

4 to die, 3 get life for killing schoolboy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A court here yesterday sentenced four people to death and three others to rigorous imprisonment for life for killing a schoolboy in Singair upazila in 2014. The court also fined them Tk 50,000 each, in default, to serve five years more in jail.

District and Sessions Judge Shahidul Alam Jhinuk pronounced the verdict in presence of six of the eight accused.

The death row convicts are Sultan, Rakibul, Sohel and Rafiq and the lifers are Rubel, Sajib and Akibul. Sultan and Sajib were tried in absentia.

The judge acquitted Shariful as the charges brought against him were not proved.

According to the prosecution, Sheikh Jahirul Islam, 18, son of Sheikh Khokan Miah of Khaserchar village, was called to Sultan's house in Basta village over cellphone on September 14 in 2014.

Jahirul's father informed the police on September 15 as his son did not return home.

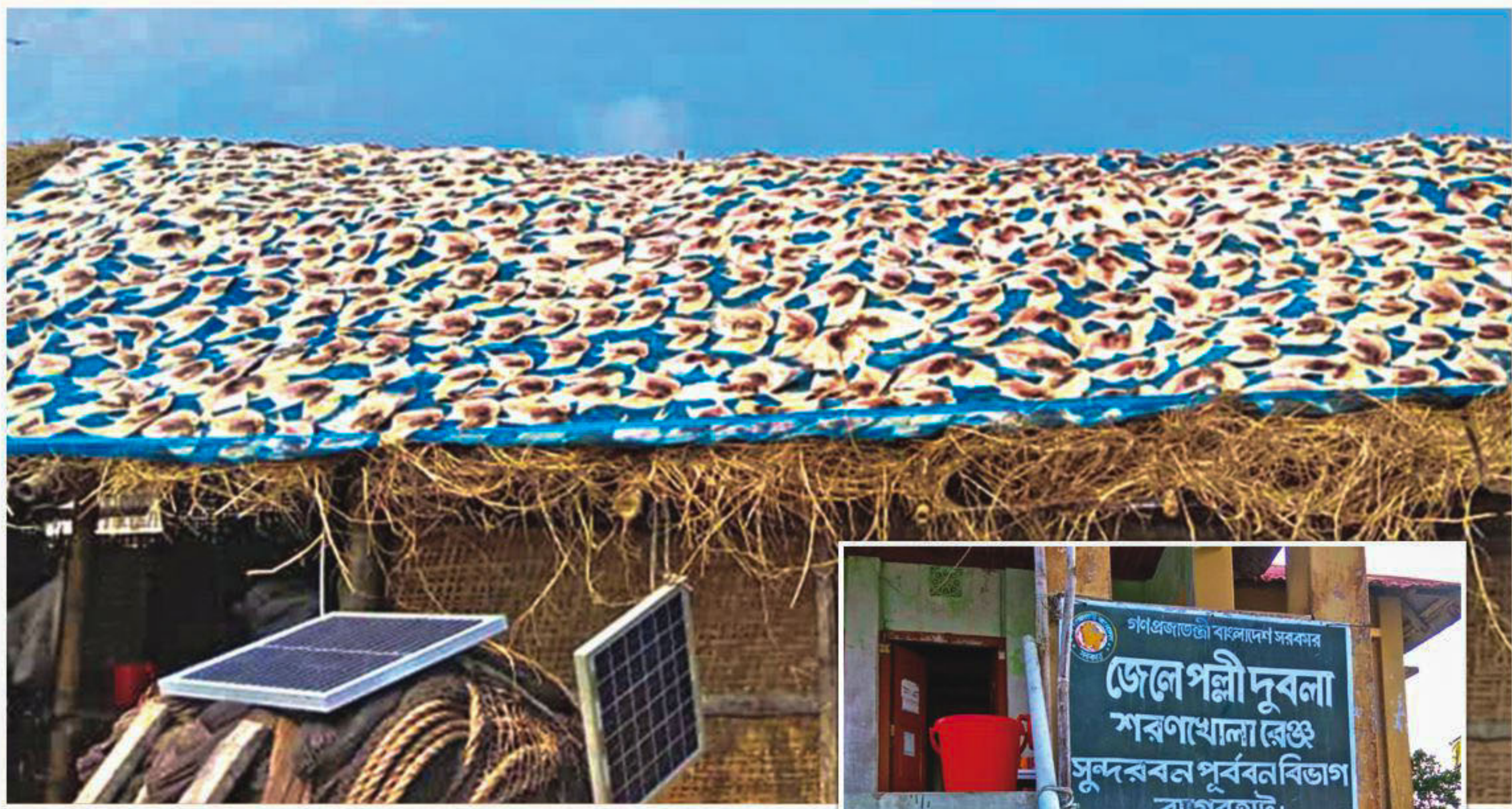
Police raided Sultan's house in the afternoon and seized two SIM cards of Jahirul's mobile phone.

