



Nearly ripe litchis at an orchard of Munshirhat village in Thakurgaon municipality develop cracks three to four days after appearance of black spots. The spread of the disease caused mostly by high temperature worries the growers of the juicy summer fruit in the district.

PHOTO: STAR

Last-minute setback for litchi growers

Crack develops in juicy summer fruit in Thakurgaon

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT,
Thakurgaon

Litchi growers in the district are facing a setback only a few days before harvest as crack developed in the summer fruit.

DAE officials advised the farmers to spray adequate fresh water on the juicy fruits but to no effect.

Besides excessive summer heat, mindless use of harmful hormones and pesticides in the district's litchi orchards for increasing the yield, ripen the fruits early and make them look larger has threatened the yield, officials said.

Environment-friendly worms and insects are also decreasing fast as a result of rampant use of the chemicals and pesticides, they said.

During a visit to Munshirhat village behind the Polytechnic Institute in the district town last week, this correspondent saw black spots developed on most litchis in every tree.

Abdul Momin, son of Badsha Mian of Mirkamari village under Ishwardi upazila in Pabna, who bought two litchi orchards having 22 trees at a cost of Tk. 1.5 lakh, said he was going to incur a huge loss this season.

He said, at first a black spot appears on litchi's outer surface, then after 3-4 days the fruit splits up.

Spraying of fresh water on the fruits did not work, he said.

Last year ordinary varieties of litchi were sold for Tk 100 to 110 per 100 pieces

while Bedana, China sold at Tk 400 to 600 per 100 pieces at grower's level, Momin said.

This year the price is comparatively higher than the previous year. Each ordinary variety of litchi is being sold for Tk 140 to 160 per 100 pieces while Bedana, China at Tk 600 to 1000, Momin and others said.

At present, several varieties of litchi including Golapi, Bombay, China and Bedana are being grown in the district, farmers and traders said.

Several growers said they sprayed pesticides, fungicides, vitamins and hormones for over 20 times for protection, better colour and size of the fruit in the season.

Deputy Director of Thakurgaon Department of Agricultural Extension Md. Belayet Hossain told this correspondent that excessive temperature may be the reason behind developing crack in the litchis.

We suggested the farmers to spray fresh water on the fruits every afternoon to save their yields, he said.

Excessive use of hormone can also be a cause of developing cracks on the fruits, he added.

DAE sources said litchi is cultivated on approximately 605 hectares of land in Thakurgaon and there are 1,200 commercial orchards in the district.

A full-grown tree generally produces 3,000 to 8,000 pieces of litchi every season for 50 years, officials said.

THAKURGAON Charges pressed against 39 BNP, JCD activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

Charges have been pressed against 39 Thakurgaon BNP and JCD men for vandalising banks, business establishments and vehicles in the town on May 16 while protesting rejection of bail petitions of 33 leaders of BNP-led 18-party alliance on the day.

Sub-Inspector Ilias Ali of Thakurgaon Sadar Police Station submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court on Sunday.

Of the accused, six are now in jail while the rest, including JCD district unit President Rashed Alam Labu, General Secretary Aminul Islam Shohag and Organising Secretary Masudul Islam Munna, are on the run.

After hearing, Chief Judicial Magistrate Jukifkar Ali Khan issued arrest war-

rant against the absconding accused yesterday afternoon. BNP and JCD men went on the rampage in the district town after a Dhaka court rejected the bail prayers of 33 alliance leaders, including BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam, in a vehicle torching case.

They vandalised several banks, business establishments and at least 100 vehicles in the town, police said.

They also clashed with police at Thakurgaon intersection, leaving at least 12 people, including three cops, injured. Law enforcers fired 30 to 40 tear gas shells and rubber bullets to bring the situation under control, police further said.

When Ruhul was mishaving with a next door neighbour in the afternoon, Farida attempted to pacify him.

This angered Ruhul and at one stage, he stabbed Farida with a sharp weapon, leaving her dead on the spot.

Police arrested Ruhul following the incident.

Man stabs his sister dead

UNB, Bagerhat

A man stabbed his elder sister dead at Uttar Tafalbari village in Sharankhola upazila yesterday.

The victim is Farida Begum, 50, wife of Rustam Ali of Tafalbari village and daughter of Ismail Hawlader of Uttar Tafalbari.

Villagers said Ruhul Amin Hawlader had been behaving abnormally with his neighbours for the last two weeks.

Being informed, Farida came to her father's house to see her brother Ruhul yesterday.

When Ruhul was mishaving with a next door neighbour in the afternoon, Farida attempted to pacify him.

This angered Ruhul and at one stage, he stabbed Farida with a sharp weapon, leaving her dead on the spot.

