

Adverse weather affects litchi yield in Dinajpur

KONGKON KARMAKAR, Dinajpur

The luscious litchi of Dinajpur and its adjacent districts is likely to be dear this season as inclement weather has already affected the production.

Hailstorms and high temperature have reduced the chances of bumper production of the popular tropical fruit in the area, said locals.

Litchi growers in different upazilas of Dinajpur, who had expected high yield in view of sufficient flowering early this year, are now worried as adverse weather has affected the fruiting.

"The weather was favourable for litchi in early April but it turned bad in the middle of the month. I fear getting 30 per cent less than expected production from 100 litchi trees in my orchard as they got damaged due to hailstorms and heat," said Nurul Islam, owner of a litchi orchard at Uttar Ulipur in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

Litchi orchards in different areas of Sadar, Biral, Birganj, Khansama, Chirirbandar, Nawabganj and Hakimpur upazilas of Dinajpur district are in similar condition due to hailstorms and excessive heat, said farmers.

District horticulture department sources said litchi is cultivated in approx-

imately 2,000 hectares of land in Dinajpur and there are 3,000 commercial litchi orchards in the district.

Litchi trees are also found at almost every household in the district.

A full grown tree generally produces 3,000 to 8,000 pieces of litchi weighing 100 to 180 kg and able to yield the fruit for next 50 years, officials said.

At least 40 lakh kg of litchi production was expected this year, but it will be much less due to adverse weather, said farmers and horticulture officials of Dinajpur.

The litchi grown in

Dinajpur and adjacent districts is very much in demand in the national and international markets.

At present, several varieties of litchi including bedana, bombai, china and madraji are grown and marketed.

Last year ordinary varieties of litchi sold for Tk 250 to 300 per 100 pieces while bedana sold at Tk 600 to 1,000 for 100 pieces, market sources said.

Growers predicted higher prices this year as the production is likely to be lower than last year's.

Experts of horticulture

department in Dinajpur suggested the farmers to clean and nurse the stems and regularly spray pesticides on the litchi trees.

During a visit to different places, this correspondent saw farmers watering the trees to protect them from heat. Litchi trees need to be watered three to four times a day.

Md Moududul Haque, district horticulturist of Dinajpur, however, expressed hope that the production will be near the target if weather conditions improve shortly.



PHOTO: STAR

A litchi orchard at Mashimpur village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila sees hardly any fruits as recent hailstorms coupled with high temperature badly affected the fruit-bearing trees.

Rape, murder of indigenous girl sparks protest

Alleged criminal arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Longudu police yesterday arrested the alleged rapist and killer of indigenous girl Sujata Chakma from his house at Uttar Yarengchhari in Atharakhkhara union under Longudu upazila of the district.

The arrested is Md Ibrahim, 30, (a converted Muslim, earlier name Kanchan Chandra Biswas), son of Santosh Kumar Biswas of Uttar Yarengchhari village in Atharakhkhara union.

Santosh hails from Bolondi in Jessore district.

Sujata Chakma, 11, daughter of late Jyotish Chandra Chakma of Ultachhari village in Atharakhkhara union under Longudu upazila, was forcibly taken to a nearby jungle when she along with her youngest brother Triratan Chakma went to graze their cattle at about 2:30pm on Wednesday, said police.

"The alleged criminal, Ibrahim raped her and then hacked her with a

machete on the chest and back, leaving her dead on the spot, said Reazul Haque, officer in-charge (OC) of Longudu police station, quoting locals and the victim's family members.

"Situational evidences tell that arrested Ibrahim is the real culprit although he has not confessed it to us during primary interrogation. We are yet to receive the doctors' report in this regard," he said.

As the victim's brother Triratan Chakma hurriedly came back and told the incident to his family members, they started searching and found Sujata's body in a pool of blood in the jungle. Informed, police recovered the body on the night.

The body was handed over to her family members after autopsy at Rangamati General Hospital yesterday.

The victim's elder brother Biton Chakma, also a member of ward No 8 of Atharakhkhara union parishad, filed a murder

case with Longudu police station in this connection and Longudu police yesterday arrested the alleged killer.

"Ibrahim, also accused of raping another indigenous teenage girl on June 15 last year, was arrested by police after the incident and the court sent him to jail. He came out from jail last month after a higher court granted him bail," Longudu OC Reazul Haque added.

Monkya Ching, resident medical officer of Rangamati Sadar Hospital, said, "We will provide the medical report by next four days. I can't tell you anything about it."

