

Two traders fined for selling onions at higher price

UNB, Ctg

A mobile court of Chattogram District Administration has started drives to control the onion market due to the rampant increase in prices across the country.

Yesterday, it fined Meher Ali Traders and Mohammad Ali Ahmad Traders Tk 20,000 for selling onions at an increased rate and for irregularities such as not keeping receipts.

The market monitoring team and a mobile court conducted the drive from 3:00pm to 6:00pm under the supervision of Chattogram District Administration's Assistant Commissioner (Land) and Executive Magistrate Md Omar Faruk in Khatunganj.

"Our monitoring will continue. Additionally, efforts are going on to ensure that the prices of consumer goods do not increase under the pretext of reduced supply," he said.



An old woman sits near the bank of the Teesta, grieving for what was once her home. Like her, river erosion has left 12,500 families homeless in the last 10 years in Lalmonirhat. With nowhere else to go, many have been forced to live on the streets or in homes constructed on WDB embankments.

PHOTO: STAR

RIVER EROSION IN LALMONIRHAT

12,500 families left homeless in 10 years

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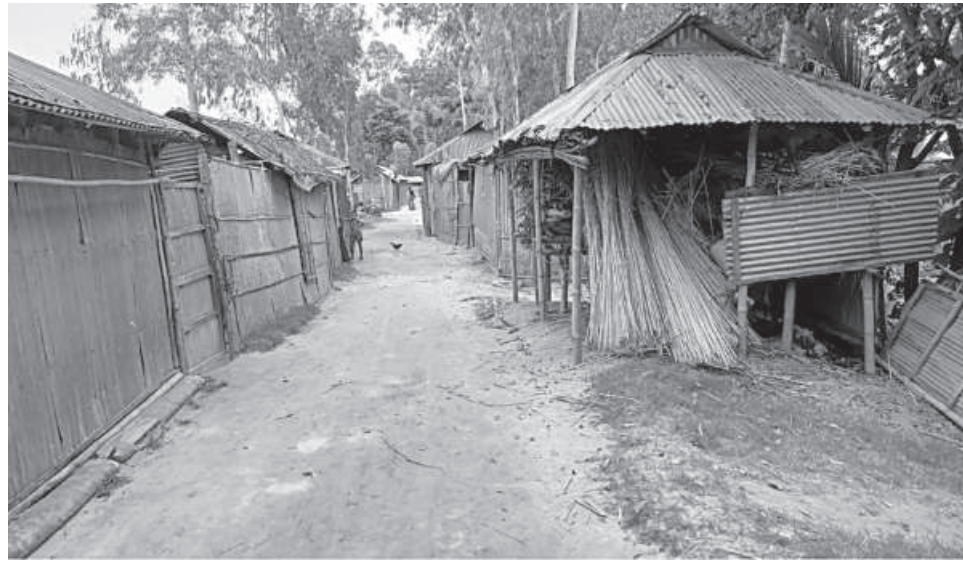
Narendra Nath Barman often visits the bank of the Teesta. Tears roll down his eyelids as the 75-year-old stands silently on the riverbed in Rajpur village of Lalmonirhat Sadar—a place he once called home.

Once a prosperous man, Narendra now lives with one of his four sons Sridhar and his wife stays with their other son Bhabesh, as all his children now live in separate homes constructed on the Water Development Board dyke.

"We had 25 bighas of land which were enough to support my family. But everything is gone now," said Narendra.

Losing the last 10 bighas of arable land in the past decade, the couple now has nowhere to go and cannot afford two square meals every day.

Same is the state of Narendra's neighbours



old erosion victim from Falimari village of the upazila, 300 acres of arable land was lost to Dharla River erosion, affecting around 300 families.

Same is the condition in Sindurna village in Hatibandha upazila, as 80 families there now live separately as Teesta devoured over 150 acres of arable land in the last 3-4 years, said Nazrul Islam, a 56-year-old resident of the village.

According to District Relief and Rehabilitation Office, Department of Agriculture Extension, WDB and Education Office sources, Teesta and Dharla erosion has affected over 12,500 families in the last decade, devouring over 9,000 acres of arable land.

"A total of 22 of 45 unions in the district are victims of erosion, with 80 percent among the affected being farmers in Teesta and Dharla shoal areas. Two bundles of tin and Tk 5,000 in cash have been given to each family for rehabilitation," she added.

Mashiur Rahman, chairman of Dawabari Union Parishad in Hatibandha, said around 4,000 families in his union were affected by erosion of the Teesta over the last decade. While some have received government

assistance, the number is far less than needed.

