

Watermelon in fish farms

A game changer for farmers in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Around 6,200 farmers across nine upazilas of Khulna have been cultivating off-season watermelon on approximately 919 hectares of land in fish farms.

This innovative method has boosted yields, profits, and enthusiasm among farmers.

In Dumuria upazila alone, around 2,250 farmers are growing watermelon on nearly 305 hectares of fish farms, producing 30-35 tonnes per hectare.

The total production in the upazila is estimated to be worth around Tk 40 crore, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension.

During a visit to several integrated farms in Dumuria, this correspondent saw watermelon being cultivated on raised bamboo platforms along fish enclosures, with fruits wrapped in net bags to protect them from pests and damage.

The watermelon variety, "Asha", starts yielding fruit within 60-62 days and can often be harvested three times per season. This dark-green variety has seen rising demand, especially when regular watermelons are unavailable.

"I cultivated 'Asha' on 40 decimals of land along my fish enclosures. The fruits weigh 4-8 kg and sell for Tk 35-40 per kg. I spent around Tk 25,000

and have already sold watermelons worth Tk 1,20,000. Traders come to us, so we don't need to take the produce to market," said Mirtunjoy, a local farmer.

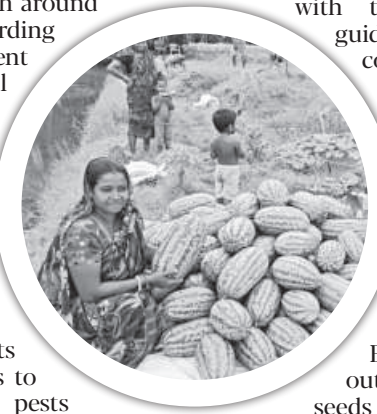
Farmer Afzal Hossain added, "It's a profitable crop with minimal cost and effort. Even heavy rains cause little damage due to the elevated banks of the enclosures."

A similar scenario was observed in Batiaghata upazila.

Md Insad Ibne Amin, Dumuria's upazila agriculture officer, said a decade ago, farmers were unfamiliar with this method. "With guidance from DAE and cooperation among themselves, farmers have profited from integrated fish farming and watermelon cultivation," he said.

Pintu Mallik, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Batiaghata, pointed out that watermelon seeds are imported from countries like Thailand, Japan, and India, though high seed costs and limited storage facilities are challenges.

Kazi Jahangir Hossain, deputy director of DAE in Khulna, said the practice has positively impacted the region's agriculture and economy but emphasised the need for affordable, improved seed varieties and better storage facilities.





Locals carry fishing traps home after purchasing them from a market in Khulna. These traps are typically placed in water when canals overflow during the monsoon season, catching various native fish such as puti, bele, and taki. The demand for such traps rises during the rainy season, with prices ranging from Tk 800 to Tk 1,200 depending on size and quality. This photo was taken at Phultala upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Incomplete work, full payment

Contractors withdraw bill for unfinished Ratnai river dam work

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Allegations of widespread irregularities have surfaced in connection with the work on a river protection embankment on Ratnai river in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

Even though only around 25 percent of the work has been completed so far, the contractors went on to withdraw the total bill for the project.

Officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board said the work to place geotextiles and dump sand-filled geo-bags along the 200-metre embankment at a cost of Tk 20 lakh began in May-June 2023.

Asaduzzaman Nannu, a local Awami League leader and also chairman of Durgapur union parishad, and Ershad Ali, brother of former social welfare minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed's APS Mizanur Rahman, got the work as contractors.

Till June 2023, the contractors only placed geotextiles on the embankment but did not

dump sand-filled geo-bags, thereby leaving most of the work incomplete. However, they collected the entire bill, while abandoning the rest of the work.

"The incomplete work left the embankment vulnerable. Eventually the river breached the embankment recently and devoured seven

Anwar Hossain, a local UP member, alleged that Ershad had abused political influence to get away with the irregularities even though he was repeatedly urged to complete the work for the embankment.

