



Once used for crop cultivation, large areas of land have been turned into ponds for fish farming at Boiragipara village in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat. Inset, digging of a pond with excavators and loading of earth on trucks goes on at another place of the same village.

PHOTO: STAR

Arable lands give way to fish ponds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Areas of arable land in Kalai and Khetlal upazilas of Joypurhat see an alarming decline as many owners are digging ponds on their land for more profitable fish farming.

The trend poses a threat to crop production in the areas, said officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

More than 350 large and small ponds have been dug on around 200 acres of land in these two upazilas since 2016, they said.

Abdur Razzak, a farmer of Matrai union in Kalai upazila, said land owners in his area are digging ponds on their croplands as they find fish farming to be safer than cultivating crops. "Making profit from crops is quite uncertain," he said.

Razzak said he recently dug a pond on his two-acre land despite having another pond on one acre. When this correspondent asked

whether he got permission for digging the pond, he replied in the negative. Farmers used to produce paddy, potato and wheat on those lands, he added.

Kalai Upazila Agriculture Officer Rezaul Karim said land owners need to obtain permission from the local administration for digging ponds on their arable land, but they disregard the directive.

During a recent visit to different villages in Punat, Matrai, Jidnapur, Ahmedabad and Udaypur unions in Kalai upazila, this correspondent found that dozens of ponds have been dug on large areas of highly fertile land, while more digging was going on. Farmers hired hundreds of labourers and tractor trolleys for digging the ponds.

Many land owners also sold the top soil to brickfield owners.

Locals said Narayan Chandra Roy of Bamangram village and Rafiqul Islam of Balait village under Kalai upazila and Moazzem Kazi of Khalishgari

village under Khetlal upazila dug ponds on 12 acres in 2016.

"They dug the ponds without any permission from the local authorities," said Monirul Islam of Bamangram.

Saiful Islam of Imampur village in Kalai upazila said he filed an application to local authorities seeking permission to dig a pond on his land, but failed to get the permission, adding that he dug a pond on 17 acres for fish farming.

Twelve other land owners of his village dug ponds on 50 acres, said Saiful.

Agriculture Officer Rezaul Karim admitted that arable land is decreasing fast in the upazila due to digging of ponds. This will reduce crop production and so, the practice should be stopped immediately, he added.

Kalai Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Afaz Uddin said his office is not permitting anybody to dig pond, and legal action will be taken against those who dig ponds on arable lands.

Stop business centring education

Schooling and business cannot go hand in hand, speakers tell Mymensingh meet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Speakers at a programme yesterday said education and education as business cannot go hand in hand and it should be stopped immediately.

Moreover, in recent years the situation has turned from bad to worse due to mushroom growth of unauthorised educational institutions in Mymensingh town and its adjacent areas, speakers alleged.

They said this at a press conference at Mymensingh Press Club, organised by Bangladesh Manobadhikar Protistha O Bastobayan Sangstha (BMPBS), Mymensingh unit.

Some dishonest people are running such business in the name of education by realising high tuition fees.

Besides, as there is not enough open

space in those unauthorised institutions, many schools arranged their functions on busy roads, creating serious nuisance for public, they said. They added that due to illegal favour by a section of unscrupulous officials and lack of proper monitoring, many of those institutions have been running successfully for years, defying the existing rules.

Nasrin Sultana, secretary of BMPBS, read out the key note paper at the programme.

Meanwhile, following a writ petition jointly filed by BMPBS and Nasrin Sultana with the High Court (HC) on January 28, an HC bench issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why it should not be directed to stop operation of unauthorised educational institutions, including primary and high schools and madrasas, across the country.

Jessore kid found killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A five-year-old boy was found murdered in Jessore Sadar upazila on Friday night.

The victim was Yeasin Ali, son of Wasim Ali of Bhekutia village, and a Class I student of Bhekutia Government Primary School.

