

Brick kilns amid agri lands damage paddy, other crops

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Brick kilns set up on or close to agricultural lands wreak havoc to crops in different areas of Rangpur and Lalmonirhat districts.

Toxic gas from two brick kilns damaged boro paddy on about 230 acres of land at Asmatpara village under Damodarpur union in Badarganj upazila and Bhogirath-Machhari village under Sarai union in Kaunia upazila in Rangpur district during last couple of days, reports our Rangpur correspondent.

"I cultivated boro paddy on around two acres of land but toxic hot gas of ANB Bricks totally damaged it," said Abdul Baki, 50, a farmer of Bhogirath-Machhari village in Kaunia upazila.

Kaunia Upazila Agriculture Officer Mahabubur Rahman said he visited the affected area and found that boro paddy of at least 80 acres of land was totally damaged by the toxic gas from ANB Bricks.

Abdul Mottaleb Sarker, upazila nirbahi officer of Kaunia, told this correspondent that he assured the affected farmers of help to realise compensation for the damage.

Contacted, Alamgir Hossain, owner of ANB Bricks, said he will compensate the affected farmers as soon as possible.

In Badarganj, toxic hot gas from UBL Bricks damaged paddy on 150 acres of



PHOTO: STAR

Standing boro paddy on around 80 acres of land at Bhagirath-Machhari village in Kaunia upazila under Rangpur district got damaged under the impact of hot poisonous gas emitted from a brick kiln set up in the agricultural surroundings. Inset, paddy at a field of Asmatpara village in Badarganj upazila dried up due to the same effect from a nearby brick kiln.



land belonging to 80 farmers at Asmatpara village.

A large number of trees including fruit bearing mango, jackfruit and litchi trees were also affected by the toxic gas.

Ziaul Haque, agriculture officer of Badarganj upazila, said he visited the affected

boro fields, prepared a list of the affected farmers and submitted it to the authorities concerned.

"I have already asked the owners of the two brick fields to compensate the affected farmers for their loss," said Rangpur Deputy Commissioner Farid

Ahmad.

The affected farmers of the two upazilas have demanded removal of the brick kilns to save their crops from regular damage.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports: Around 60 affected farmers have demanded compensation as

flying ash and thick smoke from a brick kiln have damaged boro paddy and other crops on vast tracts of land at Chandonpat village of Kamlabari union in Aditmari upazila under the district during the last one week.

The burning of high-sulphur coal in nearby brick kilns has damaged boro paddy on about 30 acres of land and threatens boro and maize on more 20 acres of land at Chandonpat village, locals said.

"We are having trouble growing crops since the SAB Brickfield went into operation two years ago. The smoke from the brick kiln also affected a large number of trees including mango, jackfruit and bamboo," said Afsar Ali, an affected farmer, also a local UP member.

Hamidur Rahman, upazila agriculture officer of Aditmari, said he visited the damaged boro and maize fields, made a list of affected farmers and submitted it to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

"The crop damage may be due to the burning of environmentally harmful high-sulphur coal imported from India. While burning, this type of coal emits poisonous sulphur dioxide," said Aditmari UNO Rezaul Alam Sarker.

"I will take necessary step to realise compensation for the affected farmers," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

This bridge near Purbo Jouta Government Primary School in Baufal upazila under Patuakhali district has remained without any repair after its collapse on April 28, causing immense sufferings to a large number of villagers, including school children.

FIVE-POINT DEMAND

Barapukuria miners threaten fresh strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The miners at Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) in Parbatipur upazila of the district have threatened to go on an indefinite strike from May 21 if their five-point demand is not met by May 20.

Leaders of BCMCL Workers' Union issued the ultimatum to BCMCL authorities yesterday.

The demand are regularisation of jobs of 147 workers engaged in underground and surface mining operations, appointment of a full-time doctor for the workers, disbursement of profit bonus for 2011 and 2012, introduction of life insurance scheme and

food rationing for the miners.

Wazed Ali, President of BCMCL Workers' Union, said they have been agitating for long to regularise jobs of 147 workers, who are engaged in mining operations, risking their lives.

"If the demands are not met within the deadline, we will start an indefinite strike on the following day," Wazed said, adding that the BCMCL authorities will be responsible if any untoward incident happens during the strike.