Ershad declined to comment in this regard. Asaduzzaman is on the run since the fall of the AL



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Need proper

FROM PAGE 5 of proper reformation," he added.

Shafiqur also said they have forgiven Awami League for oppressing their party, but they will never forgive the mass killings conducted by the AL government. "We want justice for every killing," he said.

The party's district unit ameer Abu Taleb Mondol chaired the rally.

Earlier, Sahfiqur met with the families of the martyred students during the student movement in Pabna.

122 incidents of attacks since

FROM PAGE 3 for Minority Affairs, upgrading the Hindu Religious Welfare Trust to Hindu Foundation, upgrading the Buddhist and Christian welfare trusts to foundations as well, introducing laws for the recovery and protection of Debottor (religious endowment) properties, properly implementing the Vested Property Return Act, and extending the Durga Puja holiday to five days.

Addressing the briefing, Antu Roy, convener of the platform, claimed none of these attacks were politically motivated. "The current interim government, media, and police administration are all trying to cover up these incidents by labelling those as politically motivated attacks," he alleged.

"That's why we have compiled this list through field investigations. We visited these locations to verify the incidents first hand. However, the incidents reported from Khulna have not been included yet, as our probe is still ongoing there," he said.

Antu Roy demanded security for members of the minority communities, as well as justice and compensation for the victims of communal attacks. Representatives of the platform Bakul Barman, Susmita Kar, Sukanto Barman, Banamali Barman, also Linkon Datta also spoke.

Interim govt

FROM PAGE 3 "Today, the responsibility for bringing positive change should not rest solely on the shoulders of the interim government. Every citizen must play a part," he said.

He further warned that while the "autocratic government" has been ousted, a few oligarchs who collaborated with it may attempt to regain influence by using vast amounts of money.

Prominent economist, Anu Muhammad, criticised the recently ousted Awami League government for trying to maintain power by appeasing the military and several business groups. He argued that the interim government lacks a clear roadmap or specific targets in its action plan and expressed concern over recent attacks on minority communities. "Why should minorities feel insecure? We have not seen any effective measures addressing this issue," he said.

The book review programme was centred on Songkote Gonotontro (Democracy in Crisis), authored by senior journalist Amir Khasru.

Several writers, retired military officers, and journalists were present.

Two more

FROM PAGE 5 admitted their involvement in the killing, Rab added.

Later, the army filed a case with Chakaria Police Station regarding the arrests.

With these latest arrests, a total of nine people have been arrested in connection with the murder of Lt Tanjim, Officer-in-Charge Manzur Kader Bhuyan told The Daily Star.

The Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR), in a statement yesterday, said at least 17 people were involved in the killing.

Five locally made guns, 14 rounds of bullets, and a knife have been recovered from the arrestees so far. The Bangladesh Army will continue to conduct operations to arrest the other robbers involved in the killing, the ISPR statement added.



Office of the Natore Pourashava

Natore

Memo No.Nat: Pou/Engr: Div/ADB/2024/1619

Date: 26/09/2024

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-2025

Limited Tendering Method(LTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal(<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of works as stated as below:

