



Waste materials being dumped in an open space just beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway by Trishal Municipality in Mymensingh as there is no designated site in the town for garbage dumping. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## TRISHAL MUNICIPALITY

# Waste dumping pollutes SUTIA RIVER

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Indiscriminate dumping of household waste materials beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway in Trishal upazila has become a nuisance for local residence, thanks to the indifference of the authorities concerned.

Local people alleged that though they have protested the hazardous act, which has been continuing for the last 10 years or so, no necessary step has been taken in this regard yet.

They said the municipal authorities collect the household garbage every day and dumped those on the bank of the Sutiya river near Naudhar area.

The mindless dumping of waste materials along the river bank is not only polluting the water of the adjacent river it is also posing threat to local environment.

Though the garbage is being piled-up at different spots along the river bank for years, the municipality authorities are seemed reluctant to check the menace.

Like Sutiya river, a few other rivers including Khiru, Banar and Pagalia also flow through the upazila town and fall into the Old Brahmaputra river, they further said.

Alongside land grabbing issues, Sutiya is



also facing serious pollution due to the unplanned waste dumping beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway, Ariful Islam of Naudhar area said.

Such irresponsible act by the municipality authorities not only creates nuisance, but also poses serious health threats to thousands of people traveling to and from Dhaka, he added.

While talking to this correspondent a number of local residents said the small rivers like Sutiya Khiru, Banar and

Pagalia are considered as the lifeline of agriculture and ecological balance of the nearby locality, but the four rivers are being left neglected for years.

Once these rivers were great sources for irrigation water and considered as safe habitats for local fish varieties, but now those have become narrow fountains, covered with water hyacinth, they lamented.

Local businessman Abu Musa said during the monsoon the pile of garbage

is washed away by the rain water into the river.

Advocate Nazrul Islam Chunnu, convener of Jonoudyog Mymensingh, a citizens' forum, said the authorities concerned cannot ignore the consequences of the environment, ecology and health hazards.

Established in 1998, the municipality, covering 15.49 square kilometres area, with around 40,000 dwellers could not manage a designated waste dumping ground in the last 25 years.

Azharul Islam, a councillor at Trishal Municipality, said workers engaged by the municipality collect around 10 tonnes of garbage every day and dumped those on the bank of the Sutiya river beside the highway as there is no designated dumping spot.

Admitting the act, the councillor said as there is no dustbin or any designated garbage dumping spot in the town, the municipality authorities have been disposing the waste materials on the river bank for the last few years.

Trishal Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Juwel Ahmed said they have taken initiatives to stop the environment pollution and grabbing of river land at any cost.

## GRASS CUTTER MACHINES

# Made in Kotchandpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jhenidah*

Several workshops in Kotchandpur upazila are thriving by selling grass-cutter machines to different areas across the country.

Around 95 percent of the machines selling across the country come from Kotchandpur, while the rest are manufactured in Jashore, workshop owners said.

Farmers are highly benefitted as the machines save their time and labours.

There are around 20 workshops on both sides of Kaliganj-Jibannagar road, displaying hundreds of grass-cutter machines.

Owners of those workshops said they make five kinds of machines of different sizes and prices, including box machine (large) for Tk 28,000, box machine (small) for Tk 25,000, motor machine (small) for Tk 16,000, and motor machine (large) for Tk 20,000.

They supply the machines to Jhenaidah town, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia and Magura districts.



Several workshops in Jhenidah's Kotchandpur upazila providing grasscutters to nearby districts.

PHOTO: STAR

"We collect raw materials from Jashore. Around 17 to 18 workers in my workshop sell around 120 to 150 machines every month," said Aktarul Islam, owner of Aktar Engineering Workshop.

Another workshop owner Altaf Hossain said the business flourished recently and is a profitable one. He now sells 120 to 140 machines monthly.

Shimul Hossain of Enayetpur village in the upazila said he purchased a grass-cutter machine for Tk 16,000.

"The machine saves my time. Earlier, I would spend one and half hours preparing fodder for my cattle, but it takes only 10 minutes now," he said.

Amirul Islam, a wholesale trader in Jhenaidah town, said the machines made in Kotchandpur are very popular.

Quality raw materials are used to make these machines that have a demand as well.

Sohanur Rahman, a trader from Kushtia, said he collects 200 machines from Jhenaidah in each lot and sells those within a short time. Jhenaidah Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Asgar Ali said, "The grasscutter machine has brought a radical change in cattle farming. It can help the farmers prepare a huge quantity of fodder in a short time."

# NEWS

## EC to brief foreign envoys on January 4

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2014, and 2008.

They said the EC took the initiative as many foreign countries and international organisations are interested about the January 7 polls.

