



These water lilies have become visible after removal of huge amount of water hyacinth in Ashurar Beel, a vast water body in Dinajpur's Nawabganj upazila. Inset, Nawabganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Moshiur Rahman himself gets into throat-deep water to remove water hyacinths from the water body. PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Ashurar Beel getting back beauty

Nawabganj UNO takes the helm to free the 700-acre water body from illegal grabbers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The historic Ashurar Beel, a vast water body in Nawabganj upazila, is gradually getting back its scenic beauty, thanks to the timely taken initiative by Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Moshiur Rahman.

The UNO himself took the helm to remove the illegal structures along the 700 acre water body recently to restore its past glory.

UNO Moshiur launched a week-long eviction drive to free the historic water body from its illegal encroachers in mid September.

His endeavour did not end there. On

September 21, he got down in stinky water of the Ashurar Beel, which has close affinity among locals, and started cleaning the water hyacinths in a bid to restore its beauty and save its aquatic life.

No government official had ever made such an extraordinary effort before, locals said, adding that before removing the water hyacinth he spent a busy week to free the water body from encroachers.

Of the 350 hectares (700 acres) water-body, situated at the north of Sal Forest and about a kilometre northwest of Nawabganj upazila headquarters, around 109 hectares

are in nearby Birampur upazila.

Local said once the water body was a safe place for many local fish species, birds and aquatic plants like white and red water lilies, but it saw a drastic decline due to illegal encroachment and use of pesticides in nearby croplands.

"Earlier, it was a favourite place for nature lovers, but it lost its eye catching beauty due to mindless grabbing of the water body," Altaf Hossain of Patildah area in the upazila said.

After ending of the week-long eviction drive, UNO Moshiur noticed the large water-

body was covered with water hyacinths and decided to remove those as well, locals said.

When the workers were cleaning the water hyacinth the UNO noticed that things were not happening as he liked.

Then he joined hands to assist them in the cleansing work, locals said, adding that many onlookers then followed him as his endeavour inspired them.

"I have made this little effort to restore the scenic beauty of Ashurar Beel by freeing it from illegal encroachers and water hyacinths," Moshiur said.

# 50 children fall sick in Barguna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 50 students of Alirbandar Government Primary School in Taltali upazila of Barguna fell sick after taking anti-worm tablets on Wednesday afternoon.

"Seventeen of the sick kids received treatment at Taltali and Amtali upazila health complexes. None of the sick kids came to school today [Thursday]," said Md Altaf Hossain Mobarak, headmaster of the primary school.

"Md Sohel Mia, a health assistant, came to the school and had students of classes III, IV and V take anti-worm tablets around 3:30pm on Wednesday. But after taking the medicine, the kids started vomiting and loose motion.

"Consequently, fear spread among students and guardians came to school after hearing the matter.

"We sent 14 students to Taltali Upazila Health Complex and three others to Amtali Upazila Health Complex," said the headmaster.

"Just after taking tablet we became unwell," said Tania, a student of Class V.

Dr Sankar Prosad, Taltali upazila acting health and family planning officer, said, "The kids became unwell as they took the tablet in empty stomach. They will get well soon."

Anti-worm tablets are being given to school kids across the country during the ongoing National Worm Control Week from October 1 to 7.

The kids in Barguna became unwell as they took anti-worm tablets in empty stomach.

# Five kids, balloon vendor injured in gas cylinder blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Six people, including five kids, sustained critical injuries in a gas cylinder explosion near the National Development Fair at Ishwardi Upazila Parishad premises yesterday.

The victims are gas balloon vendor Bappi Hossain, 45, Tushar Hossain, 10, son of Bhodon, Alim Hossain, 13, son of Abu Syed, Sohan Hossain, 10, son of Nasim Uddin, Farhad Hossain, 12, son of Faruk Hossain, and Rabbi, 11, son of Rustom Ali of Ishwardi upazila headquarters.

The injured were taken to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex from where five of them were sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated, police said.

Bappi was selling gas balloons among children near the main gate of the fair, organised by Ishwardi upazila administration, when a gas cylinder exploded with a big bang, leaving five kids and the vendor injured, Officer-in-Charge of Ishwardi Police Station Azim Uddin said.

After the explosion people started to run here and there for shelter, said Ishwardi Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Jobayer Hossain.

Though the fair was hampered for quite sometime, later everything became normal as the day progressed, the UNO said, adding that the upazila administration has already taken steps to ensure proper treatment of the victims.



