

VIRUS ATTACK SPREADS IN COX'S BAZAR

Shrimps in hundreds of enclosures damaged

MUAZZEM HOSSAIN SHAKIL,
Cox's Bazar

Shrimps in hundreds of enclosures have been damaged in about a week as virus attacked the exportable item in the district.

Shrimp farmers and fishery officials said the attack followed contamination of water due to overflowing of enclosures during heavy rain and flooding.

The debacle in shrimp farms has frustrated several thousand shrimp cultivators in the coastal district.

Abdul Hashem, a leading shrimp cultivator, claimed that about 1,000 out of 3,000 shrimp enclosures have been affected with virus and fishes worth over Tk 50 lakh damaged in

the farms.

Unplanned and unscientific cultivation with virus-affected imported fry could be another reason, he said.

Hashem claimed that shrimps worth at least Tk 5 lakh have been damaged in his enclosures in about a week.

Shuvo, another shrimp farmer in North Nalbia, said one of his two enclosures has been affected. He suspected that the water of his farm might have been contaminated by water rolling down the hills.

Shrimps in many other enclosure are still safe, he said.

Hoanok Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Abu Taher Shikder said most of the shrimps of his enclosure

have become virus-affected.

Indiscriminate use of medicine for rapid growth of shrimp fry might be the cause of the disease, he said.

Officials of Cox's Bazar Shrimp Cultivators' Association said most of the affected farms are in Moheshkhali, Chakaria, Teknaf, Pekwa and Kutubdia in the district.

The Chief Scientific Officer of Cox's Bazar District Fisheries Research Institution, when contacted, said they are investigating the cause of virus attack. There may be many reasons like decrease in salinity in water of enclosures, contamination of water, use of overdose medicine and more water than needed in the enclosures.

He said the disease broke out

due to adverse weather. It will diminish naturally, he said.

Dr Shahdat Hossain, Senior Scientific Officer at the Institution said he detected that the tail of virus-affected shrimp becomes reddish, which ultimately changes its original colour. This suggests that they have been attacked with 'white spot' disease.

Quick change of the enclosure water and shifting affected shrimps to another could be a remedy. But this is difficult and expensive for farmers, he said.

Some shrimp cultivators said they can not control the disease even by following advice of fishery officials.

DEMAND FOR GAS

Life stops for 15 minutes in Rajshahi city

RU CORRESPONDENT

Life stopped in Rajshahi city for 15 minutes yesterday in demand for pipeline gas supply.

All activities were stopped for 15 minutes from 11 am at the call of Rajshahi Gas Andalon Parisad, a civic body agitating for long for gas supply.

Offices did not function, transports remained standstill on roads, pedestrians stood where they were and long human chains were formed in different areas of the city during the brief period.

The Parisad also stages a rally at Shaheb Bazaar in the afternoon. With Parishad Convener Mahtab Uddin in the chair, the rally was addressed by representatives of the elite and different professional groups.

The speakers said supply of gas to Rajshahi city was a election pledge of the BNP-Jamaat government. But it announced a plan to this effect at the fag end of its tenure. This is nothing but a bluff to the people to secure votes in the coming election. They demanded implementation of the plan before the next polls.

Earlier, the Parisad observed strike on several occasions in the city to press the demand. Meanwhile, official sources said the government has already decided to supply of gas to the city and the project has been approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

Tk 6 lakh postal orders looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A dacoity was committed at the main post office at Sirazee Road in Ambagan area of Sirajganj town early yesterday.

The dacoits looted cash and postal orders worth about Tk 6 lakh from the strong room of the post office, its officials said.

Police also arrested night guard Raton Ali in connection with the incident. He is being interrogated, police said.

Quoting the night guard, police said robbers numbering 8 to 10 entered the post office at about 3 am by breaking open windows and tied up the night guard. They looted cash and 11,000 postal orders each valued at Tk 50.

Upgrade Pabna Edward College to university

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

People of all classes and political parties joined students of Pabna Edward College in a massive human chain formed for upgrading the institution to a full-fledged university.

