

TAHIRPUR OF SUNAMGANJ

# Upstream sand turns agri lands infertile

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Taherpur

Massive arrival of sand from the upstream in Indian Meghalaya badly affects soil fertility and overall ecology, much to the worry of thousands families in different villages under Taherpur upazila of Sunamganj.

"At least 3,500 acres of fertile land in Chanpur, Rojoni Line, Maram, Burungamara and Rajai villages have gone under sand in the past eight years, causing huge losses of agricultural production, said Jamal Uddin, former chairman of Borodol Uttar Union Parishad (UP).

"On July 20, 2008, suddenly big chunks of earth from the hills came down and buried the houses, roads, and paddy fields in North Bordol UP and nearby floodplains of the Jadukata river in a morning. Unplanned mining in Meghalaya causes such landslides," he said.

"Within a few minutes, the nearby ponds and wetlands were filled up with sand and stone chips during a

flash flood that day," said Kuddus Mia, 45, a resident of Borodol village, and a witness to the incident.

Abdur Razzak, president of Chanpur Bazar committee, said many small and medium lowlands have already disappeared and fishes and aquatic life are badly affected as consequences of unplanned uranium mining in Meghalaya.

It has a larger impact in and around the Tanguar Haor and Surma river basin area, he added.

On several occasions fishes and aquatic lives died in the Jadukata river without any apparent reason, he said.

"During the past few years, I failed to produce any crop on 20 acres of land that previously gave three harvests a year. Massive arrival of sand is responsible for the situation," said Andru Sholomar, a leader of the Khashi community and an inhabitant of Rajai village in the upazila.

"In only two weeks during the last year's flood, three more acres of my land got covered with sand brought in

by the rain-triggered floods from the nearby hills in India.

Locals alleged that the government authorities are yet to take any effective initiative for saving the area's ecology or removing the layers of sand by excavating or dredging.

Unplanned activities in the West Khasi Hills in Meghalaya and consequent hill slides affect the Jadukata river and agricultural land and wetlands in the border areas of Taherpur, said Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon.

Both Bangladesh and India should take serious steps to protect the people, biodiversity and economy in the areas, he added.

Md Zahedul Haq, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Sunamganj, said he visited the area and reported to the higher authorities about the matter.

However, the area of affected land would be less than what the locals claim, he said.



Formerly a fertile land, this area at Chanpur village in Taherpur upazila of Sunamganj is now totally unproductive as a thick layer of sand has covered the area.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA



The injured vulture at Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

PHOTO: STAR

## Rare Himalayan vulture under treatment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A seriously injured and emaciated Himalayan vulture, found at Taltola village in Sreemangal upazila under the district on Monday, is undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation in the upazila town.

"Sree Gobinda Das of Taltola village captured the rare animal when it fell down from a tree at his house. Later he arranged sending it to Wildlife Service Foundation," said Tabibur Rahman, assistant conservator of Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department in Moulvibazar.

"This vulture is in a very critical state. It can hardly walk or lift the head. It is being given saline water. It weighs below one kg although such

vultures usually weight three to five kg," said Sopon Deb Sojol, director of Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation.

"A few weeks ago, Md Saidul Islam Sahin of Dakkhin Borohat area rescued a vulture from drowning when it fell into a pond. That bird is also under treatment at Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation," he said.

Md Nurul Mohaimen Milton, general secretary of Environmental Journalists Forum, said, "Arrival of wildlife in localities indicates serious degradation of their habitat. We should think about the ecological health of forest areas."

Most of the vulture species have disappeared from Bangladesh as well as other South Asian countries, said RSM Monirul Islam, divisional forest officer of Sylhet Forest Division.

## Carpenter's skull recovered

Police say a man hired two drug addicts to kill his wife's lover

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A man hired two drug addict youths to kill one person in Santhia upazila to take revenge for extra-marital affairs with his wife, said police.

Victim Abu Sayed, 30, son of Momtaz Ali of Koromza village in the upazila, was abducted from CNG-bus stand of Bera upazila and killed on October 30 last year.

The killers strangled Sayed, a carpenter by profession, and dumped his body into a field of Koromza Khoyer Bagan area and the head, separated from the body, was thrown into a pond in Mongolgram village of Santhia upazila, police said.

Police recovered the skull of the victim from a pond at Mongolgram village of the upazila yesterday and arrested Md Fakhrul Islam and Shamim Hossain. Later, the two were sent to jail through a court.

Police arrested Fakhrul and Shamim according to the statement of Rajib who was arrested on January 21 on suspicion of his involvement with the killing. Rajib gave the confessional statement to the court.

Superintendent of Police Jihadul Kabir quoting the arrestees said the victim had illicit relation with Fakhrul's wife. Fakhrul hired Rajib and Shamim to kill the victim and separate his head for Tk 2 lakh.

Police found the names of six to seven people involved with the killing, the SP said.

## Say no to drugs

Rehabilitation centre owners urge in Sajek

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

An organisation of the owners of rehabilitation centres in Bangladesh held a special programme in Rangamati on Monday under the banner 'Say no to drugs.'

Songuk, the owners' organisation, held the programme at Sajek tourism centre in Bagaichhari upazila of Rangamati, which was attended by more than 200 young people who have given up using drugs. Their family members also attended the programme.

Coordinator of the programme Mostafizur Rahman Sumon said the youth who once used drugs have given up the addiction and returned to normal life.

