



Farmers set fire to sterile paddy plants during their human chain programme in front of Noakhali deputy commissioner's office on Sunday demanding compensation for losses and punishment to the companies that lured them into buying and cultivating 'low quality' hybrid rice seeds jhalak and hira that yielded the sterile plants.

Farmers upset as hybrid seeds yield sterile paddy plants

Compensation from supplier companies demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Farmers of different upazilas in Noakhali district have suffered losses as cultivation of alleged low quality hybrid rice seeds jhalak and hira has yielded very little rice grains this season.

Earlier on Sunday, the farmers formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office demanding compensation for their losses and punishment to Supreme Seed Company and Energy-pack Company limited who marketed hira and jhalak seeds

respectively.

Several farmers of Subornachar upazila including Bhulu Member, Latif Master, Karim Saodagar, Oli Ullah and Nabi Mia said they were attracted by the publicity of the local dealers of Supreme Seed Company and cultivated hira seeds in vast areas of lands but the plants produced sterile paddy, having no rice grains.

Confirming the matter, Deputy Director of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Nipendro Kumar Sarker said he has already informed the

higher authorities in written and sent letters to the alleged seed companies to inspect the fields and compensate the farmers.

Ruhul Amin, deputy director of Noakhali Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) said, "It is really a matter of sorrow and we are investigating the matter. If the farmers' allegation against the seed companies is found true they cannot evade the responsibility."

Regional manager of Supreme Seed Company, Mojibur Rahman told this correspondent that

after hearing the news of disaster from Charkark of Subornachar they visited the spot and fixed a meeting with the local farmers in this regard on April 29.

Mostafa Khairul Islam, area manager of Comilla region of Energy-pack Agro Limited, said the disaster happened due to high temperature at day and unseasonable dew in the night time.

However, the affected farmers rejected the statement and said the disaster happened due to low quality seeds supplied by the companies.

PHOTO: STAR

27 mutineers sentenced to jail in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Twenty-seven jawans of 23 Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were yesterday sentenced to jail terms ranging from four months to seven years for their involvement in the mutiny at Khulna sector headquarters on February 25 and 26 in 2009.

The special court-12 headed by Rajshahi BGB Sector Commander Col Ehia Azam Khan delivered the

judgment at 11:30am.

Two other members of the court were Lt Col Gazi Mohammad Khalid Hossain and Lt Commander Md Touhidul Islam. Deputy Attorney General Shashanka Shekhar Sarker was present.

Of the jawans, two were jailed for seven years, two for six years, two for four years, six for three years, three for two and a half years, two for one and a half years, four for one year, three for four months, and one was jailed

for six months, one for five years and another for two years.

The court, set up at the sector headquarters at Goalkhali in the city, also fined the convicts Tk 100 each.

According to the prosecution, 27 jawans revolted against their officers at the sector headquarters on February 25 and 26 in 2009, looted arms and ammunition from armoury, put up barricades at several points of Khulna-Jessore highway

and damaged a number of vehicles.

Lance Naik Abdus Salam Majhi of 23 Battalion at the Sector headquarters filed the mutiny case as complainant with the special court 12 against the rebels on October 25 last year.

Charges against the accused were framed in the court on March 27 this year while depositions of 20 prosecution witnesses recorded during trial of the mutiny case.

JATKA PROTECTION DRIVE

Fishermen clash with navy personnel, 4 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Fishermen clashed with a navy team that conducted a jatka (hilsa fry) protection drive on Gazaria channel of the Meghna under Mehendiganj upazila yesterday noon.

The navy men fired blank shots and charged batons on the fishermen, leaving four of them injured. The team also seized current nets worth Tk 10 lakh from the fishermen.

The injured fishermen are Abdur Rahim, 42, Roman, 22, Jamal, 17, Rafiq, 26.

Contacted, officer-in-charge of Mehendiganj Police Station said a 12-member team of Bangladesh Navy led by Lt Iftekhar was patrolling different areas of the Meghna River in an engine boat as part of 'Jatka Nidhan Nirodh' operation.

At around 12:00 noon, they saw a large number of fishermen were engaged in fishing on the Gazaria channel of the Meghna near



PHOTO: STAR

Fellows take to hospital one of the four fishermen, injured during yesterday's clash with a navy team conducting a jatka (hilsa fry) protection drive at Gazaria channel of Meghna River in Mehendiganj upazila under Barisal district.

Chunnu Miar Ghat (terminal) under Ulania union of Mehendiganj upazila.

As the naval team raided, seized current nets from the fishermen, they protested their (navy personnel) act

and demanded alternative employment.

A one stage of altercation between the two sides, about 200 fishermen and locals swooped on navy men who charged batons and

fired three rounds of blank shots to disburse the mob.