About 5000 students of the college left classes to join the human chain in front of the college.

A citizens' committee, formed recently to press the demand, also formed another human chain in the town. Prior to the human chain, leaders of the committee held a brief rally, which was addressed by, among others, Pabna Bar Association president Abdul Matin, Pabna reporters Unity President Habibur Rahman Swapan, journalist Faruk Hossain Choudhury, Pabna Udichi secretary Biplob Chowdhury and district BNP vice-president Abdul Mannan.

NEXT ELECTION

Call to boycott dishonest candidates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday called upon political parties to nominate honest and efficient candidates in the next general election to institutionalise democracy and bring about people's welfare.

Nominating 'clean' candidates for the next general election has now become a demand of the people, they said.

They urged parties not to nominate corrupt, inefficient and black money holders and called upon the people to boycott such candidates, if nominated.

The seminar on Campaign for Democracy, organised by Satkhira unit of Campaign for Good Governance, an NGO, was held at Satkhira Officers Club auditorium with its president Kamrul Islam Farooque in the chair.

Former minister Dr. Aftabuzzaman was the chief guest while Satkhira Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Sheikh Azhar Hossain and former lawmaker Habibur Rahman were special guests.

The speakers said politics is now virtually being controlled by use of money and muscle power. This must change to bring in honest and dedicated people to politics. Political parties should realise this to ensure good governance, they said.



Central and local Awami League leaders during council of Nilphamari unit of the party yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Nilphamari AL council held after 11 years

Senior leaders sidelined as new body elected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The council of Nilphamari district Awami League was held here yesterday after eleven years.

Asaduzzaman Noor MP inaugurated the council, attended by party Presidium member Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and central organising secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna, among others.

The council was held in two sessions. It elected a new district committee headed by Dewan Kamrul Ahmed as president and Momtazul Islam as secretary.

Party sources allege that in the new body some senior and dedicated leaders were not included while new faces who came from

other parties were given positions.

A candidate for the post of president, Dr Hamida Banu Shova MP, said, according to the party constitution, one councillor should be selected from every 10,000 people but this was not followed.

Many leaders brought allegations against a leader saying he played a major role in sidelining senior leaders.

Old guards like Afser Ali Ahmed, former district AL president and close associate of Bangabandhu and Kazi Aminul Haq were present at the council but they were "not allowed to address it", some party leaders alleged.

However the conference was held in a lively atmosphere as a

large number party workers attended with colourful banners and festoons. There was enthusiasm all around at the venue.

In the first session, the conference was addressed by grassroots leaders and guests from Dhaka. Election was held in the second session.

Addressing the council, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir alleged that some ruling party leaders siphoned out 1,90,000 crore taka from Bangladesh in last four and a half years.

The government is making plots for election engineering to cling to power, he alleged and urged party men to prepare to resist the move.

11 yr-old Shahnewaz languishes in jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eleven year-old physically and mentally challenged Shahnewaz has been languishing in Bagerhat district jail since January for faults unknown.

None has so far come forward to rescue the minor boy from the prison.

Superintendent of Bagerhat district Jail Bimol Chandra Shaha told this correspondent that the physically and mentally retarded boy was picked up by Sadar thana police on January 1 from Signboard area near Bagerhat Pirojpur road. He was found loitering there.

The boy was sent to jail by court as police arrested him under Section 54 of CrPc for suspicious

movement".

The Jail Superintendent said the boy was sent to a rehabilitation centre but was sent back to the jail due to lack of accommodation there.

Shahnewaz hails from Khalishpur housing estate of Khulna city, as he told police after arrest. But he could not name his parents or any other relative.

"We are still trying to find out his parents", said the OC of Bagerhat Sadar thana.

The Jail Superintendent said Shahnewaz cries with a vacant look when any one treats him with tenderness. He is also indifferent to taking food.

Pneumonia, viral fever claim 3

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Pneumonia and viral fever have spread in the district, killing three persons including two children in last three weeks. Several hundred have been attacked.