Police and family sources said the boy had been missing since 6:00pm on Friday.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from a paddy field in the area around 9:00pm.

The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy, said Sobhan, sub-inspector of Jessore Kotwali Police Station.

Doctors suspect Yeasin might have been strangled.

ALLEGED CORRUPTION BY HEADMASTER 53 students fail to attend SSC exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

As many as 53 students of two schools in Gafargaon upazila of the district could not appear in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations this year as they did not get their admit cards due to alleged corruption by the headmaster.

All of them filled up their forms from Rouha High School but they did not get their admit cards till the start of the exams on Thursday, said Upazila Secondary Education Officer Belayet Hossain.

Of them, 35 are from Rouha High School and 18 are from adjacent Uthuri Junior High School in the upazila, the official said.

Guardians of the ill fated students submitted a complaint with the deputy commissioner in Mymensingh on Thursday against Maruf Ahmed, headmaster of Rouha High School, said Gafargaon Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Dr Shahmim Rahman, adding that Maruf went into hiding on Wednesday.

Locals said as Uthuri Junior High School is not a registered institution, its headmaster Yeasmin Sultana contacted headmaster of Rouha High School and gave him Tk 1.5 lakh for enlisting her 18 students and filling up their forms under his institution.

As the headmaster did not register the 53 students under the education board concerned, there was no way for the students to get the admit cards and appear in their examinations, the UNO added.

Headmaster assaulted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The headmaster of a primary school was assaulted allegedly by the chairman of the school managing committee (SMC) yesterday.

The victim is Abu Zafar, headmaster of No 5 Pakdal Government Primary School in Kachipara union under Baufal upazila.

"We got Tk 44,000 in 2016-17 fiscal year for repairing the school building. SMC Chairman Sadiqur Rahman Tipu took Tk 32000, saying that he will return it later," Zafar said.

As Zafar asked Tipu to return the money yesterday, the latter allegedly assaulted him.

Locals admitted Zafar to Baufal Upazila Health Complex.

Baufal upazila Primary Teachers' Association Secretary Kamruzzaman Khan said they demand removal of Tipu from his post.

Tipu said he did not assault Zafar, instead Zafar tried to assault him.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Abdullah Al Mahmud Zaman said legal steps will be taken if the chairman is found guilty.

3 bodies found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The bodies of three men were recovered from different areas in Gouripur upazila of the district on Friday.

Police recovered the decomposed body of a man, aged about 40, from a paddy field beside Gouripur-Shahganj road in the morning. Identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

The body of an elderly man was found in a water body at Bir Ahemdipur village at night. Deceased Pir Ali, 70, of the village, was a mental patient, said police.

The law enforcers also recovered the hanging body of Abul Bahar, 30, son of late Misir Uddin of Mohiswaron village, from his house at noon.

Family members said he committed suicide over family feud.

'Ensure punishment to journo Shimul's killers'

Sirajganj court fixes April for charge framing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

People from all walks of life, including newsmen, at a rally in front of Shahzadpur Press Club in Sirajganj yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of the killers of journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul.

On the day in 2017, Shimul, Shahzadpur correspondent of Daily Samakal, was shot in a clash between two factions of upazila Awami League near the house of Shahzadpur municipality mayor. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka the following day.

Later, the victim's wife Nurunnahar Begum filed a case with Shahzadpur Police Station against key accused Mayor Halimul Haque Miru and 24 other people.

On May 2 last year, police submitted charge sheet accusing 38 people including the mayor, his brother Habibul Haque Mintu and upazila AL leader Nasir Uddin in the case.

Police arrested Miru and 29 other people since the murder.

The speakers at the rally urged the government to bring the killers to book immediately for the sake of the justice and the safety of the journalists. Binol Kumar, president of the press club, Topon Das, news editor of Daily Samakal, and the slain journalist's wife Nurunnahar Begum, spoke at the programme.

The case was shifted to Sirajganj Judge's Court on January 25 this year. The court has fixed date in April for charge framing, said advocate Abul Kashem, lawyer to Shimul murder case.



