



PHOTO: STAR

A few of the several hundred crows that met sudden death due to unknown diseases in and around Barisal city during the last two days, right, workers of Kishoreganj district livestock office culling bird flu infected hens at Bogadia village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

Crows dying, poultry culled

Fear of fresh round of bird flu grips Barisal, Kishoreganj

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Barisal city and adjoining areas saw sudden death of a large number of crows in last two or three days while authorities destroyed at least seven thousand bird flu infected hens in Kishoreganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

Hundreds of crows that died at Girzamahalla, Medical College area, Sadar Road, Bells Park and Kirtonkhola riverbank areas in Barisal city during last two or three days are rotting in the open, reports our correspondent.

The crows were seen falling from trees and dying after a while, witnesses said.

Abdul Jabbar, Barisal district livestock officer, said their staffs are collecting samples for laboratory tests in Barisal and Dhaka to detect the disease that caused the massive deaths of crows.

"The crows may have died after eating some infected items," said Dr Md Shawkat Ali, principal officer of Regional Livestock Disease Investigation Laboratory in Barisal.

"During the last few days, similar incidents have been reported from Patuakhali and Bhola towns. After laboratory test of the samples of dead crows sent from Patuakhali, no virus of avian influenza was found. The crows died due to eating of dead

chickens infected with 'ranikhet' disease, not avian influenza," he said.

Although he advised locals to bury the dead crows, the situation has raised a fear of fresh round of bird flu among them.

Livestock officials urged people to remain watchful of the situation and inform local livestock officials if unusual deaths of crows are seen anywhere.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent adds: District livestock officials destroyed around 7,000 avian influenza (bird flu) infected hens of Bhai Bhai Farm owned by Muzammel Huq at Bogadia village in Kishoreganj Sadar upazila yesterday. Informed that some hens of the

farm died of unknown diseases during the last few days, Dr Bahadur Ali, veterinary surgeon of district livestock office, visited the spot.

After primary examination of some collected samples, he detected those as affected by bird flu.

The report was sent to Dhaka central office from where a letter confirming the case as bird flu came on Wednesday night.

District Livestock Officer Nousad Hossain in presence of administration officers and police personnel arranged destroying the hens of the farm yesterday morning.

Farm owner Muzammel said the price of the hens would be around Tk 14 lakh.



PHOTO: STAR

An elderly woman laments as she lost her everything in the fire that burnt 24 huts to ashes at Bonkola village in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna yesterday.

24 houses gutted in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A devastating fire gutted at least 24 huts belonging to poor people including day labourers at Bonkola village of Sujanagar upazila under the district yesterday morning.

The fire originated from a wood-burning stove of Batashi Khatun of the village at about 10:30am spread very quickly due to strong wind and destroyed the 24 houses, said locals and fire fighters.

"I do not have anything for my poor family as the fire destroyed my house. I do not know how I will exist now," said a lamenting Batashi Khatun.

The villagers tried to douse the fire but 24

houses were gutted as the fire fighters came very late, said Md Alhaz, another victim.

When contacted, Md Anwarul Islam, the officer in charge of Pabna fire station, said the delay in reaching the spot was due to long distance and miserable condition of the road.

The damage would be worth about Tk 10 lakh, he said.

The victims, on the other hand, said the losses would be worth Tk 20 lakh.

Sujanagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer HM Nurul Islam visited the spot in the afternoon and distributed blankets among the victims.

"We have also reported the incident to the higher authority for more relief," he said.

SNIPPETS

Three 'suicides' in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two women and a teenage girl allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday and the day before. The victims were identified as Reshma Khatun, 14, daughter of Atiar Rahman of village Laxminathpur in Kaliganj upazila, Swapna Begum, 24, wife of Sirajul Islam of village Kamta in Debhata upazila and Sakhina Khatun, 30, wife of Jamat Ali of village Jhhapa in Kalaroa upazila. Quoting local people police said, following family feud Reshma Khatun took poison and died at home at village Laxminathpur on Wednesday. Swapna Begum committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of her house at village Kamta. In the other incident, Sakhina Khatun took poison and died on February 1.

