



Leaving a lucrative job in Dhaka, Munjer Alam Manik in Dakkhin Sahar area of Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila found success in farming fish organically.

One man’s venture to eat healthy

Organic food producer Munjer planted papaya, banana, gourd, pumpkin alongside other vegetables on the banks of his fish ponds

RABIUL HASAN DOLLAR, Chapainawabganj

Life had offered Munjer Alam Manik, who used to work at a multinational company, almost all modern amenities in the crowded metropolis of Dhaka. Yet a thought nagged him all the time. “What are we eating,” he would mull frequently about the pervasiveness of adulterated and contaminated food in the capital’s grocery shops and markets.

“After my son’s birth, I became more concerned with food contamination. I wanted to do something about it,” said Munjer. And he did.

The 42-year-old was recounting the story of his success in organic fish farming when this correspondent visited Munjer’s 26-acre farmland at Dakkhin Sahar in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila.

In 2014, Munjer invested Tk 85,000 and leased a pond starting an organic fish farm. Soon he expanded his business,

investing a total of nine lakh taka in four leased ponds on 4.4 acres of land. Within three years, he was earning enough to quit his job in Dhaka and move his family to Chapainawabganj town. Today, the fish farm generates around Tk. 2.5 lakh profit each year.

“Our markets are full of pesticides laden vegetables. It has become a menace for people who cannot get organically farmed fish and vegetables,” said the organic food producer, who also planted papaya, banana, gourd, pumpkin and other vegetables in a planned manner on the banks of the ponds.

“I had just one agenda when I decided to farm organic fish. My aim was to make fresh fish and pesticide free vegetables available to everyone,” he said.

Munjer totally avoids chemical fertilisers, or feeds available in local markets for use in his ponds and vegetable plants.

He feeds the fish in his farm with natural food such as oil cake (residues from compressed oilseeds) and crushed maize.

Fish feeding on natural food grows slowly compared to ones that eat commercially manufactured feed, admits Munjer. However, he produces at a small scale only for the local market and charges a higher price per kg of fish for the quality.

“I paid him only Tk 20 to Tk 30 higher price per kg compared to market price, but I get fresher and better tasting fish than those available in the market,” said one of Munjer’s regular customers, Hasan al Sadi, a businessman of Basuniapatti in Chapainawabganj town.

About 80-90 people, mostly from Chapainawabganj town and villages adjacent to the farm, buys from Munjer.

“My buyers usually buy one week’s worth of fish,” he said adding that the

quantity and frequency of netting the fish depend on customers’ order.

Buyers collect their orders directly from the farm; sometimes, Munjer supplies the fish to the buyers’ house on his own motorcycle.

Different species of carp including- rui, katla, mrigal, silver carp, grass carp, as well as tilapia and clown knife fish are available in the farm.

From dawn to dusk, Munjer supervises the work in his acreage, which also includes a dairy farm. Except for one helping hand, Munjer mostly employs temporary day labourers from the locality as farm hand. Each month around Tk 55,000 is spent behind the four ponds.

Referring to Munjer’s work, Dr Amimul Ehsan, district fisheries officer, said, “Our department highly appreciates him for his organic fish farming.” He hopes it will inspire other young men to take up organic fish farming too.

Mentally ill woman abandoned by mother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A mentally ill young woman, aged around 22 years, was found abandoned two months ago at an ashram near Pabna Mental Hospital in Hemayetpur.

Ever since the woman’s mother secretly left her at Thakur Anukulchandra Satsanga Ashram on June 12, the ashram authorities have been providing shelter to her, who can only identify herself as Nilufar Yasmin Lubna from Chandanaish upazila in Chattogram.

Tapash Kumar Roy, secretary of the ashram, said the institution provides short-term shelter, at no cost, to needy outdoor patients of the mental hospital and their attending family members who cannot afford to stay in paid accommodations for several days.

The ashram, with a capacity of around 10 occupancies, does not allow accommodation to any patient without registering details of her or his family member.

