said he built the dam to ease communication with the beach, considering the interest of tourists and local people. "I will build a box culvert on the dam to restore water flow. I am trying to get permission from the local land office," he added.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) in Kalapara upazila Khondakar Robiul Islam said necessary steps will be taken after he visits the spot. Nobody can stop natural water flow, he added.

# Sayedul Hoque laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Muhammed Sayedul Hoque was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Purbobhagh village after his third namaj-e-janaza in Nasirnagar upazila of the district yesterday.

The veteran politician, who was a close aide of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and an organiser of Liberation War in 1971, was buried beside the graves of his parents.

Before the burial, his third namaj-e-janaza was held at Purbobhagh SE SDP Model High School ground.

People from all walks of life attended the funeral prayer to pay their last respect.

Earlier on the day, a Navy helicopter carrying his body flew to the upazila headquarters around 12:30pm and his second namaj-e-janaza was held at Ashutosh Pilot High School premises.

His first namaj-e-janaza was held at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad.

Before the janaza, a guard of honour was given to the late minister.

During the janaza his son Dr Rayhanul Hoque requested all to pray for the salvation of his father's departed soul.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, Awami League presidium member Abdul Matin Khasru, Brahmanbaria-3 lawmaker RAM Obaidul Muktaadir Chowdhury, Brahmanbaria-6 MP AB Tajul Islam, Brahmanbaria-2 lawmaker Ziaul Haque Mridha, AL Central Committee Organising Secretary Enamul Haque Shamim, Nasirnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Liakat Ali, district unit AL General Secretary Al-Mamun Sarker and Nasirnagar upazila BNP President Syed AK Ekramuzzaman took part in the janaza.

Sayedul Hoque breathed his last while undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) on December 16.

The 75-year-old politician had been admitted to BSMMU with multiple age related complications since September 17 and was put on life support on Wednesday.

He was elected MP five times in 1973, 1996, 2001, 2008 and 2014. He became the fisheries and livestock minister after the Awami League formed the government in 2014.



# Poultry farming under threat

Price hike of chickens, feed and medicines worry 2000 youth farmers in Jhenidah

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Increasing prices of poultry chicken, poultry feed, medicines and other items in the last six months are worrying around 2,000 poultry farmers in the district as they are incurring losses due to that.

District Livestock Officer (DLO) Md Hafizur Rahman said there are 2,000 poultry farms in six upazilas of the district, of which 400 are layer poultry farms. Taking training from Youth Training Centre in the district, the youths have set up poultry farms in many places of the district, he added.

Poultry farmers can get profit of around Tk 10,000 by rearing 500 poultry chicken for 30 to 40 days, but they are incurring loss now due to increasing prices of chickens, feed and medi-

cines, he added.

Tajul Islam, a poultry farmer of Asannagar village under Kotchandpur upazila, said he started a poultry farm in 2000 and got good profit, adding that he sells poultry feed and chickens and also rears poultry. Nowadays, his trade is dull in comparison with previous years and he is incurring losses due to increasing prices of chickens, feed and medicines, Tajul said.

Tajul said the price of broiler chicken has come down alarmingly and it is being sold at Tk 80 to Tk 90 per kg while the rearing cost is Tk 180 to Tk 190 per chicken weighing around 2.00 kg.

Poultry farmer Shanti Biswa said the price of poultry feed has risen up to Tk 30 from Tk 20, oil cake up to Tk 32 from Tk 14 and medicines up to Tk 120 from Tk 60 in the last six months. On

