



## AL leader shot dead in Kushtia

4 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A local Awami League leader was shot dead and four others with him were injured yesterday in Bheramara, Kushtia.

Siddiqur Rahman Siddique, 50, was the general secretary of a local AL committee in Chandgram area.

He was working at his farm with several others when four or five men arrived and started shooting at them, said Mojibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bheramara Police Station.

After the armed men left, locals rescued the gunshot men and took them to Bheramara Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared Siddique dead.

The injured men were admitted to the hospital.

The OC added that police were looking for the assailants.



A view of the Daborkhali canal in Chattogram's Ichakhali union reveals that large portions of the water body have been filled up. Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority filled up a two-km stretch of the canal, the health of which is critical for irrigation as well as preventing waterlogging, to set up an economic zone. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## LIQUOR MANAGEMENT

# Colonial-era rules discarded, fresh ones in place

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formulated rules to regularise the sale and consumption of alcohol, a move that narcotics control officials believe will generate revenue and make alcohol easily accessible to individuals with permission to drink.

Certain hotels, resorts, and restaurants will be given licence to open bars and sell foreign liquor, which will help flourish tourism by attracting more foreign tourists, said Manjurul Islam, deputy director (preventive education) at the Department of Narcotics Control in the capital.

The new rules replace the Guidance for the Officers of Salt and Excise Department Volume 1 and Volume 2 from 1915 and 1918, Prohibition Rules from 1950 and several notifications issued on different occasions, Manjurul added.

"The new rules are introduced to keep up with the times, changes in the society and the mindset of people," said Manjurul, who was one of the officers who drafted the rules.

The new rules formulated under the Narcotics Control Law 2018 will ensure discipline in sales, marketing, import-export, storage, production, processing and consumption of alcohol, Manjurul said.

Clubs with 100 or more members with permission to drink are now eligible to apply for a liquor licence while those with over 200 such members will be eligible to apply for a licence to open a bar.

Bars will be allowed at export processing zones (EPZ), theme parks, resorts and development projects where foreign citizens reside, according to the new Alcohol Control Rules 2022 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on February 5.

Anyone aged 21 and above will be allowed to apply for permission to drink. The limit for the sales of alcohol to those with permission is three units at a time and seven units in a month.

The rule defines units as 750ml of foreign spirit, 2,250ml of wine, and 15 beer bottles containing 750ml each.

Hotels, restaurants and places serving food and alcohol will be allowed to apply for licences to open bars.

Hotels ranked five star and above will get licences to set up to seven bars; four star hotels up to three bars; three star hotels up to two bars; and two-star hotels one bar.

In the Hill Tracts, indigenous people aged over 21 can drink at home.

Besides, the rules have separate guidelines for homeopathic medicine importers and tea garden workers.

Places that sell alcohol must be closed on Fridays, Muharram, Shab-e-Baraaat, Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Shab-e-Kadar, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha and any government holidays.

Alcohol can be imported from any country that has trade relations with Bangladesh to supply liquor. No taxes will be imposed for export of locally produced alcohol.

Liquor bottles sold in the country must have health warnings.

Beer cannot be produced without following a procedure prescribed by the government.

Foreign remittance earners duty-free shops can import alcohol.

Restaurants, hotels, clubs or bars will be able to buy 40 per cent of their alcohol from Bangladesh

**"This will flourish tourism as alcohol will be available at tourist spots. It will generate revenue and alcohol will be easily accessible to permit holders."**

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Know your deshi 'superfoods':

## ASHWAGANDHA

STAR HEALTH DESK

Ashwagandha (withania somnifera) is an herbal shrub, the roots and berries of which are used for medicinal properties.

The herb has been revered by practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine for ages.

The following are some of its common usages:

Ashwagandha is known to relieve stress and anxiety. It is considered to be an adaptogen — a substance which helps the body cope with stress.

Consumption of the herb may help increase muscle strength. The herb may also enhance athletic performance during exercise.

It may reduce symptoms of mental health conditions like depression.

Some found ashwagandha to be helpful in reducing blood sugar levels and triglycerides, thus helping diabetes patients keep sugar in control.