During their meetings with the chief election commissioner, many ambassadors and mission chiefs had enquired about the polls atmosphere.

The ruling Awami League and its 14-party alliance partners are among the 27 political parties taking part in the election.

Seventeen political parties, including the major opposition BNP, are boycotting the polls saying that a free and fair election is not possible under the incumbent government.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal on December 18 said he

would not comment on whether the January 7 polls would be accepted nationally and internationally.

"I am not going to comment on that. We'll see after the election," he said when asked about whether there would be any problem regarding

**Seventeen political parties, including the major opposition BNP, are boycotting the polls saying that a free and fair election is not possible under the incumbent government.**

the national and international acceptance of the polls.

The CEC on November 27 said the upcoming election should be free, fair, and credible for the sake of the

country's economy and future.

He said it is unfortunate some countries are "trying to meddle in the polls".

The US and some other countries have been stressing on free and fair elections. The US on May 24 imposed visa restrictions on Bangladeshis who undermine the democratic election process.

The European Union exploratory mission visited Bangladesh from July 6-22 while the US joint mission of the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) toured Bangladesh from October 8-11.

Based on the report of the exploratory mission, the EU decided not to send a full observer mission. The EU later said they would send a four-member observer team to monitor the polls.

## Three Jubo League activists

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connection, police will take action, said Ahmed Sanzur Morshed, the OC of Chandina Police Station.

In the Natore-4 constituency, a supporter of independent aspirant Asif Abdullah Bin Kuddas,

was assaulted allegedly by Gurdaspur Municipality Mayor Shahnewaz Ali Mollah and his associates in Chachkoid market area yesterday afternoon.

Shahnewaz, a supporter of AL candidate Siddiqur Rahman Patwary, denied the allegation.

OC Ujjal Hossain of Gurdaspur Police Station said he received a written complaint to this end and legal action will be taken after investigation.

In another incident, a differently-abled person, Sultar Mia, 60, a supporter of an independent candidate, was beaten up allegedly by

those of AL candidate at Charitabari Bazar in Aditamari upazila on Sunday night.

In Patuakhali, a Sramik League leader was stabbed allegedly by his rivals over an intra-party feud in Kalapara upazila on Sunday night.

The victim, Sajib Mridha, 35, was a former vice-president of the Kalapara upazila unit Sramik League.

One was detained for interrogation, said OC Ali Ahmed of Kalapara Police Station.

In another incident, a campaign office of AL candidate for Faridpur-4 Kazi Zafarullah was vandalised allegedly by followers of independent candidate Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, popularly known as Nixon Chowdhury, in Doskhin Kalamridha village of Bhanga upazila on Sunday night.

AL candidate's men alleged that Badal Hossain, a member of

Kalamridha Union Parishad and a follower of Nixon Chowdhury, led the attack.

However, Badal could not be contacted over the phone.

A written complaint was filed in this connection and police are investigating it, said Inspector Proddut Sarker of Bhanga Police Station.

In the Barishal-5 constituency, independent candidate Md Salahuddin Ripon yesterday filed a written complaint with the office of the returning officer alleging that supporters of the AL candidate threatened his followers and obstructed them from campaigning.

However, AL candidate Zahid Farooq denied the allegation.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

## Independent has edge over AL candidate

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The one thing Faisal lacks is the AL's electoral symbol.

Several local AL leaders, requesting anonymity, said Mrinal is somewhat alienated from the local leaders even though he became the Munshiganj-3 MP twice.

"He doesn't have any support from his party colleagues. He became an MP uncontested and without any vote being cast. Activists have never valued him, and they never will," Afzar Uddin Bhuiya, president of Munshiganj Sadar AL, told a rally last week.

Men who are close to Mrinal acknowledge that he tried his best to get more involved in local politics,

but his rivalry with Faisal's father Mohiuddin has been an impediment.

The rivalry between Mrinal and Mohiuddin began before the 2014 national election when the AL chose the former to be the MP over the latter.

As supporters of the two leaders engaged in violent clashes in the last four days, at least 14 people were injured.

On their campaign trails, both Mrinal and Faisal are making promises of development in the area.

Faisal is saying that the area needs development work because Mrinal has hardly done anything as an MP while Mrinal is seeking another

chance to "finish the ongoing development initiatives".

According to locals and civil society members, residents of the area are enthusiastic about the election mostly because they believe there will be "real competition between the two AL leaders".

Contacted, Faisal said, "He [Mrinal] has not kept the party leaders close to him because of his arrogance. That's why he lacks the popularity that I have."

There are 4,80,241 voters in Munshiganj-3.

However, Mrinal has claimed that some members of his party have been spreading lies about him.