Local people take an injured in a gas cylinder explosion in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila yesterday. Below: An injured boy takes treatment at Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex, and right, remains of the exploded cylinder. PHOTO: STAR



The six-storied building of 250-bed hospital in Bagerhat town. PHOTO: STAR

# Hospital stuck in red tape

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

Construction of the six storied building of 250-bed hospital in the town was completed in January this year but it is yet to become operational due to bureaucratic problems.

It is not functioning because Bagerhat Public Works Department (PWD) asked the health department of the district to receive the building but the latter refused to take it showing some faults of the building, said Bagerhat PWD Executive Engineer Satinath Basak.

According to Bagerhat Health Department, in 1997, the hospital was upgraded to 100 beds from 50 beds. In 2013, it was planned to upgrade to 250 beds.

Construction of the new building started in June 2013 spending Tk 26 crore under the Health Population and Nutrition Centre Development Project.

The construction work was completed in January this year but due to bureaucratic problems, the handover of the building is pending, causing immense sufferings to treatment seekers.

Mujibur Rahman, a retired government

official of Afra village in Sadar upazila, said locals have to go to Sadar Hospital but they are not getting proper treatment there due to doctor and bed crisis.

He hopes that if the 250-bed hospital starts operation without any delay, people of the area will be relieved from the crisis.

Civil Surgeon Dr Arun Chandra Mondal said they have asked the Public Works Department to install some technical equipment of the building as soon as possible.

He said they will start it as soon as possible.

There is an arrangement of lift along with intensive care centre (ICU), CT scan, outdoor treatment, own electricity and water supply system in the newly built building, said the engineer.

In February this year, they sent a letter to the Health Department to receive the building, he said.

"They have asked us to make link-corridors. We have made the link corridors again as per their requirement. Now they are again asking us for making special basins for operation theatres and so on. We have asked the contractor to do that. I think the present civil surgeon will not receive it in his tenure as he will retire soon," said the engineer.

## SHAVING HEADS OF FIVE BOYS

# Headmaster held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police early yesterday arrested Abdul Jabbar, headmaster of Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar High School at Akhanagar village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, on charge of shaving the heads of five students of another local high school on Sunday.

The five boys -- Asraful Islam, Rubel Rana, Md Sabuj, Sarwar Hossain and Asif, all Class X students of Bheharhat High School in the same upazila, got the humiliating treatment at an arbitration arranged by Jabbar after they protested stalking of a schoolgirl on Saturday.

Sarwar's father Faridul Islam filed a case with Ruhea Police Station in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday accusing three people including headmaster Abdul Jabbar, said Prodip Kumar Roy, OC of the police station.

Jabbar, a former UP chairman and incumbent joint convener of Ruhea Thana unit BNP, is an influential person in the area, locals said.

Around 10:00am on Saturday, the five boys went out from their school for photocopying some sheets at a market when they saw local madrasa student Mohammad Liton, 15, waylay and forcibly hold the hand of a Class VII female student of nearby Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar High School.

The five friends protested and asked Liton not to harass the girl again.

The next day, Abdul Jabbar arranged an arbitration in his school.

There he called a barber and got the heads of the five shaved, said several people attending it.

The girl and her mother, who were also present at the arbitration, kept saying that the boys were innocent but in vain, they said.

The incident created a sensation in the area.

# Three JMB suspects held in Joypurhat

Shooter gun, 12 crude bombs seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three suspected members of banned militant organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested in Khetlal upazila of Joypurhat yesterday.

The arrestees are Nur Alam, alias Polash, alias Prince, son of Nurul Islam of Jamalpur village in Joypurhat Sadar upazila, Azizar Rahman, 52, son of Abdur Rahman of the village, and Nur Mohammad Mondal, 35, son of late Sarafat Ali of Moheshpur village in Khetlal upazila.

Khetlal Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abu Shahriar said the trio gathered in a house at Matirghar village in the upazila on Wednesday night to make plans to carry out destructive activities in the upazila.

On information, a police team raided the house and arrested Nur Alam with a shooter gun and 12 crude bombs. Based on his information, police later arrested two other JMB members.

They are all accused in different cases, the OC said.

# Teacher sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A primary schoolteacher was sent to jail yesterday in a case filed under the ICT Act for allegedly sharing distorted image of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The accused is Monayeem Khan Pathan, 40, an assistant teacher of Abdul Wahed Memorial Government Primary School in Gouripur upazila.

Gouripur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdullah Al Mamun said the teacher shared the distorted photo of the prime minister on Wednesday. Later, he was detained from his school.

The arrestee was produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court that sent him to jail, the OC said.