Abdul Hakim Shimul

Hindu's land grabber arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The main accused in a case for grabbing the land of a Hindu family was arrested from his house in Fakirtokeya Balapara village in Sadar upazila yesterday, while four other named accused fled from their homes.

The arrestee, Majnu Miah, 40, son of late Jabbar Ali of the village, was produced before the Judicial Magistrate's Court that sent him to jail, said Sub-Inspector (SI) Mainul Islam.

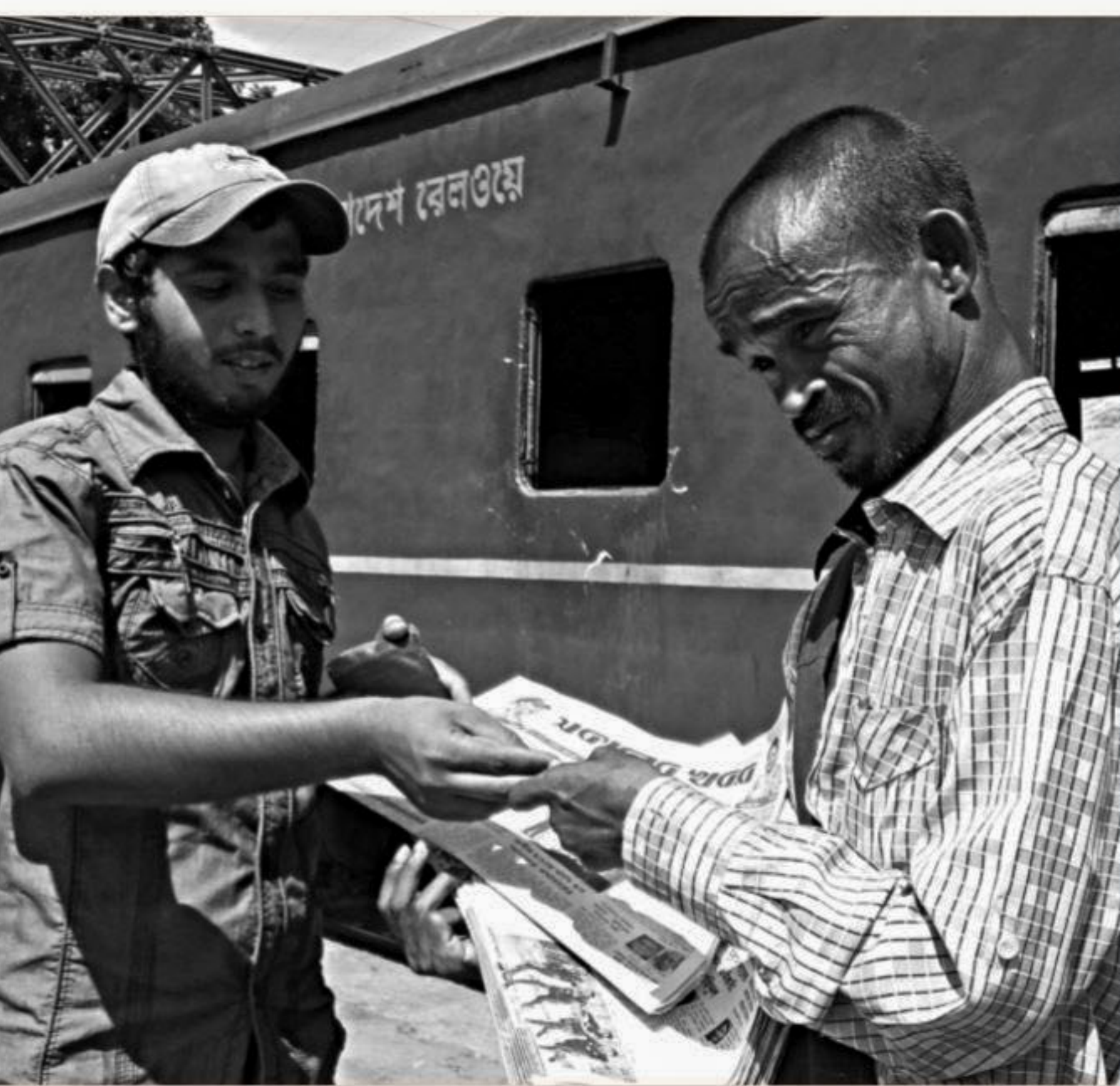
The SI said Majnu and some of his men grabbed seven decimals of land belonging to Khagendranath Barman, son of Dinonath Barman of the village, and built a temporary tinshed house on it forcibly. They also took away 120 bamboos after felling them, he added.

