

## LAND DISPUTE IN SHERPUR

# Union parishad chairman shoots farmer to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A farmer was shot dead yesterday allegedly by a union parishad chairman during an altercation over a piece of land in Sherpur's Nalitabari.

Police are looking for Habibur Rahman, Awami League-supported chairman of Jogania Union Parishad over the killing of Idris Ali, 26, of Kuttamara village, said Abul Khayer, officer-in-charge of Nalitabari Police Station.

He added that five other suspects had been detained.

The chairman had a long standing dispute over a piece of land with the victim's family, he said.

Yesterday morning, supporters of the two parties engaged in an altercation over harvesting paddy on the disputed land, the OC added.

At one stage, Habibur shot Idris in the throat. He was taken to Nalitabari Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, the OC said.

Police sent his body to Sherpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

# Kerala offers free flats to homeless people

AGENCIES

The Indian state of Kerala is offering free flats to homeless people, an ambitious model that activists say other states must follow as a nationwide "Housing for All" plan falls short.

The first 145 families moved into their newly constructed flats in a 270-unit complex in Adimali town in southern India this month, a state official said.

The state has surveyed its homeless population, and will build more than

400,000 homes for those who qualify, said U.V. Jose, chief executive of the LIFE Mission, a government agency overseeing the project.

"Those without a home are the poorest, most vulnerable. Many cannot afford to buy a home, no matter how cheap it is," Jose told the Thomson Reuters Foundation yesterday.

"A home is a basic necessity. With a home, they can feel more secure and confident, and they can focus on other matters, which can improve the quality of their life," he said.

# BNP MP-elect takes oath

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changed our decision on joining parliament. We will hold a meeting soon to decide what action we would take as a leader has joined parliament defying the party's decision."

Around noon yesterday, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered the swearing-in of Zahid at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Talking to journalists after the oath ceremony, the BNP lawmaker from Thakurgaon-3 said he took oath voluntarily knowing that he might be expelled from the party.

"People elected me as their representative in parliament. They expect me to take oath and take the responsibility of my constituency and the country."

He said he would stay beside BNP even if it expelled him.

Defending his decision to join parliament, Zahid said he has worked for the party at the field level for 30 years. "This was the fourth time I contested a national election. My constituency [Thakurgaon-3] had been never won by the BNP before the last election since the country's independence."

He said he would speak in parliament demanding release of

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. "She is an elderly woman of 73. I will press for her release for the sake of democracy."

## 'ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE'

Within an hour after the oath ceremony, BNP standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy said Zahid has become a "public enemy" by taking oath violating the party's decision.

"Those who take oath going against the party's decision and keeping its chairperson in jail have no capability to stay with the nationalist force. They are enemies of the people," he said at a human chain programme in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

The BNP-led Jatiya Oikyafront won eight seats in the December 30 national election. Of them, six were won by the BNP and two by the Gonoforum.

Both the Gonoforum leaders -- Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed and Mokabbir Khan -- have already taken oath as lawmaker and joined parliament.

The Jatiya Oikyafront decided not to join the 11th parliament alleging widespread irregularities in the Jatiya Sangsad polls.

# Modhumoti stays illegal

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restore within six months the wetland in Savar's Bilamalia and Bailarpur moujas.

In September 2013, the private firm and buyers of plots in the project lodged five petitions with the SC, seeking a review of its judgment.

Earlier, the SC in a verdict on August 7, 2012, upheld a High Court judgment that had declared illegal the Modhumoti Model Town near Aminbazar.

The apex court directed the authorities concerned to keep the area as a free-flood flow zone.

Metro Makers and Developer Limited developed the housing project, filling up 550 acres of wetland identified as floodplain in the 1997 Dhaka City Master Plan.

The HC on July 27, 2005, declared the project unauthorised, illegal and against public interest. It also said

that the interest of the buyers must be protected.

In August 2004, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) filed a writ petition with the HC as public interest litigation, challenging the legality of the project.

It said the project was developed violating the Environment Conservation Act, Town Improvement Act and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) rules.

In its petition, Bela mentioned that if the project continued, the character of the area would be destroyed and the environment would be polluted.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela, told this newspaper that following the SC order, the Metro Makers and Developer Limited must remove all the earth from the project area and restore the wetland within six months.

# Precautions in place: PM

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precautionary measures," she said.

The PM came up with remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Bonolota Express, a non-stop intercity train service on Dhaka-Rajshahi route, through a videoconference from the Gono Bhaban.

The PM renewed her call to people to stay alert alongside the intelligence and law enforcement agencies against militant attacks.

"Not only the intelligence agencies, but also the country's people will have to remain alert and immediately inform the law enforcement agencies after finding out those who are involved in terror and militant activities. Because, we want peace in the country," she said.