On September 17, police recovered Jahirul's body in six pieces from a septic tank in a house, adjacent to Sultan's house.

Jahirul was a Class VIII student at Khara Char High School.

Police arrested six accused, but could not arrest the main accused Sultan and Sajib.

The investigation officer submitted the charge sheet before the court on June 4 in 2017.



Fish kept on a bamboo platform for drying in the sun. The photo was taken from Dublar Char 'fish village' in Sharankhola Range under the Sundarbans a few days ago.

PHOTO: PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY



Fish drying starts in full swing in the Sundarbans

Thousands make temporary settlements at Dublar Char, other spots for the seasonal trade

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

Dublar Char and several other areas in the Sundarbans are now buzzing with activities as a large number of fishermen are engaged in drying fishes after netting them from the sea.

Around 90 species of fishes including rupchanda, bhada, khalisa, churi, ditanas, laitya and different kinds of shrimp are dried in different areas including Dublar Char, Chapra Khalias, Alkorokol, Office Killa, Meher Ali, Majhir Killa, Shelar Char, Kokilmoni, Kaborkhali, Narkel Baria, Bara Amberia, Manik Khali and Chhoto Amberia char areas of the Sundarbans, said stakeholders.

"Before sunrise we go out for netting the fishes, which are processed for drying in the sun," said Jamshed Ali, a fisherman of Dublar Char.

"Thousands of fishermen from different areas of the southern region, including Paikgachha, Satkhira, Khulna, Pirojpur, Barguna, Mongla and Rampal make makeshift houses here for drying and processing fishes," said another fisherman Rasul Sheikh.

"In the next six months we will dry sea fishes here. We get more fish during the new moon and full moon. This dried fishes will be sent to different areas of the country including Chattogram," he said.

Zainal Abedin, assistant conservator of forest of Sharankhola Range under East Sundarbans, said, "There are 13 centres for fish collection, processing and marketing in Dublar Char fish village, about 120 kilometres from Mongla by boat. Fishermen and fish depot owners go there for drying fish for preservation and sale."

"The fishermen started leaving for Dublar Char on October 28 with license from Bagerhat Divisional Forest Office and Sharankhola Range Office and around 30 thousand fishermen have already gathered there. We hope revenue collection from the fish drying process this year will be

higher than last year's," he added.

Abdullah Al Mahmud, Operations Officer of the Coast Guard's West Zone (headquartered at Mongla), said, "The Sundarbans has already been declared robber-free. We are extra careful about providing adequate security for the fishermen engaged in processing and drying fish in Dublar Char and other areas."

Mahmudul Hasan, divisional forest officer of East Sundarbans, said he has visited the spots to see dried fish processing work.

"The fishermen have made temporary houses to stay there for drying fishes. We are supervising the areas so that no unwanted incidents occur," he said.

DUCK PLAGUE IN LALMONIRHAT Over 1,500 ducks die in one week

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Over 1,500 ducks have died in the last one week due to outbreak of duck plague in Hatibandha upazila under the district.

With the death of ducks every day, farmers in the area fear a major setback this year.

The disease has mainly affected two educated unemployed youths who have already lost 1,500 out of 4,000 fowls in their farm at Dakkhin Gaddimari village in the upazila.

Two friends Asaduzzaman Rahman and Shah Zahurul Haque Mithu, who jointly started duck farming on a rented land about seven months ago, are now worried whether they would be able to recover their investment.

Mithu said they have already invested Tk 12 lakh for the purpose, including purchase of 4,000 fowls and poultry feeds, labourer cost and space rent in the last couple of months.

"About 2,000 ducks started laying eggs just two weeks ago but due to the outbreak of plague the production has stopped now," he said.

Asaduzzaman said although their farm is only 200 metres from the upazila livestock office, they didn't get any support from the officer due to unknown reasons.

Upazila Livestock Officer Dr Babul Bishwas said there is no preventive vaccine or curative medicine for duck plague.

BNP leader Milon sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A Chandpur court denied bail to BNP central leader and former state minister for education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon and sent him to jail yesterday.

The Court of Chandpur Senior Judicial Magistrate Shafiqul Azam passed the order.

Mejbah Uddin, former district election officer, filed a case with Chandpur Sadar Model Police Station against Milon in 2009 for not submitting his election expenses return on time.

Earlier on Monday, his bail was sought in Chandpur District and Sessions Judge's Court and Additional Chief Magistrate's Court in 16 cases but the courts rejected the prayers.

A total of 25 cases against Milon, including those on charges of extortion, stealing vanity bags and mugging, are under trial in courts in Chandpur.

The former state minister recently returned home from abroad. Detective Branch of police arrested him from Chattogram early Friday.

Milon got BNP's nomination for contesting in Chandpur-1 constituency in the next Jatiya Sangsad elections.