Man kills wife, aunt

UNB, Pirojpur

A man killed his wife for dowry, aunt for trying to save his wife and injured another at Badura village in Sadar upazila Wednesday morning. The deceased were identified as Sima Roy, 35, wife of Goutam Roy, his aunt Shefali Roy, 50, and injured Sheuli Roy, 40, wife of Goutam's cousin. Police said Goutam used to torture his wife for dowry since long and on Tuesday evening they locked into an altercation over the issue. On Wednesday morning, a brawl ensued between them again over the issue and at one stage Goutam hit Sima with a sharp weapon, leaving her dead on the spot at around 9am. Shefali Roy also came under the attack of Goutam and died on the spot when she came to save Sima. Injured Sheuli Roy was rushed to Khulna-250 bed hospital in a critical condition. Later, Goutam surrendered to the police at around 11.30am.

5 hospital 'brokers' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rab in a drive yesterday arrested four brokers at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital compound on charge of harassing patients. The arrestees are Md. Khokan Miah and Shahidul Islam of old medical colony, Ripon Kumar Dey of Zindabazar, Nizam Uddin of Kanishail and Mahmud Ali of Munshipara areas of the city. They were handed over to the police later. For long, they had been engaged in harassing patients and their attendants while alluring many others to different private clinics in the name of better treatment, Rab said.

Khulna criminal held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police arrested a listed criminal from near the General Hospital in the city. He was identified as Rezaul Karim Bablu alias Kala Bablu. According to OC Munirul Gias of Khulna Sadar police station, the arrestee is accused in several criminal cases in the last three years. On Wednesday noon, he and his accomplices stormed into the house of general secretary of Khulna Deed Writers' Association Md Mosharef Hossain and looted over Tk 20,000 at gunpoint, he said.

Hotels, restaurants fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A mobile court on Tuesday fined 32 hotels and restaurants in Kuakata for absence of registration and unhygienic environment. Md. Saiful Islam, executive magistrate in Patuakhali conducted the mobile court from 10am to 10pm while Rab and police teams assisted him. Sources said, the court realised Tk 31,600 fine from 25 hotels and seven restaurants. The court also filed separate cases against all the 32 hotels and restaurants, executive magistrate of the court said.

Charges framed against Ulfa leader, his aide

Three cases filed against them

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A court framed charges against Ulfa leader Major Ranjan Chowdhury and his Bangladeshi aide Pradip Marak in three separate cases yesterday.

The two were produced before the court of district and sessions judge AMS Sayeed amid tight security in the morning.

Public prosecutor Shah Azizul Haq read out the allegations against the

accused in three cases filed against them under arms, explosive and anti-terrorism act.

The court fixed May 4 for next trial proceedings.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-9) in a drive on July 17 at Laxmipur village in Bhairab upazila of Kishoreganj arrested Ranjan, leader of Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Asam (Ulfa) and his Bangladeshi aide Pradip Marak, of Bakura

village in Jhinaigati upazila.

The law enforcers caught them on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bhairab and later recovered two pistols, four bullets, four handmade bombs and bomb making materials from their possession.

The following day, Deputy Assistant Director at Rab-9 camp Md. Karimullah filed four cases against them under arms, explosives, intrusion and anti-terrorism act with Bhairab police.

JMB militant arrested in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-5) men arrested an Ehsar (full-time) member of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Kambarbari village in Bagmara upazila yesterday.

Abdur Razzak, 35, son of Solaiman, was picked up from his village in Kambarbari area at noon as there was an arrest warrant against him, Rab-5 director Lt Col Moinuddin Mahmud told newsmen at Rajshahi Rab headquarters in the afternoon.

Razzak is a charge-sheeted accused in the case filed by JMB's torture victim Abdul Mannan of Kathalbari village, said Rab anti-militancy team's inspector Mirza Golam Sarwar.

