



PHOTO: STAR

A large amount of potato rots at Moulana Bashir Uddin Cold Storage at Hazirhat in Rangpur Sadar upazila, right, potato growers block Dinajpur-Dhaka highway at Gopalganj village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila demanding compensation for damage of their potato kept at Uttara Himghar Ltd, a cold storage in the village.

Potato growers burst into protest

Compensation from cold storage owners demanded in Dinajpur, Rangpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Hundreds of farmers blocked roads in Dinajpur and Rangpur yesterday demanding compensation as thousands of bags of potatoes they kept in cold storage have rotted due to alleged negligence of the authorities.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reported that potato growers blocked Dinajpur-Dhaka highway at around 5:45pm demanding compensation for damage of their potatoes at Uttara Himghar Limited, a cold storage, at Gopalganj village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila, and also protesting attack on them allegedly by the hired goons of the cold storage authorities on Monday.

The agitating growers also damaged two passenger buses on the road did not withdraw the blockade as of filing of this report at 6:30pm.

On Monday, they came under attack while agitating in front of the cold storage demanding compensation for damage of what they said about 5,000 bags of stored potato due to failure of the authorities to arrange alternative power supply during outage as per previous assurance.

The affected farmers said the authorities overloaded the cold storage but did not arrange alternative source of power during load shedding.

At least 10 potato growers were injured in Monday's attack allegedly by the hired goons of Uttara Himghar Limited authorities in front of the cold storage.

Three of the injured--Abdul Haque, Tariqul Islam and Mominul Islam were admitted to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition while the rest given first aid.

Soon after the incident, the farmers put up barricades on Dinajpur-Dhaka highway protesting the attack. Road links between Dinajpur and other districts remained cut off for several hours from 12:30pm due to the blockade.

On Saturday, the farmers burst into protest and blocked Dinajpur-Dhaka highway after Executive Director of Uttara Himghar Ltd Mirza Ashfaq, also the joint secretary of Dinajpur district Awami League, declined to give them compensation for their losses.

The agitators withdrew the blockade after Dinajpur deputy commissioner formed an investigation committee headed by ADM Zakir Hossain. Besides, a one-member committee led by Upazila Agriculture Extension Officer Md Abdus Salam will assess the losses of the farmers who kept their potatoes at the cold storage, sources said.

According to our Rangpur correspondent, hundreds of potato growers and hoarders yesterday blocked Rangpur-

Dinajpur highway for two hours from 11:00am demanding compensation from the owner of a cold storage where stored potatoes have rotted due to lack of power supply.

The growers and hoarders held Moulana Bashir Uddin, managing director of Moulana Bashir Uddin Cold Storage Ltd, at Hazirhat under Sadar upazila responsible for damage of their potatoes as he did not arrange alternative power supply during load shedding.

The agitating growers and hoarders withdrew the road blockade at around 12:45pm after upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) assured them of taking steps so that they can get compensation from the cold storage owner.

In the afternoon, the affected farmers lodged a case with Rangpur kotwali Police Station against Bashir Uddin and director of the cold storage Abul Bashar, putting blame on them for their (farmers) losses.

Contacted, Abul Bashar said they could not ensure uninterrupted power supply to the cold storage as its generator has remained inactive for several weeks.

Sources said the cold storage has storage capacity of about 40,000 bags of potatoes, but the proprietor stored about 60,000 bags of potatoes this year.

FEUD OVER SHRIMP ENCLOSURE 2 killed, 14 hurt in Satkhira clashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two people were killed and 14 others injured in sporadic clashes between two rival groups over taking possession of a shrimp enclosure at Chunkuri in Shyamnagar upazila yesterday.

Police rushed to the spot and opened three rounds fire to disperse the feuding groups, witnesses said.

The deceased were identified as Pashupati Barkandaj, 45, manager of Dhaka Shrimp Enclosure at Chunkuri and Jahangir, 33.

The injured are Asgar Ali, 50, Anisur Rahman, 30, Mosharrifa, 42, Antuzil, 33, Shah Alam, 35, Mintu, 32, Ayub Ali, 35, Mahbub, 32, Nasima Khatun, 36, Zakir 34 and Alamgir, 42. They were admitted to Shyamnagar upazila health complex soon after the incident.

As the condition of injured Mosharrifa, Azizul, Shah Alam, Mintu and Ayub Ali deteriorated, they were shifted to Satkhira Sadar Hospital, police and hospital sources said.

Quoting locals police said, one Ahmedul Kabir of Dhaka had been cultivating shrimp taking lease of 300 bighas of land from the local landown-

ers for the last 10 years. A conflict between the owner of Dhaka Shrimp Enclosure and some of the landowners arose this year as the latter took control of 65 bighas of land inside the enclosure and set up another shrimp enclosure.