Demanding exemplary punishment to the culprit, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity yesterday brought out a procession in the town and held a rally at New Court Building. They sent a memorandum to the home minister through the deputy commissioner

of Rangamati in this regard.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent adds: At a protest rally held at Changee Square area of Khagrachhari district town yesterday, leaders of Hill Women's Federation demanded exemplary punishment to the rapist and killer of Sujata Chakma.

Rape and other kinds of sexual abuse against indigenous girls have continued in Chittagong Hill Tracts region as criminals often go unpunished, they said.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Ayesha Khanom, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, has expressed her grave concern at rape and murder of adivasi schoolgirl Sujata, said a press release.

Demanding proper action against the criminal, she called upon all to form nationwide social movement against such brutalities on women and children.

Abducted man rescued in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Police rescued an abducted man in an unconscious state from the bank of the Padma near Paturia truck terminal under Shiblalaya upazila early yesterday.

Lutfar Rahman, 31, son of Badsha Mia of Koitora village, was rushed to Manikganj Sadar Hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Locals found the victim in a sack and informed police. His hands and legs were tied, said police.

Victim's brother Mozaffar Hossain said a gang of criminals kidnapped Lutfar from their residence on April 16 and demanded Tk 2 lakh as ransom for his release.

Mozaffar filed a case with Manikganj Sadar Police Station in this connection.

Rice mill gutted

UNB, Sherpur

A huge quantity of rice and machinery were gutted in a fire at Garkanda in Nalitabari upazila early yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the flame originated from an electric short circuit at Haque Rice Mill at about 3:00am and soon engulfed the entire mill and its godown.

On information, fire fighters from Sadar upazila headquarters reached the spot at about 4:30am due to long distance and bad condition of the road, when there was nothing left to save.

The affected mill owner claimed that the loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 1 crore.

Seven drug peddlers held in 3 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Law enforcers in separate drives arrested seven people in Narsingdi, Magura and Bogra districts on Wednesday and Tuesday.

In Narsingdi, law enforcers arrested two drug peddlers along with 1,000 bottles of phensidyl and 15 Yaba tablets from Satipara area of the district town on Wednesday night.

The arrestees are Razzak, 28, and Ayub Khan, 25, of the area. Police said. They also recovered a bullet from the duo.

In Magura, police seized 14 bottles of Phensidyl at Arpara-Kaliganj Road in Shalikhia upazila on Wednesday and arrested a man, reports UNB.

The arrestee was identified as Raju Ahmed, 45, son of Matiar Rahman of Parikhitpur village in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur.

Samshul Haque, officer in-charge of Shalikhia Police Station, said Raju was injured in a road accident in the area while he was going to Madhukhali by a motorbike in the morning.

Later, police arrested him along with the drug. Raju was admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital, the OC added.

In Bogra, police arrested four alleged drug peddlers along with 262 bottles of phensidyl from Madarganj Ghat in Sariakandi upazila on Tuesday night.

The arrestees are Yusuf Ali, 21, son of Hasmat of Lushni village in Kirigram district, Kashem, 45, son of Goni Miah, Abul Hossain, 45, son of Azimuddin and Sobhan, 42, son of Betar Boksh of the district.

The Daily Star - ENGLISH FAIR



PHOTO: STAR

Prize winners in different events of the English language fair held at Sapahar Government Girls' High School in Naogaon district pose for photograph with their teachers.

Kids from 3 more schools learn amid fun and games

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'naubaganj

Students of three schools in Sapahar upazila of Naogaon district took part in an English language fair held under English in Schools programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi, yesterday.

Adcom Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fair.

Over 350 students of Sapahar Government Girls' High School, Sapahar Pilot High School and Nitpur High School joined the fair at Sapahar Government Girls High School auditorium.

Mokhlesur Rahman, headmaster of the school, inaugurated the fair at around 11:30 am. At the inaugural session, the English teachers of the schools thanked The Daily Star and Robi for the programmes to promote English language learning among school students.

Globally renowned



and role play.

Mokhlesur Rahman, headmaster of Sapahar Government Girls' High School distributed prizes among the winners at the end of the programme. TM Kamrul Bari, coordinator of the programme, and Md Rajib of Adcom were present.

Aiming to promote English language learning among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

Under the initiative, each of one thousand schools selected from 64 districts of the country receives three complimentary copies of The Daily Star five days a week.

The ongoing English language fairs at different schools are being held in coordination with the education ministry as part of the three-year-long

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