The PM also urged imams across the country to deliver sermons against terrorism and militancy before Juma prayers.

"I want you all to speak up against militancy and terrorism, and highlight Islam as a religion of peace in the next Juma Khutba in every mosques across

the country," she said.

Hasina also called upon the people of the country, particularly guardians, teachers, public representatives, imams of mosques and clerics of different religions to stand collectively against any suspicious militant activity in their respective localities.

Noting that Islam is fully a religion of humanity and peace, she said those who conduct militant and terrorist activities in the name of Islam are giving a bad name to the holy religion across the world.

"So, those who are involved in such activities will have to remain away from these," she said.

Hasina urged the imams across the country to pray for Bangladeshis, including the eight-year-old grandson of Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, and other people who were killed in recent terror attacks in Sri Lanka and New Zealand, after Juma prayers on next Friday.

"We lost Zayan Chowdhury. We don't want to lose any more children in such attacks," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is all smiles as she inaugurates a non-stop train service on the Dhaka-Rajshahi route via a video conference at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

# Prescription now must for antibiotics

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authorities concerned to explain why selling antibiotics without prescriptions from registered doctors should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by SC lawyer Sayedul Haque Suman seeking necessary order on the issue.

Citing the petition, Sayedul said on many occasions antibiotic drugs were reportedly sold to people without prescriptions and excessive use of the medicines made those ineffective.

Quoting a senior doctor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU),

the lawyer in his petition said antimicrobial resistance superbug could be responsible for up to 80 percent deaths in the largest intensive care units of the country.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at the BSMMU, told British daily The Telegraph that 400 out of approximately 900 patients admitted to the BSMMU ICU last year died.

Around 80 percent of those deaths were attributed to bacterial or fungal infections that were resistant to antibiotics, said the physician.

Suman annexed the Telegraph report published on April 22 with the writ petition. The British newspaper referred to a report published in The

Daily Star on April 8.

The report, under the headline "A big cause for health concern", highlighted the overuse of antibiotics behind the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Citing a study, it also stated that 70pc deaths in hospital ICUs were linked to AMR.

Referring to the latest data and analysis of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology (DMI) at BSMMU, the report also stated that superbugs and multi-drug resistant (MDR) bacteria were detected in 6.5 percent cases in 2010.

But it increased to 11-14 percent in 2018.

"It is alarming because the

percentage is increasing faster during the last one year compared to previous years," Prof Ahmed Abu Saleh, head of DMI told The Daily Star.

AMR is a situation when microorganisms like bacteria, virus and some parasites resist medicinal interventions.

At least 55.7 percent residents of the capital have already developed antibiotic resistance due to high level of antibiotic intake through agricultural items, Suman told UNB referring to a Poribesh Bachao Andolon (POBA) report.

Experts have suggested that the government should take immediate measures to stop indiscriminate use of antibiotic drugs.

# Urban sprawl eats up 57pc

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Institute of Planners, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Nijera Kori, Association for Land Reform and Development, and Nodi O Poribesh Unnayan Parishad of Savar at the TIB office.

In the entire 1,528-sqkm jurisdiction of the master plan that includes Tongi, Rupganj, Keraniganj, and Narayanganj, a quarter of the 74,699 acres of legally binding conservable flood flow zones have been filled up in the name of "development", said Adil.

During the same decade, 57 acres of 154-acre water retention area were lost, the urban planners said.

DAP has marked over 1 lakh acres as conservable water bodies, water retention areas, and flood flow zones. At least 22,206 acres of these have been lost this decade, said Adil.

The findings were based on the master plan maps and periodic images from satellites.

Basila, Bashundhara Residential Area, Beraid, Amin Bazar, north Uttara,

Baktarchar of Narayanganj, and areas beside Dhaka-Mawa highway were some of the worst affected parts.

Feroze Ahmed Kanak, research associate of the government-run Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, in his presentation said the government's Amin Bazar landfill was on a designated flood flow zone.

The government had acquired 52 acres but the landfill is now 74 acres, he said, adding that many people of adjoining areas had to leave their ancestral homesteads and livelihoods because of this.

Ishrat Islam, professor of urban and regional planning at Buet, said those responsible for destroying the wetlands must be made accountable.

The grabbers are far more powerful and united than those who fight for conservation, said Ishrat.

Ishrat said she, as a technical expert on DAP revision, sat for a meeting once and realised that the upcoming revised DAP renamed flood flow zones and wetlands to conservation

zone, which has no legal protection. TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said in the name of development, such destructive activities were carried out in

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enforce law to prevent illegal real estate business on wetlands
- Make river and wetland conservation authorities to file annual report
- Assess economic, cultural value of wetlands
- Enforce law on land holding limitation for individuals, companies, organisations
- Hold custodians accountable

connivance with businessmen, law enforcers, and politicians and taking advantage of poor governance.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha,

custodian of the master plan, has been a part of the destructive activities, he said.