Habibur Rahman, chairman of Moghalhat Union Parishad in Lalmonirhat Sadar said about 900 families in his union have suffered the same fate due to Dharla erosion in the last ten years. They now live on abandoned railway lines, dykes and roads.

Mofazzal Hossain Mofa, chairman of Rajpur Union Parishad of Sadar upazila said 70 percent of the 5,000 Teesta erosion-affected families in his union are now living in poverty.

Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of WDB in Lalmonirhat, said 20-22 points of Teesta and Dharla shoal areas in the district experience erosion every year. Around Tk 200 crore has been spent to monitor and prevent erosion in the last 10 years.

Shafiqul Islam, president (Lalmonirhat) of Teesta Bachao Nodi Bachao Sangram said, "River erosion is the main reason for the impoverishment of riverside people. If things do not change, thousands of families will lose everything."

Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Jannatara Ferdous said, "Victim families are being offered assistance as per government allocation."

Tamizi sent to rehab for mental health test: DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Haque Group Chairman Adam Tamizi Haque has been sent to a rehabilitation centre for a mental health test, where doctors are examining him, said DB chief Harun Or Rashid yesterday.

This comes after a case was filed against Tamizi under the Digital Security Act for allegedly burning a Bangladeshi passport on Facebook Live.

"If the doctors say he is mentally unbalanced, then we have nothing to do. But if he did it intentionally, then we will investigate whether there is someone else behind it or not," Harun told reporters at his office in the capital's Minto Road.

He said Tamizi said various incoherent things on social media. He also accused the government of conspiring against him. Tamizi was taken to the DB office for interrogation around 10:00pm on Saturday. On November 16, Rab raided his house in Gulshan, reports UNB.

Rab said Tamizi was threatening to take his own life if he was arrested.

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Gadli Bala, 70; Josna Bala, 72; and Suren Chandra Roy, 75; who now live on government roads after losing 12, nine and 15 bighas of cultivable land in the last nine years.

Once living as a happy family, Gadli now has to fight for food on her plate.

"My husband Binod died of a heart attack eight years ago when we lost everything to erosion. My sons relocated to Dhaka with their families. It is just me that remains here now," she said.

Unable to salvage their belongings, many other erosion victims, who once owned fruit orchards and farmlands, have also resorted to begging to survive.

According to Baktiar Rahman, a 65-year-

BENAPOLE PORT
TCB yet to unload 90 tonnes of imported onions

UNB, Dhaka



Amid surging prices of onions throughout the country, 90 tonnes of onions are waiting to be unloaded after imports from India through Benapole port five days ago.

Meanwhile, as the bulbs have been kept in the truck for a long time, the onions have already started to rot, according to the port authorities.

Benapole Quarantine Plant Monitoring Officer Hemanta Kumar Sarkar said on December 5, the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) imported 90 tonnes of onion.

However, the shipment has not been unloaded yet.

Santosh Mondal, an Indian truck driver who brought the onions, said he has been waiting at the Benapole port for the last five days with onion trucks. "The onions are getting rotten, but none is coming to unload those," he added.

Rezaul Karim, director of Benapole port, said 90 tonnes of onions imported by the TCB has been left in the port for the last five days.

Prices of onion increased by Tk 100 or more per kg overnight as traders began stockpiling following the news that India had extended a virtual restriction on its export.

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FREEDOM FIGHTERS' MINIMUM AGE
SC adjourns appeal hearing till Jan 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned till January 14 next year the hearing on 18 appeals regarding fixing the minimum age of freedom fighters during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

The appeals were filed by the government in 2019, 2021 and this year challenging a High Court verdict which declared illegal the government circulars and gazette notifications which fixed the minimum age of freedom fighters at 12 and a half years in 1971.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, yesterday passed the adjournment order after Assistant Attorney General Abantee Nurul sought time on behalf of the government for placing arguments.

Following several petitions, the HC on May 19, 2019 delivered the verdict saying that the circulars and gazette notifications and the section concerned of the Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust law regarding the freedom fighters' age are illegal and contradictory to the constitution.

2 die as car smashes into road divider

OWN CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two people in a Dhaka-bound car died after the vehicle smashed into a road divider on the Dhaka-Tangail highway in the Palli Bidyut area of Gazipur's Kaliakair upazila around 4:00am yesterday.

The deceased — Abu Taher, 45, of Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila, and Ibrahim, 36, of Lakshmipur Sadar upazila — died on the spot, said Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Naojor Highway Police Station.

The accident occurred due to dense fog limiting visibility on the highway, said police.