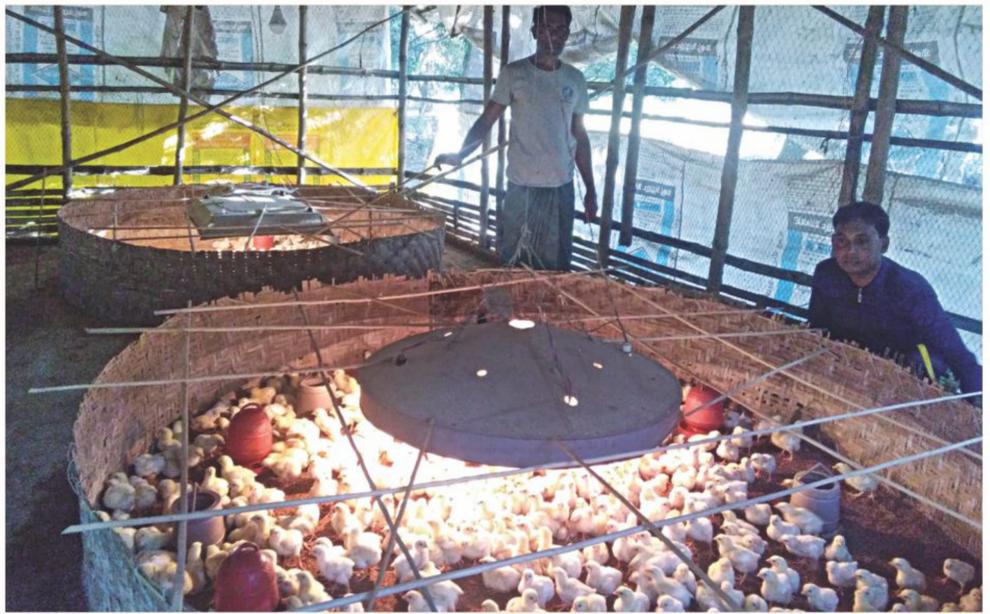
the other hand, the price of poultry has not increased, he added.

Amir Hossain of the upazila said he purchased 2,000 poultry chickens this year and has incurred huge loss due to increasing prices of poultry rearing items. Besides, local banks are not offering loans on easy instalments, he added.

Poultry feed trader Md Aynuddin said selling poultry feed is profitable but the government does not take care of it. Chicken-producing hatchery Kazi Farm and feed-producing Naurish Farm are doing monopoly business, he added.

He said he has been sustaining losses for over four months.

DLO Md Hafizur Rahman said poultry feed traders are trying to exploit poultry farmers by charging high prices for their products.



Poultry farmer Tajul Islam of Asannagar village in Kotchandpur upazila of Jhenidah wears a bleak look as he has been incurring loss due to rising prices of poultry rearing items.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN



Alamgir Hossain waters wheat grass grown at a shed of Kumirmara village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

# Wheat grass enlisted as cheap, quality fodder in Pirojpur

HABIBUR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

It's easy enough to get sidetracked on YouTube. About a month ago, when farmer Alamgir Hossain, 55, from Pirojpur town, was hoping to find a video about turkey-rearing, a video about producing fodder from wheat seeds caught his eye. He decided to try it. "The video showed wheat grass growing inside air-conditioned houses. It was surely costly," he recalls.

As the owner of eight cows, Alamgir wondered if growing wheat grass in the open wouldn't also do. "In our home village farmers already produce grass from paddy. I bought ten kilograms of wheat seeds as an experiment," he says. For Alamgir, cattle-rearing is an ancestral business. Previously the family specialised in producing oxen to pull ploughs.

Since 2000 his farm in Kumirmara village, six kilometres from Pirojpur

town, has primarily operated as a small dairy. He also raises turkeys, chickens and fish. "Wheat grass is useful," he says of his experiment. "It is better fodder than paddy straw or the usual grass varieties."

Pirojpur Sadar Upazila Veterinary Surgeon Dr Suvankar Datta agrees. "Grass grown from wheat seeds is more nutritious for livestock than other grasses," he says. "Dairy cows given a diet of wheat grass produce more and higher quality milk. It's not a technique that is popular yet in Pirojpur, but wheat grass is easy enough to grow."

He grows the grass cheaply, first in plastic trays, then in the open under a simple polythene roof. As wheat grass tastes slightly sweet, the turkeys and even the fish also enjoy it. Alamgir estimates he needs eight kilograms of fodder per day for his cows. One kilogram of wheat seeds will produce around seven kilograms on fodder; at

Tk 25 per kilogram, wheat seeds are not expensive.