The herb may help sharpen cognitive ability, focus and memory.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# A canal chokes as an economic zone emerges

Bepza fills up 2km stretch of Daborkhali canal in Ctg with no DoE clearance; 5,000 farmers affected

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Daborkhali Canal in Chattogram's Ichakhali union is at the risk of dying after Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (Bepza) has filled up around a two-km stretch of the critical water body to set up an economic zone.

The occupation, which began about three years ago, has stopped the canal's water flow completely, affecting more than 5,000 farmers in Mirsarai upazila who depend on the canal for irrigation of their farmland.

The canal is directly linked to the Bay of Bengal, and so protects the area from waterlogging as it carries the rainwater almost instantly to the Bay during monsoon.

But the massive destruction of the canal has resulted in a crisis of irrigation water and heavy waterlogging in the area, posing a serious threat to livelihoods and the environment.

Bepza leased 1,150 acres of land in Mirsarai from Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (Beza) to establish an economic zone under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN), said officials of the Department of Environment.

Bepza, a state agency, obtained

clearance from the DoE to set up the economic zone but has no permission to alter the shape of the canal in any way, officials said.

According to the Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act 2000, all canals and natural water bodies must be preserved by the state.

"The project authorities obtained clearance from the environment department to set up the economic zone, but the problem is they did not mention anything about filling up the canal," Mufidul Alam, DoE director of Chattogram region, told The Daily Star recently.

"Filling up of any canal is a punishable offence under the existing law and action will be taken against those who filled up the canal without permission," he added.

This correspondent recently visited the area and saw around two kilometres of the canal filled up from Bay of Bengal's entry point to a neighbourhood known as Ek Hazar Feet Road Intersection.

Mirsarai Upazila Agriculture Officer Ragnath Naha said cultivation of over 3,000 acres of land depends on this canal water, and around 5,000 farmers are directly involved in farming in the area.

"But due to the water crisis, farmers can no longer irrigate their land, which is

affecting the upazila's paddy production target," he said.

Echoing his view, Ichakhali Union Parishad Chairman Nurul Mostafa said, "The canal is dying due to the unplanned work. We are not against the project, but the authorities should leave the canal alone for the sake of the environment and farm production."

The land along the canal has long been known as highly fertile where farmers cultivated three crops a year for generations. But due to the crisis of irrigation water, only one crop can be grown now, said local farmers, many of whom have been forced to take up other livelihood options such as daily labour.

"For the last two years, we could not grow Aus or Aman paddy due to the severe water crisis," said Belayet Hossain, a farmer from Charsarat village.

The destruction of the canal has also complicated the waterlogging problem in the area as monsoon water cannot as easily fall into the Bay because of the earth-filling and a newly-erected embankment on the canal, locals and officials said.

Aliur Rahman, general secretary of Movement to Protect Rivers and Canals of Chattogram, said they held several human

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## Memory's door

MOHAMMAD SULTAN

In response to Khwaja Nazimuddin's declaration on January 27, 1952 that only Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan, an all-out strike was organised in all schools and colleges in Dhaka on February 4.

The day after Nazimuddin's declaration, the Khyber Mail (a newspaper from the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan) published in their editorial that Urdu cannot be the only state language of Pakistan. Next day I put the cutting of Khyber Mail's editorial on the university's notice board.

I think it was on February 4 that Muslim girls, for the first time after the birth of Pakistan, skipped schools and joined a procession. That day there were two meetings: one was in support of the language

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Jubilant Comilla Victorians players and crew celebrate winning the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League title with a pulsating one-run win over Shakib Al Hasan-led Fortune Barishal in the final, one of the most thrilling title deciders in the tournament's history, at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Narine blazes Comilla to third BPL title

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A late twist saw Comilla Victorians snatch the game away from

Fortune Barishal's grasp and secure a slender one-run victory to ensure their third Bangladesh Premier League title at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Sunil Narine was the star with an inspirational performance with bat and ball. After a 23-ball 57 helped Comilla post 151 for nine, the West Indies all-rounder returned impressive figures of two for 15 in four overs to guide Comilla to glory.



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