Due to their limitations in providing long-term accommodation, they would like to hand Nilufar over to her family or get her admitted to the mental hospital, Tapash said.

But the ashram authorities are now in a difficult situation as they do not have the resources to confirm her identity and the hospital will not admit anyone without details of an approving family member.

Finding no solution to the situation, the authorities recently filed a general diary with Pabna Sadar Police Station in this regard, he added.

Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station, said in search of the woman’s identity, they already sent her photos to different police stations.

Asked about the admission policy at Pabna Mental Hospital, its Superintendent Dr Shushanto Kumar Das said the hospital admits patients only after getting approval of their family members and their contact details.



Nilufar Yasmin Lubna

ROW OVER PLAYING CRICKET

Schoolboy stabbed, house ransacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A schoolboy was stabbed allegedly by one of his neighbours centring a feud over playing cricket match in Aditmari upazila on Monday night.

The victim, Nayan Chandra Roy, 15, a Class X student at Mahishkhocha High School, was first admitted to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated, said Saiful Islam, acting officer in charge (OC) of Aditmari Police Station.

Quoting locals, OC Saiful said an altercation took place between Nayan, son of Khoka Chandra Roy of Baraibari village, and Ariful Islam, 18, son of Alam Miah of the village, over playing a cricket match on Monday afternoon.

As a sequel to the conflict, Ariful along with some of his cohorts attacked Nayan’s house around 10:00pm the same night.

At one stage, the culprits dragged Nayan out of his room and stabbed him on the stomach with a knife, leaving him severally injured, he said, adding that they also beat up some of the villages when the latter tried to resist the attackers from vandalising Nayan’s house.

Nayan’s father filed a case with Aditmari Police Station yesterday naming 10 people and 20 others unnamed.

Police already detained prime accused Ariful and were conducting drives to arrest the other attackers, OC Saiful said.

Tortured by husband, woman hospitalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A housewife, brutally tortured allegedly by her dowry get husband on Thursday, is now undergoing treatment at Netrakona’s Kalmakanda Upazila Health Complex.

The victim, Tanjila Akter, 22, also mother of a two-year-old girl, filed a case against her husband Salam Mia, 25, a garment worker, with Kalmakanda Police Station yesterday.

Quoting the case statement, Officer in Charge (investigation) of the police station Mohammad Sirajul Islam Khan said Tanjila, daughter of late Firoz Mondol of Bahadurkanda village in the upazila, was married to Salam Mia, son of Atab Mia of Baromara village, in 2016.

Since their marriage, Salam often used to torture his wife both physically and mentally for dowry.

Although, Tanjila somehow managed Tk 50,000 from her poor parents, Salam’s demand did not stop.

Recently, Salam again started pressuring Tanjila to bring Tk 50,000 from her parents, but she denied to do so.

As a sequel, the couple locked in an altercation over the issue on Thursday morning and at one stage, Salam confined Tanjila to a room of his house beat her mercilessly with sticks, leaving her severely injured.

Being informed by neighbours, Tanjila’s brother Kanchan Mondol went to Salam’s house on Sunday, rescued her from the confinement and admitted her at the hospital, the OC said, adding that they were conducting drives to arrest Salam.

Passengers suffer as train schedule in disarray

Eid special train late by 25 hours in Lalmonirhat; intercity trains of West Zone 4 to 10 hours behind schedule

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Disruption in train schedules causes immense sufferings to passengers in several northern districts as a large number of people are on their return journey, especially to the capital Dhaka, for joining work after the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

Around one thousand passengers badly suffered as Lalmonirhat-Dhaka Eid special train, scheduled to depart at 9:30pm on Sunday from Lalmonirhat, finally started from there after long 25 hours, around 10:30pm on Monday night, reports our Lalmonirhat correspondent.

Passengers staged demonstration there on Monday evening as they were yet to know for certain when the train would arrive.

Golam Mostafa, an employee of a non-government office in Dhaka, said he and his family members were waiting for the train at the station from 8:00pm on Sunday night for getting the special train.

“I was asked to join work today [Monday] but I am here at Lalmonirhat as the train is yet to arrive,” he said on Monday afternoon.