According to the case, Razzak along with 15 others, abducted Mannan from his home for his refusal to pay them toll and tortured him taking to JMB torture camp in Hamirkutsa area in May 2004. Mannan was later forced to pay the militants Tk 1.10 lakh illegal toll.

In 2004, JMB men, using the banner of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), unleashed a reign of terror in Rajshahi, Natore and Naogaon districts.

Two youths jailed for stalking

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mobile courts in Jhenidah and Khulna jailed two youths for stalking yesterday and the day before.

In Jhenidah, a youth was held and jailed for three months and fined Tk 10,000 yesterday for stalking an SSC examinee, reports our correspondent.

Arrestee Asif Iqbal Rafn, 22, is son of Ashanur Rahman of Belat Daulatpur village under Kaliganj upazila.

Sub-Inspector Akkas Ali at Kaliganj police station said that Asif had been teasing the girl for long. He was arrested yesterday morning from Shoibnagar Madrasa examination centre on the charge of teasing the girl after her parents brought her there. A mobile court led by SM Moniruzzaman, AC Land, of Kaliganj handed down the verdict.

In Khulna, a mobile court on Wednesday sentenced a young man to six months imprisonment for sexually harassing a college girl, reports our staff correspondent.

Convict Mirazul Sheikh, 28, a rickshawpuller, is son of Ismail Sheikh of South Central Road area of the city.

Sources said Mirazul used to harass Suchi, a student of

city's Sundarban Government College, since long on her way to college.

As per her complaint, police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel jointly raided Mirazul's house and arrested him in the morning.

Later, the mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Minara Nazneen, on the basis of the stalker's confession, awarded the punishment.

Meanwhile, a case was filed with Satkhira Sadar police station accusing three youths of abducting a teenage girl on Tuesday.

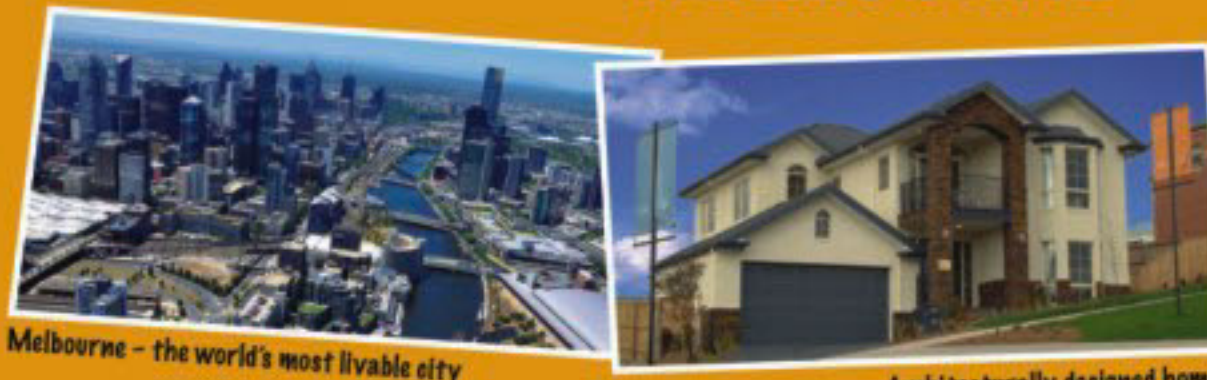
Victim Shamima Yasmin, daughter of Golam Mostafa of village Gobindakati in Sadar upazila was abducted while she was going to Jhhowdanga High School on January 26.

The accused are Sayeed Sardar, 18, Shahin, 20 and Maziful Islam Gazi, 22 of village Gobindakati in Sadar upazila.

Victim's father Golam Mostafa earlier filed a case against them.

The complainant alleged that the accused abducted his daughter Shamima, a class nine student on her way to school on January 26. Since then she has been missing, he added.

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