Contacted, Mehendiganj OC said the naval commander informed the matter to police and left the area without lodging any case.

UP polls in Sylhet, Dinajpur, joypurhat dists May 31-July 2

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Elections to 98 union parishads in Sylhet and 129 union parishads in Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts will be held from May 31 to July 2.

In Sylhet, elections to eight union parishads in Sadar upazila will be held on May 31, eight union parishads in Gowaingh upazila on June 2, six union parishads in Companiganj upazila on June 5, six union parishads in Jaintapur upazila on June 8, seven union parishads in Kanaighat upazila on June 11, nine union parishads in Zakiganj upazila on June 14 and 10 unions Parishads in Beanibazar upazila on June 21, election office sources said.

Eleven unions in Golapganj upazila will go to polls on June 18, 14 unions in Balaganj upazila on June 25 and eight unions in Biswanath upazila on June 28, nine unions in Dakshin Surma

upazila on July 2, reports our staff correspondent.

The authorities concerned could not announce the date for election to five union parishads in Fenchuganj upazila as voter list in two newly formed unions in the upazila is yet to be rearranged.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: Elections to 129 out of 133 union parishads in 18 upazilas of Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts will be held from May 31 to July 2.

According to a district election official, elections to 100 union parishads in 13 upazila of Dinajpur district will be held from May 31 to July 2.

According to the schedule, voting will take place in three unions of Hakimpur and four unions of Ghoraghat upazilas on May 31, nine unions of Nawabganj upazila on June 2, seven unions of Birampur upazila

on June 5, seven unions of Phulbari upazila on June 5, six unions of Kaharol upazila on June 8, six unions of Bochaganj upazila on June 8, six unions of Khansama upazila on June 11, 12 unions of Chirirbandar upazila on June 11, ten unions of Parbatipur upazila on June 19, ten unions of Dinajpur Sadar upazila on June 22, 11 unions of Birganj upazila on May 26 and nine unions of Biral upazila on July 2.

In Joypurhat, election to 29 out of 32 union parishads in five upazilas of Joypurhat district will be held from June 6 to 20.

Nine unions in Joypurhat Sadar upazila will go to polls on June 7, eight unions in Pachbibbi upazila on June 12, five unions in Akkelpur upazila on June 12, two unions in Khetlal upazila on June 16, and five unions in Kalai upazila on June 20.

30 injured as BNP factions clash in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

At least 30 people were injured in a clash between two factions of BNP in front of the deputy commissioner's (DC) office here yesterday.

Party's district unit General Secretary Abu Taher Talukder are among the injured.

Police and district BNP sources said there was an internal conflict between two groups of the party, one

led by Abu Taher and the other by former president of the district unit Ashrafuddin Khan over formation of a new committee.

The clash ensued when both groups went to the DC's office at around 12:30 pm for submitting a memorandum containing various demands including government's steps to contain price spiral of essential commodities.

Equipped with lethal weapons, they locked in a

clash, resulting in injuries to 30 party men from of both sides.

Seriously injured Shariful Alam and Kamal Ahmed were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital in a critical condition while the rest to Netrakona Sadar Hospital and different private clinics.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Barisal district and city BNP submitted memorandums to the dep-

uty commissioner yesterday protesting price hike of essentials.

BNP also held a rally on the premises of Ashwani Kumar Hall and brought out a procession on city.

Chaired by Maniruzzaman Faruk, the rally was addressed, among others, by Ziaur Rahman Shikdar, Kamrul Hasan Ratan, Kamrul Ahsan Shahin, Mir Zahidul Kabir, Altaf Mahmud Shikdar, and Ali Haidar Babul.

Grabber setting up shops on zila parishad land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An influential land grabber has continued construction work to set up shops on a piece of land owned by Pabna Zila Parishad, ignoring a notice from the authorities.

"Md Khaled Rouf of Atua village in Pabna Sadar upazila took the lease of

30x7 feet land adjacent to the hydrology office from Pabna Zila Parishad on July 1, 2009 for one year. The lease term expired on June 30 last year and it was not renewed," said Md Matiar Rahman, an official of lease dealing section of Pabna Zila Parishad.

But in last week, Khaled backed by some local ruling party men started illegal

construction of 10 shops on the land owned by the Pabna Zila Parishad. The occupier started the work to sell the shops illegally," the official said.

Contacted, Chief Executive Officer of Pabna Zila Parishad Md Jafar Ullah said, "When the occupier started construction we visited the spot and asked him to stop the work

but to no effect. The construction of shops on the government land is illegal and so, we will take legal action. We have informed the district police administration of the matter today (Tuesday)."

Pabna Police station the officer in charge Md Enyat Uddin said they are taking action following the procedure.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers employed by a land grabber continue illegal construction work for setting up shops on the land of Pabna Zila Parishad.