"The cases will not be a bar to his contesting the polls," said Milon's lawyer Quamrul Islam.



PHOTO: STAR

This banded krait snake, rescued from poachers in Hatimara tea garden in Chunarughat upazila of Habiganj on Monday evening, was released to Lawacherra National Park in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar the same night. The snake, called Shankhini in Bangla, is dear to a section of poachers for its valuable venom. Its scientific name is Bungarus fasciatus and reaches 150 to 225 centimetres in length.

Child killer to die

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing six-year-old Jewel Hasan.

District and Sessions Judge Shawkat Hossain Chowdhury passed the order against the convict -- Abdur Rahim, 37, a shopkeeper at Beel Magurata village in Tangail Sadar upazila, said advocate Ataur Rahman Khan Azad.

Bangladesh Manobadhikar Bastobayon Sangstha assisted the state side.

The court also fined Rahim Tk 10,000, he said.

Police recovered Jewel's body from a paddy field at the village on November 19 in 2016, said Public Prosecutor S Akbar Khan. Rahim was arrested in Tangail town on January 1, 2017 and he confessed to the crime at a senior judicial magistrate's court the next day.

He told the court that he strangled Jewel on the night of November 18 and threw the body near a graveyard.

Rahim also admitted that he killed Jewel to remove obstacle to his extramarital affair with the boy's mother, the PP added.

Bean boon for char farmers



A grower plucks bean from his field at Dhumaitari village in Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Char farmers of Sundarganj upazila are showing much interest in farming vegetables, especially bean, as it is more profitable than other crops.

They cultivated bean in homesteads, fallow lands in the Teests river basin and even on crop fields for earning additional profit, together with normal crops.

The barren char lands now turn into greenish landscape due to vegetable cultivation and the growers are able to change their poverty stricken situation, said Mokbul Hossain, a landless farmer of char Haripur.

They are very much interested in

farming vegetable as they can earn good profit from there than other normal crops like paddy, jute and maize, said another grower of the area Shamsul Mia.

Aminul Islam of Dhumaitari village said he cultivated bean on his 30 decimals of land by spending Tk 7000.

"I have already started plucking beans from last week and sold them at Tk 80 per kilogram. In the meantime, I earned Tk 3,000 from the little harvest which will continue till the end of December," he said.

Many bean growers planted seeds much earlier and got high price from their produce. As the consumers are

purchasing newly produced bean without considering its price, the growers are much benefitted, said Afzal Hossain, a farmer of Dahabandh union.

Vegetable trader Hamidul Islam of the upazila headquarters said market price of early variety beans always remained high and the trader gets big margin of profit. However, the price of vegetable will fall when the supply increases within the next two weeks.

Upazila Agriculture Officer Rashedul Islam said vegetable farming is no doubt profitable with low input cost, so more farmers, especially char growers, are encouraged to take up vegetable farming than last year.

Bumper Aman yield in Tangail

Cultivation and production exceed targets this year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Farmers in the district are very happy at getting bumper yield of Aman paddy this year due to favourable weather condition and absence of pest attack.

Local farmers are very busy processing the harvested paddy and an air of traditional Nobanno festival of rural Bangladesh is prevailing in their households.

Harvesting of paddy started at different places in the district in early November and will continue throughout the month, said Tangail Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) Shariful Islam.

The target for transplanted (Ropa) Aman paddy cultivation was 83,862 hectares of land in 12 upazilas in the

district this year, while it was cultivated on 97,709 hectares, the SAAO said.

The target of broadcast (Bona) Aman paddy cultivation was 29,021 hectares of land in the district this year, while it was cultivated on 25,080 hectares, he said.

The rice production target from both transplanted and broadcast Aman paddies was 2,50,000 tonnes this year, but it may reach 2,84,000 tonnes, Shariful said.

Around 20 maunds of paddy per bigha was produced this season, he added.

Farmer Humayun Kabir of Pitchuria village in Sadar upazila, said he cultivated Aman paddy on his three bighas of land spending Tk 16,000. "The yield looks very good and I hope to get about 50 maunds of paddy," he said.

BRRI-49, BRRI-51, Paijam (Atap), Abchhaya and Swarna varieties of paddy were cultivated most in the district this year, the SAAO said.

The yield of BRRI-49 variety was better than others and it also ripened earlier. As this variety of rice is tasty, the demand for it is higher than others in the market, he said.

The newly harvested paddy has already started coming to the markets, said Naya Miah, a paddy trader in Sakhipur.

BRRI-49 and BRRI-51 paddy were selling at Tk 700 per maund, Paijam at Tk 700 to Tk 800, Abchhaya at Tk 750 and Swarna at Tk 800 in local markets, he said.

District DAE Deputy Director Abdur Razzak said the bumper Aman production was possible this season as there was no pest attack or flood.



Farmers in Boldhi area under Kalihati upazila of Tangail take home harvested paddy.

PHOTO: COLLECTED