To get the most from his seeds, Alamgir first dries them in the sun to remove moisture. Then he cools them in the shade for an hour. After soaking them for around four hours thereafter, the seeds are ready to sprout. For the next twelve hours he keeps the seeds in a plastic tray with good drainage, covered by a sack. Then the seeds are introduced to a few inches of soil, while being covered for a further twelve hours. Finally the grass crop is on its way.

"I do need to water the crop three times daily," he says, adding that he doesn't use fertiliser. Each crop of fodder takes a week to be ready.

"I want to buy some more cows," Alamgir remarks, "and increase grass production." He says that several neighbours have already been to see him to know more about his novel fodder farming endeavour.

# Youth rescued from drug peddler's captivity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police rescued a youth of Chapainawabganj from captivity in an alleged drug peddler's house in Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila yesterday.

The accused is Ahsan Habib Rony, 30, of Naldair village in the upazila.

The victim, farm worker Anisur Rahman, 22, son of Altaf Hossain of Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila, had become hostage of Rony since December 11.

Anisur got acquainted with drug peddler Shahin, 35, of Chapainawabganj Sadar, at a tea stall last month.

On December 11, Shahin along with Anisur came to Jamalpur's Dighpait area and met Rony.

Shahin then left the place after giving something wrapped in a piece of cloth to Rony and did not return.

Rony took Anisur to his house and found less quantity of heroin than he paid Shahin for, said police.

Consequently, angry Rony took Anisur under his hostage and chained him in a room.

On information, police rescued Anisur from the house. They also arrested Rony's wife with five grams of heroin.

However, Rony managed to flee the scene.

# RAPE, MUTILATION OF GIRL

# Accused still at large

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The stalker, who allegedly raped a girl and mutilated her in Ishwarganj upazila of Mymensingh early Friday, is yet to be arrested.

The victim's father, a poor farmer, filed a case with Ishwarganj Police Station on Friday accusing Sohag Mia and an unidentified youth.

The girl, 16, passed her SSC examinations this year, but she left her study and moved to capital Dhaka four months ago to escape harassment by Sohag, a local college student, family sources said.

In Dhaka, the girl started working at a garment factory.

On Thursday, she went home to meet her family members in Ishwarganj.

When she came out to respond to the call

of nature early Friday, Sohag aided by an accomplice forcibly took her to a secluded place nearby, raped her and cut her genitals with a blade, police quoted the family members as saying.

Family members and neighbours took her to Ishwarganj Upazila Health Complex. She was later shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

"Sohag used to ask my daughter to marry him and make indecent proposals on her way to school. Rejected, he said that he would teach her a good lesson. Sohag's parents were informed but the harassment continued," said the victim's father.

Drives are on to arrest the accused, said Badrul Alam Khan, OC of Ishwarganj Police Station.

# Jessore BCL man stabbed dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Criminals stabbed to death an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Jhikargachha upazila of Jessore on Saturday.

The victim was Milon Hossain, 26, son of Alam Hossain of Katakhal at Jhikargachha upazila headquarters.

The attending doctor at Jessore General Hospital declared Milon dead after he was rushed there, said Mizanur Rahman, cousin of the victim.

"Miscreants stabbed him in Jhikargachha upazila headquarters when he was returning home after attending a Victory Day programme," he added.

The youth was brought dead to the hospital, said Dr Kollol Kumar Saha, medical officer of Jessore General Hospital.

In protest, local Awami League activists blocked Jessore-Benapole Highway and they freed the road around 5:00pm, following assurance by the administration, said Abu Saleh Mohammad Masud Karim, officer in charge of Jhikargachha Police Station.

Police are trying to find out clues behind the killing, he said.

# 5 Shibir men sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A court here yesterday sent five Shibir men to the jail, rejecting their bail prayers.

The court gave the order when the police produced them before it.

The five were arrested in Hatibandha upazila while they were preparing to conduct sabotage on Saturday, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Hatibandha Police Station Shamim Sarder said.

The arrestees are Lalmonirhat Government College unit Shibir President Jahangir Alam, 21, Bawra unit President Golzal Hossain, 22, and Hatibandha upazila unit Publicity Secretary Abu Sayeed, 23, and activists Uchhas Hossain, 24, Mison Islam, 23.