



PHOTO: STAR

Huge quantity of watermelons at a field of Dhulashar village in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district get damaged as saline water from the sea flooded the area during high tides at the time of full moon last week.

Seawater damages watermelon on 1,500 hectares in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Watermelon on over 1,500 hectares of land in different upazilas of the district have been damaged due to flooding by salty water from the Bay and adjoining rivers during new moon last week, much to the worry of farmers.

Under the influence of the new moon, tidal surges from the Bay and its adjacent rivers flooded over 1,500 hectares of watermelon fields from April 7 to 9, said sources at Agriculture Extension Department (AED).

The huge salty water has damaged various green crops including watermelon. Even after receding of water from those fields watermelon on the fields has continued rotting due to the effect of salty water.

Local farmers said the area of damaged watermelon fields would be 1,500

hectares as salty water entered the fields. AED sources, however, said watermelon on 377 hectares of land has been damaged fully and on 580 hectares partly.

This year watermelon was cultivated on 6,276 hectares of land in seven upazilas of Patuakhali district -- 4,500 hectares in Galachipa upazila, 1,346 hectares in Kalapara, 275 hectares in Baulal, 70 hectares in Dashmina, 50 hectares in Sadar upazila, 20 hectares in Mirzaganj and 15 hectares in Dumki, said sources of AED.

During recent visits to different areas under Kalapara and Galachipa upazilas, this correspondent saw many watermelon fields, especially those in low areas, are still under water. Watermelon is rotting on those fields although water receded.

"I cultivated watermelon on 1.80 acres of land at a cost of Tk 30,000. I planned to sell watermelon after 10/12 days later but sudden tidal surge flooded it. Although

water has been removed from my fields, watermelon is rotting due to bad effect of salty water. I have sold it for very low prices as most of it has already rotten," said Abu Bakar, 50, a farmer of Dhulashar village in Kalapara upazila.

He said he had hoped to earn Tk about one lakh but the amount would be hardly Tk 25,000.

Nasir Howlader, 40, Mosharef Hossain, 42, Bellal Howlader, Joyal Abedin, 45, Eunus, 35, Zafor, 38, and Eusuf, 36, of the village also told similar stories.

Most of the farmers cultivated watermelon with the money received as loan from banks or NGOs but all their hopes are now nipped in the bud, said several farmers.

When contacted, AED Deputy Director Nikhil Ronjon Mondol said they have already made a damage list in the district and sent it to higher authorities recommending take necessary step in this regard.

Rangpur trader Belal's body exhumed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police yesterday exhumed the body of murdered trader Ahsanul Huq Belal, a resident of Mahiganj in Rangpur town.

After digging up the body in presence of Executive Magistrate Anjuara Begum at about 10:00am, it was sent to the morgue of Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The body was exhumed to detect any poisonous ingredient in it, said Kotwali Police Station Sub-inspector Noor Alam, also investigation officer of the case.

As the question of involvement of people in addition to Sufia Begum in the killing has been raised, police decided to exhume Belal's body, said Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdur Rashid.

Police recovered and arrested Sufia Begum at Moyenakutti on April 5 night when she was going on a CNG-run scooter with the mutilated body of Belal.

In a confessional statement under Section 161 to a judicial magistrate, Sufia Begum said she alone killed Belal by having him take poison-mixed fruit juice and later cut the body into pieces.

Three outlaws arrested in two dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Three members of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were arrested in Sirajganj and Satkhira districts yesterday and on Tuesday night.

The arrested outlaws are Abdul Mannan, 35, Abdur Hannan, 32 of Uttar Shyampur village under Tarash upazila of Sirajganj, and Bidyut Kumar Bachchu, 38, of Maguradanga village under Tala upazila of Satkhira.

According to our Sirajganj correspondent, law enforcers arrested Mannan and Hannan, raiding Uttar Shyampur village at around 3:30am.

The outlaws were later produced in a Sirajganj court that sent them to jail.

Police said the two were wanted in a number of criminal cases.

Our Satkhira correspondent reported that detectives arrested Bidyut Kumar Bachchu, a regional leader of the outlawed PBCP, in Maguradanga area under Tala upazila on Tuesday night.

