



PHOTO: STAR

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.

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 and chemicals 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, Bombai, 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.

Sand lifting threatens bridge

Contractor defies UNO order, continues extraction at dead of night

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A newly constructed important bridge over Buri Teesta River in Dimla upazila of the district is under risk due to sand extraction from the riverbed only 50 metres off the bridge.

The men of the contractor concerned are lifting sand from the area for completion of an approach road while with the upazila authorities of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) are turning a blind eye.

Joinal Abedin, a well-known contractor of the district, started construction of the 171-metre-long and 5.12-metre-wide bridge, locally known as "Shoila bridge" in Sadar union of Dimla upazila following a work order on April 12 in 2009.

But the bridge built at a cost of Tk 4.14 crore is yet to be handed over to LGED as the department authorities at the last stage of the work found that the approach road was not built as per design.

And so, contractor Joinal Abedin was directed to rebuild the road properly through expansion on both sides.

But the contractor set a locally made heavy dredger

on the riverbed very close to the bridge and started extracting sand to fill the lower structure of the metal-alled approach road.

Vacuum in the riverbed caused by sand extraction poses threat to the concrete bridge that serves as a convenient link between the district headquarters and Dimla upazila and Domar and Dimla upazilas. It also shortens road distance from Lalmonirhat and Panchagarh districts to Nilphamari.

Following verbal complaints from a number of people regarding sand extraction from the riverbed near Shoila bridge, Mizanur Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Dimla, visited the sight on May 16 and stopped sand extraction with the dredger machine.

However, the UNO, as per earlier schedule, left the upazila to join his new workplace the following day and his successor is yet to join the office.

Meanwhile, men of the influential contractor, also a local leader of Jatiya Party (JP), a component of ruling Awami League-led grand alliance, have continued sand extraction from the sight at dead of night, said locals.

Locals' objection to sand extraction from the riverbed fell into deaf ears, said Mohabbat Hossain, a health worker at a Dimla hospital, who uses the bridge regularly.

Rabiul Alam, vice chairman of Dimla upazila parishad, said the pillars of

the bridge as well as the river embankments will be affected if a hole is created near the bridge due to sand extraction.

On contact, Rashidul Alam Bidyut, a representative of the contractor, claimed that extraction of sand from the riverbed is

'minimum' and they are not operating the dredger to extract sand for the last few days.

Asked about the matter a few days ago, Shyamapada Ghosh, upazila engineer of Dimla said, "I am aware of sand extraction by the contractor's men from riverbed

with a locally made dredger. It will not affect the bridge in any way as its foundation is very strong."

This correspondent could not talk to contractor Joinal Abedin for his comments as he did not receive phone calls despite repeated attempts.



PHOTO: STAR

A dredger set by a contractor, also a local leader of Jatiya Party, extracts sand from Buri Teesta River in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari district, posing threat to the adjacent newly constructed bridge connecting the district headquarters with Domar upazila.

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 Jukfika Ali Khan issued arrest war-

rants 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.

A case was filed with Thakurgaon Sadar Police Station under the speedy trial Act the same night.

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 Sardarjpara 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 revered the body in the morning and sent it to Madaripur Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR

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 in separate drives 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 Chasra village under Tularampur union in Sadar upazila yesterday noon, reports our correspondent.

The arrestees are Anwar Bux, 30, and Sanoar Bux, 28, son of Elahi Bux of Bethari in Jadobpur 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 Younus 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 arrestee 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.



PHOTO: STAR

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