“I failed to join my office today [Monday] as the Lalmonirhat-Dhaka Eid Special train is too late,” said Enamul Haque Pramanik, a government service holder in Dhaka.

“I collected tickets for me and four other family members to get on the special train on Sunday night but I got the train a day later. The unusual delay of the Eid Special train caused special suffering to us,” said Mahasin Ali.

Another passenger, Ashraful Islam said his wife got sick at the station platform due to long wait for the train.

On the occasion of Eid, a special train was arranged from August 5 to 10 before the Eid and from August 14 to 18 after the Eid under West Zone Railway’s Lalmonirhat Division.



Tired of waiting since Sunday night for the Dhaka-bound Eid special train at Lalmonirhat station, passengers demonstrate there on Monday evening. Inset, people wait at Dinajpur railway station for their scheduled trains yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Divisional Railway Manager Shafiqur Rahman declined to say why the train was late for 25 hours in the last day journey.

Lalmonirhat station sources, seeking anonymity, said the train was late for 12 hours in the journey and another 13 hours due to a technical fault at the station.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Schedule collapse of almost all the intercity trains under Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway (BR) causes immense sufferings to passengers.

Panchagarh Express intercity train of Dhaka-Panchagarh route was scheduled to reach Dinajpur Railway station at 8:10am yesterday but arrived seven hours later, said Nargis Pramanik, stationmaster of Dinajpur Railway Station.

Ekota Express, which was supposed to reach Dinajpur Railway station at 4:40am yesterday, arrived at 9:35am.

However, all the trains heading for Dhaka departed as per schedule, said the stationmaster.

Dhaka-bound Drutazan Express, which left Panchagarh at 7:20am Tuesday and arrived at Dinajpur station at 9:30am (only 20 minutes behind the schedule) was already overcrowded and many people were seen getting on its roof to go to their destinations.

This correspondent found a large number of people waiting at Dinajpur station since morning to board their scheduled trains.

Other stations in the district also saw huge crowds.

“All the trains of railway’s West

Zone including Panchagarh Express, Rangpur Express, Nilsagar express, Ekota Express, Drutazan Express and Lalmoni Express are now running three to ten hours behind the schedule,” said Aminul Haque Jewel, manager of Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka.

Overloading of passengers and extension of stoppage time are the main reasons for the train schedule collapse, he said.

“The Dhaka-bound trains are carrying three to four times more passengers than their usual capacity while the stoppage time is often extended up to fifteen minutes against the scheduled five minutes, considering safety of passengers. The situation will hopefully improve after a few days,” he added.

GRABBING OF WDB LAND

Taltali Jubo League president sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna court yesterday sent Jubo League’s president of Taltali upazila unit to jail in a case filed for encroachment of land belonging to Water Development Board (WDB) in the upazila town.

Barguna Senior Special Judge’s Court of Md Asaduzzaman delivered the order when Jubo League leader Moniruzzaman Mintu, also former chairman of Taltali Upazila Parishad, surrendered before it and sought bail in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), said advocate Kamrul Ahsan Maharaj, lawyer for the ACC.

Jahangir Alam, deputy director of ACC in Patuakhali, filed the case on June 21, 2018, alleging that Mintu unlawfully took possession of 1.06 acres of WDB land and set up a business named Hawlder Sawmill there.

Mintu then obtained a six weeks’ interim bail from the High Court and later, on September 6 in 2018, he surrendered and secured a permanent bail from Barguna senior judicial magistrate’s court.

On April 10 this year, the ACC submitted charge sheet for the case to the senior judicial magistrate’s court of Barguna. The case was recently transferred to the Barguna senior special judge’s court.

Yesterday, when Mintu surrendered before the Barguna senior special judge’s court and submitted a bail prayer, the court rejected the prayer and sent him to jail, said the ACC lawyer.

Refuting the allegation, Mintu’s lawyer advocate Mojibul Haque Kislul said his client lawfully set up the sawmill after leasing the piece of land from WDB.