Bachchu was released from jail three weeks ago and was reorganising the party in Tala upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers raided Maguradanga village and arrested the PBCP leader.

Police said several cases against Bachchu are pending with the courts.

Pahela Baishakh reminds them of the tragedy

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Nine years after the heinous grenade attack at Ramna Batamul in the capital during Pahela Baishakh (Bangla New Year) celebrations, family members of three slain victims were found crying, remembering the untimely departure of their near and dear ones.

Talking to The Daily Star, they demanded exemplary punishment to those who were involved in the attack. The horrifying memories of the incident are still fresh in their mind.

Al-Mamun, 23, Reazul, 22, and Shilpi, 20, three cousins and college students in Baulal upazila of Patuakhali, went to Ramna Batamul together to join the Pahela Baishakh celebration but all of them were killed in the grenade attack.

They were among the 10 people who were killed in April 14, 2001 grenade attack that also left over 100 others injured.

"When Pahela Baishakh comes close every year, my pain increases as I lost my son on this day. I buried all my hopes here nine years

back," said Al-Mamun's mother Nur Jahan, showing his grave.

"Can you tell me why my son was killed?" she threw the question.

"We want to know the names of masterminds behind the cowardly mayhem and see their punishment," Kashem Gazi, father of Al-Mamun, said when this correspondent visited his house at Kachipara in Baulal upazila.

Parvin, sister-in-law of Shilpi, said she rushed to the spot immediately after hearing the news of the blast. Doctors declared all of them dead at BSMMU Hospital, said Parvin who was living in Dhaka during the time. Shilpi stayed at her house to celebrate the programme on Bangla New Year.

"I forbade my son to join any gathering but he didn't listen," said Shamsul Haq Gazi, father of Reazul.

Every year the family members arrange milad mahfil and special prayers for salvation of the departed souls. The New Year now brings tear for them instead of joy after the death of their near and dear ones, they said.

Fraud 'pir,' accomplices remanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A court here yesterday granted two days' remand for fraud 'pir' (spiritual leader) Amzad Hossain Bepari who was arrested on Monday at his den at Khasnagar village under Sirajdikhan upazila on charge of torturing several children and women in the name of treatment.

Police produced Amzad before the Court of Munshiganj Senior Magistrate praying seven days' remand. The court granted two days' remand for him.

Meanwhile, three arrested accomplices of

Amzad-Nuru Member, 45, Kalam, 46, and Ilias, 60, were also remanded for two days yesterday.

Earlier they placed bail prayers before the court which was rejected by the court on Monday.

A three-member probe committee was formed to investigate the matter.

Additional District Magistrate Hasanut Islam leads the committee. Three cases were filed against Amzad and 15 others on charges of deception and attempt of murder. The fraud 'pir' is the main accused in each of the cases.



PHOTO: STAR

A blooming krishnachura tree adorns nature, as if heralding the advent of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year. The photo was taken from Sirajganj yesterday.

শুভ নববর্ষের পালা বদলে | ফিরে আসে বৈশাখ | ডাক দেয় নতুনের | প্রতিজ্ঞা কল্যাণের...

শুভ নববর্ষ ১৪২৭

বাংলা নববর্ষের এই শুভক্ষণে আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক, শুভানুধ্যায়ী ও দেশবাসীকে জানাই শুভেচ্ছা...

বেসিক ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
শতভাগ মনোবাক মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক

শুভ নববর্ষ ১৪২৭ | বাংলা নববর্ষ বাংলা সংস্কৃতির প্রেরণা...

শাস্ত্র বাংলায় চিরায়ত রূপ বাঙালির বৈশাখী উৎসব। আমাদের লোকজ ঐতিহ্যের পরম্পরায় বাংলা নববর্ষ উদযাপিত হয়ে আসছে আবহমান কাল ধরে। বাংলার জীবন্ত লোকজ সংস্কৃতি বেঁচে থাকুক যুগ যুগ ধরে।

বাংলা নববর্ষে সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের প্রতি আমাদের আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা।

প্রিমিয়ার ব্যাংক
সে বা ই প্র থ ম

জীবনের উৎসবে বিশ্বদ্রতা

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