"The land grabbers put pressure on Khagendranath to sell his land but he did not agree. Then they demanded Tk 50,000 from him but he refused. They finally grabbed the land on Thursday," the SI said.

Khagendranath filed a case on the same day with Sadar Police Station, accusing Majnu and four others.

Khagendranath said, "One of the land grabbers has been arrested but the illegal structure is yet to be removed. I hope I will get legal help for getting back my land."

Sadar Police Station OC Mahfuz Alam said the land owner will get back his land after the court issues order.



Hearing and speech impaired Aminul Islam selling newspaper to a security person at Lalmonirhat Railway Station. The man, continuing the task for 20 years despite his serious challenges, was crushed to death under a train at the station on Friday.

FILE PHOTO: STAR



The Coast Guard seizes deer head and hide, left, and 500kg of crabs and 50 thousand pieces of shrimp larvae during separate operations in Kalabogi canal area of Dakope upazila and Satbaria river at Jorshing of Koyra upazila under Khulna in the Sundarbans early Saturday, said Abdullah Al Mahmud, operations officer of Coast Guard's Mongla West Zone. The traffickers, however, managed to escape.



PHOTO: STAR

Man trampled to death by elephant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A man was killed by an elephant in Jibitoli Chairmanpara village in Kaptai upazila of the district on Wednesday.

The victim was Kina Chandra Chakma, 55, of the village.

Local Shanta Chakma said Kina, a fisherman, used to catch fish in the Kaptai lake early in the morning every day.

On Wednesday, an elephant came near Kina's house to eat bananas from a tree and attacked him all on a sudden, leaving him dead on the spot.

Sudatta Bikash Chakma, chairman of Jibitoli union parishad, confirmed the incident.

CRUSHED UNDER TRAIN

Challenged hawkker meets tragic death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Hearing and speech impaired newspaper hawkker Aminul Islam, 44, was crushed to death under a train on Friday at Lalmonirhat Railway Station, where he had been selling newspapers for the last twenty years.

The tragic incident left his family in utter despair.

Aminul Islam, second of three sons of late freedom fighter Abdul Gafur of Shaheed Shahjahan Colony area in Lalmonirhat town, was challenged with hearing and speech impairment and could not move his hands and legs normally due to problems since birth.

Despite his challenges, he never sought any help from anyone, except approaching people with hope to sell newspapers.

Aminul's three children Afroza Khatun, Afsana Khatun and Jahidul Islam read in classes IV, III and I respectively.

"My challenged husband's dream was to see our children educated. With the daily earning of a little over Tk 100, he struggled to meet family's needs including kids' schooling. I don't know what is in store for us," said Aminul's wife Jahanra Begum in tone of despair.

"As an honest and industrious person with a high sense of dignity, Aminul was dear to all in the area. Around 20 thousand people attended his janaja held on Shaheed Shahjahan Colony Government Primary School premise on Friday night. I will try my level best to provide support for educating Aminul's three children," said Lalmonirhat municipality Mayor Rezaul Islam Rintu.

The bereaved family needs help from the government and kind hearted people, especially to fulfill the challenged newspaper hawkker's dream to educate his children, said several locals.