Iftekhar said, "Frustrating is the fact that those who we seek the rule of law are involved in undermining the rule of law."

When the country's top court in its verdicts asks a matter be brought to the attention of the prime minister, it shows the court's lack of confidence in the regular mechanism of implementing a verdict, he said.

Isolated filling up makes flood flow zones fragmented and facilitates further land grabbing, said architect Iqbal Habib, adding that tools like satellite images and drones should be used for monitoring wetlands.

Contacted, Rajuk Chairman Md Abdur Rahman last night told The Daily Star, "It needs to be looked into as to why the designated flood flow zones of the capital reduced since 2010. I would be able to comment after that."

Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori and Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela, also spoke at the press conference among others.

# Trouble from transport strike

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be detectives in Chattogram's Patiya upazila. The law enforcers denied their involvement.

In Chattogram, transport workers observed strike in 36 routes, mostly on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar and Chattogram-Dhaka from 6:00pm Wednesday to 12:00 noon yesterday. They imposed the strike on inter-district buses only.

Due to unavailability of buses, many commuters were forced to walk or try other means of transport for reaching their destinations.

Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, told The Daily Star last night that no bus of his company operated on Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Cox's Bazar routes during the strike.

Dinesh Chandra Das, general manger of Shyamoli NR Travels,

echoed Mosharref's comments.

In Rangpur, along with the commuters, businesspeople also suffered as both inter-district buses and goods-laden trucks remained out of operation in the division from 6:00am to 12:00 noon yesterday.

People in four districts in Rangpur division -- Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Panchagarh and Thakurgaon -- suffered the most due to the strike.

**PUBLIC SUFFERINGS**  
Ayon Chakraborty, a master's final-year student of Chittagong College, started from Lohagara upazila of the district for the city around 6:00am yesterday.

It was the last date to fill-up his form and submit the fees for his final examinations.

"I first took a rickshaw and advanced a couple of kilometres. Then I requested a motor-biker to give

me a lift and he agreed," Ayon said.

After several kilometres, Ayon took lift from a private car to reach the city and managed to fill-up his form, Ayon told The Daily Star in front of his college's gate around 12:30pm yesterday.

Meanwhile, sexagenarian Azhar Uddin started from Nabinagar of Brahmanbaria to Chattogram city with fruits, milk and fish of his own farm to visit his son, who lives in the port city.

He failed to get on any vehicle on the road and had to return to his home. He was frustrated.

Elsewhere, a large number of people gathered at Dinajpur Bus Terminal to get tickets of different buses but failed.

Many of them were seen travelling on battery-run three-wheelers to reach their destinations.

"I came out of home to go to Bogura to see my ailing mother. Then

I came to know about the strike at the bus terminal," said Altaf Hossain of Dinajpur's Barabandar area.

People who had to travel for short distances were also seen using battery-run three-wheelers.

**REASONS OF CALLING OFF STRIKE**  
Transport workers in Chattogram postponed their strike as the administrations assured the agitating transport workers that their demands would be met.

Besides, BRTWF, the workers federation in Rangpur, called off their indefinite strike as the DC of Dinajpur assured them that the victim's family would receive Tk 3,000 every month from the government.

Along with that, the victim's family would get Tk 2.5 lakh to build a house and the victim's differently-abled son would be given disabled allowances, the DC promised.

# US sending 'armed soldiers' to Mexico border: Trump

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump said Wednesday the US is sending armed

soldiers to the southern border after Mexican soldiers recently "pulled guns" on US troops, escalating his war of words with Mexico on immigration.

Trump was apparently referring to an April 13 incident in which Mexican

troops reportedly questioned and pointed their weapons at two US troops conducting surveillance on the border.

"Mexico's Soldiers recently pulled guns on our National Guard Soldiers, probably as a diversionary tactic for drug smugglers on the Border. Better not happen again!" he tweeted.

"We are now sending ARMED SOLDIERS to the Border. Mexico is not doing nearly enough in

apprehending & returning!"

Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said his government would analyze the incident, take into account Trump's comments, and act "in keeping with law within the framework of our sovereignty."

"We are not going to fall for any provocation," he told reporters in Mexico City.

"The most important thing is to

tell (Trump) we are not going to fight with the government of the United States. The most important thing is to say we want a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation for the sake of development."

It was unclear if Trump was signalling a new deployment or any change in the way US troops on the border are armed or in the rules under which they operate.