Police arrested Ruhul following the incident.

2 housewives killed for dowry

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two housewives were murdered allegedly for dowry in Panchagarh and Madaripur districts on Sunday night.

In Panchagarh, Ferdousi Begum, 21, wife of Md Montu, 35, of Duhapar village under Atwary upazila, was tortured to death for dowry allegedly by her husband and in-laws, reports our correspondent.

Police quoted locals as saying that Montu, son of Md Mostafa, married Ferdousi, daughter of late Dabiruddin of Sardarpura village under the same upazila, a year ago. Since then, he and his family members used to torture Ferdousi physically and mentally for dowry.

On Sunday night, the couple locked in an altercation over the issue. At one stage, Montu and his family members beat up Ferdousi, resulting in her death on the spot.

Police arrested Montu and his sister Rumi, 22, while the rest fled their home.

Our Madaripur correspondent adds:

Police recovered the body of a housewife from the veranda of Rajoir Upazila Health Complex yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Tanzila Begum, 19, wife of Mohidul Sheikh of Majumdarkanti village in the upazila.

Zakir Hossain, maternal uncle of the victim, said Mohidul married Tanzila, daughter of Nurul Islam Sheikh of the village, on April 15 this year. After marriage, he put pressure on Tanzila to bring money from her parents to buy an auto-rickshaw, he added.

Being informed, Tanzila's father gave Mohidul Tk 2.50 lakh to buy an auto-rickshaw. On Sunday night, Mohidul asked Tanzila to bring some more money from her father. As she refused to do so, Mohidul strangled her, Zakir further said.

He alleged that Mohidul and his accomplices left the body on the veranda of Rajoir hospital at dead of night.

Rajoir police reverred the body in the morning and sent it to Madaripur Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.



Several hundred people, including women and children, join a human chain on DB Road in Gaibandha town yesterday demanding capital punishment to the killer of housewife Shamima Akhter Khushi. Hailed from Madhyapara of Gaibandha municipality, Khushi was strangled allegedly by her husband Rowshan Ferdous Babu at his rented house in the capital for dowry on May 21.

Smugglers held with gold, silver

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Law enforcers recovered huge quantities of gold and silver from alleged smugglers in Narail and Dinajpur yesterday and on Friday.

Narail DB police arrested two people with 17 kilograms of silver worth Tk 20 lakh while being smuggled from Charsa village under Tularampur union in Sadar upazila yesterday noon, reports our correspondent.

Contacted, Sub-divisional Engineer of local Water Development Board (WDB) Shabibur Rahman said, they have sent a letter to the higher authorities, seeking fund to cope with the situation.

The arrested are Anwar Bux, 30, and Sanoar Bux, 28, son of Elahi Bux of Betbari in Jodhpur union under Mohespur PS in Jenaidah district.

Sardar Rokibul Islam, police superintendent of Narail said on secret information, a team of DB police stopped a motorbike on Narail-Jessore road. They searched the youths

and found 14 bars of silver with them.

We took the seized silver to a local jewellery shop which confirmed it as silver worth Tk 20 lakh, he said.

In Dinajpur, gold weighing around 100 tolas was recovered at Hili border under Hakimpur upazila on Friday afternoon.

BGB arrested Rana Munshi, 32, son of late Younis Munshi of Basudevpur (Munshipara) village under the upazila in this connection.

Acting on a tip-off, a BGB team of Joypurhat-3 Battalion, led by Havildar Nazrul Islam of Hili check-post, raided Tampumore area in the border area of the upazila at around 5.00pm and recovered the gold bars worth Tk 6 lakh.

BGB source said that the arrested had brought the gold bars to smuggle it to India.

Erosion renders 350 families homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kurigram

Erosion by the Brahmaputra River has rendered over 350 families at seven villages in Ulipur and Chilmari upazilas homeless in the last one week.

The affected villages are Char Gujimari, Char Rumkhana, Anatapur and Shempur of Hatia union under Ulipur and Chilmari Ghat, Guatipara and Bankmara of Ramna union under Chilmari.

Of those, at least 145 families in Char Gujimari, 20 families in Char Rumkhana, 25 families in Anatapur and 15 families in Shempur villages of Hatia union and 55 families in Guatipara and 105 families in Bankmara of Ramna union were rendered homeless.

The erosion-hit people have taken shelter on government land and at their relatives' houses.

At least 35 bamboo clusters and about 145 acres of cultivable land of the two unions have been washed away due to the erosion.

The river devoured

several bamboo clusters and around 50 acres of cultivable land, said Abul Hossain, chairman of Hatia union.

Many people of the villages have started cutting down trees and bamboos in fear of the erosion, he added.