Last year, this event was held in Kuakata of Patuakhali. The horrors of drug are highlighted in such events, the organisers said.

## Next polls as per constitution

Ershad tells journalists in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The next parliamentary elections will be held as per the constitution, Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad said in Rangpur yesterday.

"The polls will be credible to all even if BNP boycotts it over the demand for polls time caretaker government. The 10th national election held on January 5 in 2014 was credible although BNP boycotted it over the same demand," Ershad told journalists at Rangpur Circuit House after arriving there at noon.

"My party has already finalised candidates for all the 300 seats in view of the 11th national elections to be held at the end of this year. We are yet to decide whether to stay in the Awami League-led 14-party alliance ahead of the polls. But, my party will not be a political partner of BNP," the former president said.

Referring to the presidential election to be held on February 19, Ershad said he is not willing to be president under the present system as it would create a gap between him and his party men.

"I want to work more for my party," he said.

Moshiur Rahman Ranga, presidium member of JP and state minister for LGRD and cooperative ministry, GM Quader, co-chairman of JP, and Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa, newly elected mayor of Rangpur City Corporation, were present with the party chief.

## Sugar mill worker dies in sugarcane carrier crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An elderly worker of Panchagarh Sugar Mills died in sugarcane carrier crash in the mill yesterday.

The deceased was Motiar Rahman, 65, son of Foimuddin of Shikarpur village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila.

Mill sources said Motiar, Nowshad and Jahangir were working on the cane carrier in the afternoon.

Before completion of their work, other workers of power department of the mill Khoyrul and Mostafizur Rahman switched on the carrier.

As the machine started suddenly, Motiar could not get down from the carrier and fell into it while Nowshad and Jahangir somehow avoided getting hurt.

On information, fire fighters came to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The fellow workers of the victim became agitated after the accident and besieged the managing director's office.

On information, additional police were deployed in the mill compound to avert untoward situation.

The operation of the mill remained suspended as of filing of this report around 5:20pm yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner Md Jahirul Islam visited the spot and assured workers of taking proper steps in this regard.

## Mustard cultivation falls

Tangail farmers fear less production due to flood, rain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Mustard was cultivated in the district on less land than targeted this season due to prolonged flood and heavy rain, along with dense fog, raising fear of less than targeted production among local growers.

District Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Additional Deputy Director agriculturist Abu Hanif said a total of 38,000 hectares of land were targeted for mustard cultivation in 12 upazilas of the district this year, adding that the target was not achieved due to flood and heavy rain.

In this situation, a total of 28,406 hectares of land were brought under cultivation, he said.

Moreover, many farmers could not prepare their land for mustard cultivation in time due to stagnant water in

the crop fields of low lying areas.

Bumper production of mustard was achieved and a total of 41,271 tonnes were produced on 38,000 hectares of land last season, said Shariful Islam, sub-assistant agriculture officer of DAE in the district.

Mustard was cultivated on 2,500 hectares of land in Sadar upazila, 2,375 hectares in Basail, 6,494 hectares in Mirzapur, 680 hectares in Sakhipur, 1,223 hectares in Bhuapur, 720 hectares in Kalihati, 151 hectares in Madhupur, 1,370 hectares in Delduar, 178 hectares in Dhanbari, 9,000 hectares in Nagarpur, 2,270 hectares in Gopalpur and 1,445 hectares of land in Ghatail upazilas.

Different varieties of mustard were cultivated here, such as Ufshi, Tori-7, B-14, and B-15. Besides, some local

varieties have also been cultivated in the district.

Abdur Rahim, a mustard grower at Bhatchanda village in Sadar upazila, said he had made good profit last year, but the yield this year may be much less due to heavy rain at the beginning of the season and dense fog later.

Abdul Haque and Lal Miah of the same village said they will not be able to recover the production costs this year as many of the plants contain no grain.

Abu Hanif of DAE said flood, heavy rain and dense fog hit mustard cultivation this year, raising fear of less production. "As the sun has started shining again, we are advising the farmers to use pesticides for saving the rest of the crop," he added.



Mustard cultivation in Tangail has been hampered this season due to flood, heavy rain and dense fog. The picture was taken from Dariapur village in Sakhipur upazila of Tangail recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## Night guard found dead in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the body of a man from Purbadhala upazila of Netrakona on Saturday.

The deceased was Abu Mia, 60, a night guard at Duttakonia Bazar in Dhalamulgaon union of Purbadhala.

Police sent the body to Netrakona Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Purbadhala Police Station Abhiranjan Deb said he might have been strangled as the body bore injury marks on the neck.

## 'Stop coaching business'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A number of guardians, students and civil society members at a human chain and rally in the town yesterday demanded stopping of coaching centre, notebook and guidebook businesses.

Speakers at the rally said mushroom growth of substandard coaching centres is affecting quality education.

Besides, many of the coaching centres are leaking the question papers of different public examinations and also using guidebooks. As a result, the students are turning back from the educational institutions, they said.

The speakers urged the government to take immediate steps to stop the brisk business of coaching centres in order to check question paper leaking.

Prof Habibur Rahman, principal of Government Fazilatunnesa Mujib Mohila College in Tangail, and poet Bulbul Khan Mahbub spoke at the rally.

District Education Officer Laila Khanom later joined the programme and expressed her solidarity with the demand.