Civil Surgeon Tamsil Uddin said high temperature in the monsoon causes the diseases.

Those killed by diarrhoea are eight-month-old Sima of Sapur village and five-day-old Babu of Kazirhat in Badarganj upazila. Sharifa Khatun, 18, of Kursha village in Taraganj upazila died of viral fever at the upazila health complex.

A large number children were attacked with pneumonia in last few days. Many of them were admitted to different upazila health complexes and at the children ward at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Accept demand for reforms before time runs out

Zillur urges govt at Kishoreganj public meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kishoreganj

Awami League Presidium member Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the government to accept opposition's reform proposals before time runs out to avoid a political deadlock and chaos.

Stand-off between the ruling and opposition parties will benefit none but may bring in a unstable situation which will be bad for the country and its people, he said while addressing a public meeting at Char Lokshampur DC-Mokhi High School at Gaboria Abdullahpur union in Kolar Char upazila in the district.

The front ranking AL leader said opposition's reform proposals are aimed at holding a fair and credible election.

The Election Commission has, by this time, made itself controversial by its actions. So any election

held under it will not be acceptable to the people, he said and urged the Chief Election Commissioner to resign.

Zillur also alleged that the government is hatching a conspiracy to appoint a 'controversial' person as head of the caretaker government. "Please desist from such a move", he urged the government.

The AL leader also sounded a note of warning that there will not be any election if the government maintains its ego and sticks to its present position. "Dilly-dally tactics will not help you retain power", he said.

Criticising the government for the price hike of essentials, Zillur alleged that ruling party leaders have made a syndicate and enhanced prices to make money to spend it in the coming election.

The AL leader also alleged that

the BNP-Jamaat coalition government has tarnished the image of Bangladesh by 'patronising' Islamist zealots, who are responsible for all the bomb blasts in the country. Mere arrest of some militants will not free the country of violence by militants. The godfathers behind the militants must be arrested to eradicate violence, he said.

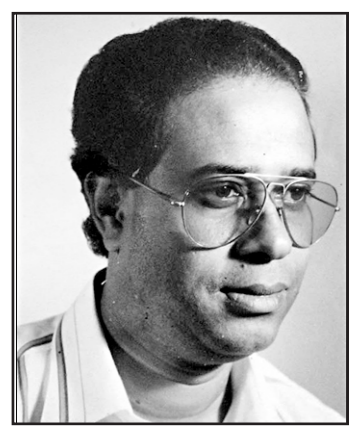
He also alleged that the government is repressing opposition leaders and activists across the country to retain power. He urged the people to identify political activists and law enforcers now repressing AL activists. Once out of power, they will be tried for their misdeeds, he said.

Among others, the meeting was addressed by AL central leader Ajoy Kor Khokon and Kolar Char upazila AL president Abul Hossen Liton.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Pabna Edward College formed a human chain in front of the college yesterday demanding steps to upgrade the institution to a university.



Anniversary of Shamsur Rahman's death today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The 6th death anniversary of journalist Shamsur Rahman will be observed here today.

Shamsur Rahman, special correspondent of the Daily Janakantho and stringer of BBC Bangla Service, was killed by unidentified assailants at his Daratana office in the town on July 16, 2000 while he was preparing a report.

Born at Shalkona village under Sharsha upazila in Jessore on May 5, 1957, Shamsur Rahman started journalism the Daily Thikana when he was a student. Later he joined now defunct Dainik Bangla.

To mark the day, Jessore Press Club, Journalist Union of Jessore and Jessore Journalist Union have chalked out elaborate programmes.

The programmes include Doa Mahfil, discussion meeting and wearing of black badges to protest the killing and delayed trial.

One trampled by wild elephants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

One person was trampled and five others were injured by wild elephants at Eidgon near Cox's Bazar town yesterday morning.

While some farmers were working on a farm, a herd of elephants attacked them killing Abdul Mazid, 50 on the spot. Four others were injured. They are Shah Alam, 40, Babul, 45, Rasheda Akter, 50, and Buzuruch, 50.

6x4

6.5x3