A 600-meter embankment, built only a month ago in Anantapur area of the union, is also threat-

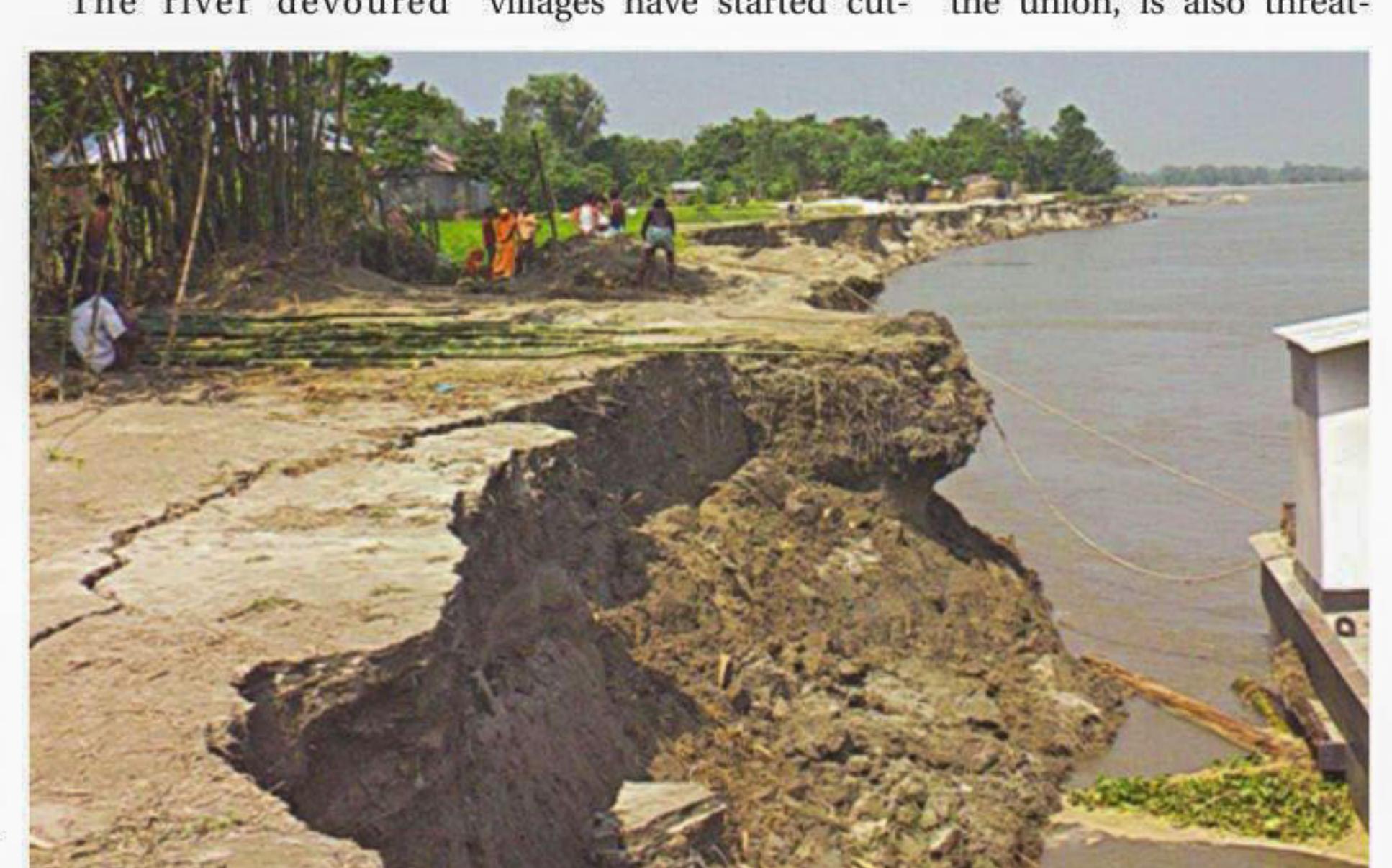
ened due to the erosion, said the chairman.

Victim Abdur Rahim, 50, of Gurati Para in Ramna union, said the erosion devoured his five acres of farmland and five bamboo clusters during the period.

Erosion by the river has taken a serious turn in the union, rendering scores of families homeless in Bangmara and Guratipara areas within the last one week, he added.

The union chairman Md Nur-E-Elahi said at least 160 families were rendered homeless by the erosion here. Till now no government officials visited the areas, he added.

Contacted, Sub-divisional Engineer of local Water Development Board (WDB) Shabibur Rahman said, they have sent a letter to the higher authorities, seeking fund to cope with the situation.



The Brahmaputra continues to devour homesteads and croplands at Bankmara village under Chilmari upazila of Kurigram district.

PHOTO: STAR