The men of Dhaka Shrimp Enclosure retook the land and filed a case with Shyamnagar police station accusing the landowners on Monday night.

Sub-inspector (SI) Mojaheed of Shyamnagar police station went to investigate the matter yesterday morning.

As he left the spot, the landowners and men of Dhaka Shrimp Enclosure locked in sporadic clashes over the issue at Chunkuri. Both the groups used lethal and sharp weapons during the clash that took place at about 10:00 am and continued for over an hour leaving 15 people injured.

Severely injured Pashupati succumbed to his injuries on way to Shyamnagar hospital. Later Jahangir also died in the evening.

Contacted, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shyamnagar police station Abdul Hai Sarkar said police were taking necessary legal steps against the offenders. "The situation is now under control," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers pass a leisurely period as trucks lie idle at Benapole land port during a 12-hour strike enforced by political parties on the Indian side yesterday.

TORTURE OF GIRL IN LALMONIRHAT Victim's father sues 7

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The father of Nurunnahar Begum, who is now fighting for life at Aditmari upazila health complex, on Monday night filed a case against seven people on charge of torturing the girl.

The accused are victim's wooer Faruque Ahamed Farhad, 25, his elder brothers Sheikh Farid, 35, Jamal Ahamed, 31, and Badsha Alam, 28, sister Mahfuza Begum, 22, mother Fatema Bewa, 52, and his uncle ex-UP member Rafiz Uddin, 45, all residing at Baro Kamlabari village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat district.

Referring to the case, police said Farhad, 25, developed an affair with neighbour Nurunnahar Begum, 20, daughter of poor farmer Sohrab Hossain and Honufa Begum, four years ago.

As Nurunnahar's parents tried to arrange her marriage on several occasions, Farhad managed to stop it by saying that he will marry the girl.

But Farhad called the girl to his home on Thursday night and told her that he would not marry her.

As the victim strongly protested and determined not to move from Farhad's home,

she was confined to a room. Farhad and other accused tortured her mercilessly. Villagers rescued her in a critical condition and took her to Aditmari upazila health complex on Saturday noon.

Earlier the victim's family dared not file any case in face of threat by the alleged torturers.

With the help of villagers, Nurunnahar's father Sohrab Hossain submitted a written allegation accusing seven people regarding the matter at Aditmari police station on Monday night and the officer-in-charge recorded it as a case.

"We are facing insecure as the torturers this morning gave us death threat to withdraw the case," said Sohrab Hossain yesterday.

The victim's mother Honufa Begum said, "As we could not buy medicines for our assaulted daughter villagers gave us some money for the purpose. We have no money to handle the case while the torturer family is rich and powerful."

Officer-in-charge of Aditmari police station Mahfuzur Rahman said police is trying to arrest the accused people. Police will give legal support to the victim family, he added.

Parents held for son's fault

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police has taken a couple under custody after failing to arrest their son who is an accused in a rape and attempted murder case filed with Khulna Sadar police station.

The arrestees are Abdus Salam, a vegetable vendor, and Beauty Begum of Gallamari area under Sonadanga police station.

Beauty was released on April 22 but Abdus Salam has still kept in the lock-up since his arrest on April 20.

Their son Rasul, along with two other accused in this case -- Piash and Jahirul of the same area -- have remained absconding, said SI Rezaul Karim, the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

The rape was committed on April 17 night on the roof of a house at Nirala residential area under Khulna Sadar Police

station. The victim, a 14-year-old, girl is still undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital as she sustained serious injuries.

With the help of local leaders of Human Rights Implementation Committee, she lodged a case on April 20 with Khulna Sadar police station naming three drug addict youths as accused of gang rape and an attempt to kill her.

The same day, SI Rezaul Karim took Abdus Salam and his wife Beauty Begum into custody although there is no allegation and court order against them.

"Police beat me several times to know whereabouts of my absconding son, which I do not know at all. My son went beyond our control long ago," said a tearful Abdus Salam.

Officer-in-Charge Monirul Giash of Sadar police station justified the act, saying, "The parents must be held equally responsible for sins of their sons and daughters. The question of legality in taking Salam into custody does not arise at all. We have no intention to let him off until his son is arrested."

"Abdus Salam's arrest is illegal as he is not an accused in the case and there is no court order in this regard. The act is also a violation of Article 33 of the constitution which says that no person can be detained without court order for more than 24 hours from the time of arrest," said advocate Mominul Islam, coordinator of the Khulna chapter of Bangladesh Human Rights Commission.

He alleged that the IO of the case is not sincerely trying to arrest the accused who are moving at large.

Heartiest Congratulations to all Members of Eastern University Family including Students, Alumni, Guardians on the Occasion of

Program:
28 April, 2010: Blood Donation
29 April, 2010: Cultural Program



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