FROM CANDIDATES' AFFIDAVITS

Nasrul Hamid has Tk 15cr loans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The loans of State Minister Nasrul Hamid have increased by around Tk 10 crore in the last five years, according to the affidavit he submitted to the EC ahead of the 12th national polls.

In the affidavit, Hamid, incumbent lawmaker and AL candidate from Dhaka-3 constituency and state minister for the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, mentioned that he has loans worth Tk 15.29 crore, while according to the affidavit he submitted in 2018, he had loans worth Tk 5.59 crore.

Hamid's annual income has increased in the last five years, as his current income stands at Tk 1.98 crore per year, while the amount was Tk 77.36 lakh in 2018.

According to the affidavits, his wife's yearly income has also increased, as it has gone up to Tk 1.02 crore in 2023 from Tk 21.20 lakh in 2018.

Hamid's movable assets have also increased in five years, as the amount has soared up to Tk 4.09 crore from Tk 1.92 crore, based on the affidavits.

His wife's movable assets have also increased, amounting to Tk 1.68 crore in 2013, compared to Tk 91.61 lakh in 2018.



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Shambhu's wealth goes up by 4 times since 2018

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu, five-time Awami League lawmaker of Barguna-1 constituency, saw his wealth multiplied by four times since 2018, as per his affidavit.

The affidavit mentioned that Shambhu and his wife at present have total movable and immovable assets worth Tk 8.50 crore including their annual incomes. In 2018, the figure was Tk 2.34 crore.

Shambhu did not provide any information on two houses he owns in Barguna. He mentioned that his wife Madhavi Debnath owns two apartments worth Tk 29.45 lakh and Tk 53.24 lakh.

In 2018, Shambhu showed income of Tk 20.60 lakh from legal profession, Tk 91,836 in bank interests and Tk 33 lakh honorarium as a lawmaker. This year, his income from legal profession decreased by Tk 10.15 lakh, but bank interests increased to Tk 12.62 lakh, while he received Tk 32 lakh as lawmaker's honorarium.

Shambhu now possesses Tk 2 lakh in cash, Tk 33.80 lakh in bank deposits, Tk 45.22 lakh in FDR, and Tk 22.47 lakh in savings. In 2018, the figures were Tk 1.30 lakh cash, Tk 20 lakh, and Tk 60,000 respectively.

In 2018, Shambhu owned a pistol and a shotgun worth Tk 64,000, but now he has a 22-bore rifle and a pistol worth Tk 2 lakh.



Faraji's wealth increases 3-fold since 2018

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Rustum Ali Faraji, four-time lawmaker from Pirojpur-3 constituency, saw his wealth increase by around threefold since 2018, according to his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission ahead of the upcoming national polls.

Faraji's affidavit revealed that he now possesses Tk 30,00,000 in cash, compared to Tk 12,50,000 in 2018.

His income from agriculture sector has also increased from Tk 65,000 in 2018 to Tk 2,10,000 this year.

His earnings from other sources, however, decreased. According to his affidavit, his earning from savings certificate was Tk 71,990 in 2018 it is zero this year. Overall, he earned Tk 1,29,482 from other sources in 2018, but Tk 57,191 this year.

His other assets, including saved money with bank, gold ornaments, and land assets have remained almost same as 2018.

Faraji's wife possesses Tk 50,000 in cash but has no other asset, according to the affidavit.

Faraji contested the 2018 national election as a Jatiya Party candidate under the Awami League-led 14-party alliance. This year he will contest the polls as an independent candidate as JP did not nominate him.



Shimul, wife both see rise in assets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Both Shafiqul Islam Shimul and his wife have witnessed a significant increase in their assets over the last five years, according to the affidavit he submitted to the EC for the upcoming polls.

According to the affidavit, Shimul, an incumbent lawmaker and AL candidate from Natore-2 constituency, owns movable and immovable assets worth over Tk 4.65 crore, while the worth of his movable and immovable assets amounted to Tk 3.83 crore in 2018, based on the affidavit he submitted ahead of the 11th parliamentary elections.

His assets include cash, bank deposits, investments in postal and savings certificates, motor vehicles, gold ornaments, lands, and houses.

Shimul claimed himself to be a businessman in the latest affidavit, while in 2018, he said he was a 'first class contractor and supplier' by profession.

Meanwhile, according to the affidavits, his wife owns assets worth over Tk 7.57 crore, while the amount was Tk 1.85 crore five years ago. Her profession wasn't mentioned in the affidavits.

Shimul had loans worth around Tk 66 lakh in 2018, but now he doesn't have any loans based on the 2023 affidavit.