SL No	ID Tender	Package No.	Name of works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & opening Date & Time
1	1017531	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-1	Rehabilitation of BC road starting from Hajra Natore behind of Collector School to Alwo NGO (Ch 0.0 to 234.0m) In ward no 03, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025		
2	1017563	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-2	Maintenance of BC road at Bongojol Rajebari staff quarter (Ch 0.0 to 186.5m) in ward no 01, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		
3	1017569	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-3	(a) Maintenance of BC at Natore Pourashava Premises (Ch 0.0 to 13.4m) in ward no 06. (b) Maintenance of BC road starting from Molikhathi Ghose Para more to Fanchi Semal factory (Ch 0.0 to 180.0m) in ward no 05 (c) Maintenance of BC road at Borohoripur Gunarigam road in front of zomzom towar (Ch 0.0 to 76.5m) In ward no-03 under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		
4	1017571	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-4	Maintenance of pump house Roof at (a) Horishpur Chairman road ward no 03 (b) Horishpur Mola bazar ward no 03 (c) Potuapara Jolkol pump no 01 ward no 02 (d) Potuapara pump no 02 ward no 02 (e) Rothbari ward no 01 (f) Alipur upshore ward no 06 (g) Molikhathi PTI ward no 05 (h) Kandivita ward no 05 (i) Alipur DPHE pump no 01 ward no 06 (j) Alipur DPHE pump no 02 ward no 06 (k) Chockbodho nath para ward no 09 (l) Maintenance of roof at Pouro Bhaban ward no 06 (m) Construction of CC road starting from Kanikhali Adv. Khogandonath house to North direction Goradar house (Ch 0.0 to 59.5m) in ward no 04 under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.	14/10/2024 at 15.00pm	15/10/2024 at 12.00pm
5	1017577	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-5	Construction of RCC Drain starting from Bolaripara Shanto Tailars to Existing RHD Drain (Ch 0.00 to 46.0m) in ward no 03, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (The bill will be paid when fund revived)

(Md. Abdul Malek)
Executive Engineer
Natore Paurashava,

12 years on, justice remains elusive

FROM PAGE 3 Many of the accused are out on bail, and no significant progress has been made in the legal proceedings.

Additionally, two public interest litigation writs filed with the High Court have stalled due to a lack of initiative by the lawyers involved.

Human rights activists and legal experts, including Supreme Court lawyers Zi Khan Panna and Manzill Murshid, cite the involvement of local influential figures in the attacks as a major reason for the lack of progress.

According to them, politically connected individuals often escape accountability, and investigations are hampered by a lack of autonomy within the police force.

Advocate Panna stressed the need for honest and competent judges to ensure a fair trial, while Advocate Murshid called for police reforms to allow for impartial investigations.

Advocate Syed Rezaur Rahman, the public prosecutor of Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court, confirmed that all the cases remain pending.

The former PP, Advocate Md Faridul Alam, suggested that many victims of the Ramu attacks are not actively pursuing the cases, as they were given new houses and pagodas by the previous Sheikh Hasina-led government, which garnered their support.

Despite this, the broader issue of communal violence against minorities remains unresolved, and the absence of justice for the victims of the Ramu attacks underscores the ongoing vulnerability of these communities.

WRIT PETITIONS

On October 2 and 3, 2012, Supreme Court lawyers Md Eunus Ali Akond and Jyotirmoy Barua filed two petitions with the HC, seeking action against the attackers and negligent local officials. Despite probe reports identifying both the perpetrators and the officials' failure to prevent the attacks, the HC has yet to issue a verdict.

The final hearing remains pending due to the reconstitution of its bench and the apparent lack of initiative from the lawyers in progressing the petitions.

PROBE REPORTS

The probe reports were submitted to an HC bench led by Justice Mirza Hussain Haider, now retired. Before his elevation to the Appellate Division, the bench's jurisdiction was reconstituted by the then chief justice.

One report, submitted on May 16, 2013, revealed the failure of local administration, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies in preventing the attacks. Conducted by a judicial body, the investigation identified 298 people responsible and made 20 recommendations, including improving administrative competence, regulating social media posts, and promoting patriotism, according to HC sources.

A separate police-led probe identified failures by the then Superintendent of Police Selim Md Jahangir and the Officer-in-Charge of Ramu Police Station, AK Nazibul Islam.

While action was recommended against the OC, none was suggested for the superintendent.

Stringent

FROM PAGE 3 products, strengthening existing tobacco control laws, halting tobacco companies' advertising campaigns, and instituting a nationwide ban on e-cigarettes and vapes.

Md Aatur Rahman Masud and Md Mostafizur Rahman, advocacy manager and lead policy adviser respectively of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Bangladesh, and Sharf Uddin Ahmed Choudhury, adviser to the NHF's Tobacco Control Programme, also spoke among others.