Contacted, BCMCL Managing Director Md Aminuzzaman said the miners have been working under Chinese company XMCL. So, they should place their demands to the company concerned, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

The owner of this profusely yielding jackfruit tree at Baroipara village in Shaikupa upazila under Jhenidah district sets thorny branches around the trunk to protect the nearly ripe fruits from being stolen.

SNIPPETS

Prime minister to visit Mawa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to visit Mawa in Louhajong upazila on May 28. She is expected to inaugurate two BIWTA salvage ships on the river Padma. Later she will address a rally organised by local Awami League near the Padma bridge rehabilitation centre at Kumarbogh. Preparations are going on to make the visit a success, said Md Saiful Islam Badol, deputy commissioner of the district.

Brick kilns fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A mobile court on Wednesday fined three brick kilns Tk.75,000 in Nawabganj upazila for using wood as fuel. Police said, the mobile court in a drive raided MRS Bricks in Koyergoni village, AB Bricks at Malarpara village and MRB Bricks at Hasarpara village in the upazila and fined Tk. 25,000 each as those were using wood for burning bricks.

Woman commits 'suicide'

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

A police constable's wife allegedly committed suicide at her residence in Puratan Kosba Niribili area in Jessore town on Monday night. The deceased was identified as Selina Aktar Bithi, 35, wife of Mizanur Rahman, a constable at Chasra police outpost of the district. Police said Bithi killed herself by hanging from the ceiling of a room when her husband was at his workplace at about 9:30pm.

Kid drowns in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A nine-year-old kid drowned in a pond at Joberpur village in Chatmohar upazila on Wednesday afternoon. The deceased was Sadia Khatun, daughter of Fazar Ali of the village. She drowned in the pond near her residence while playing on its bank in the afternoon. Family members later found the body of Sadia floating in the water in the evening. She was taken to Chatmohar upazila health complex but the doctors declared her dead.

Woman killed in attack

UNB, Natore

A woman was killed and another injured in an attack by neighbours at Jogendranagar village in Gurudaspur upazila early Monday. The deceased was identified as Safura Khatun, 27, a divorcee of the same village. Police said some villagers found a cow on a road at the village at midnight. Then they handed over the cow to the pinfold of Anwar Hossain. On information, cattle owner Saiful along with his associates rushed to the pinfold and broke open its lock to take back his cattle forcibly. They hit Anwar with sharp weapons as he (Anwar) resisted them. Neighbour Safura screamed when she saw the attack on Anwar. At one stage, Saiful's associates killed Safura and dumped her body into the nearby Atrai River.

Man held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Detective Branch of police detained an 'arms peddler' near Awtapara Bazar in Ishwardi upazila on Monday night. The arrestee, Ziarul Islam Zia, 35, of village Basherbandha of the upazila was sent to jail in the morning. A foreign made pistol, three bullets and a magazine were recovered from him.

Police seize tree but culprits flee scene

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police seized a big roadside mahogany tree worth about Tk 40 thousand from illegal fellers beside Lalmonirhat-Rangpur road at Mohendranagar in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila at dawn yesterday.

A police team led by ASP Mahfuzul Islam raided the spot when the tree fellers were sawing it beside the road, police said, adding that the culprits hurriedly left the scene sensing presence of the law enforcers.

The tree fellers were identified and will be arrested soon, police said.

An identified gang of numbering 10 to 15 people in the area are involved in felling big

roadside trees beside Lalmonirhat-Rangpur road, Lalmonirhat-Kurigram road and three other roads in the area, people at Mohendranagar village alleged.

In last one year, the gang illegally felled at least 250 big mahogany trees, each worth Tk 40 thousand to 2.50 lakh, they said.

Tree felling is also rampant beside Lalmonirhat-Burimari road, Lalmonirhat-Fulbari road, Kaliganj-Chaparhat road, Doikhowa-Hatibandha road and Patgram-Jagotbar road in the district.

Active mostly during the night, the tree looters are very skilled at the task and it requires hardly an hour to fell down a big tree, locals said.



PHOTO: STAR

Police seized this illegally felled tree at Mohendranagar village in Lalmonirhat Sadar yesterday.

Cropland fish farming gets popular in Jhalakathi

UNB, Jhalakathi

Fish cultivation in enclosures (ghers) on cropland is increasing fast in the district.

The practice is largely attributed by the locals to drastic fall in fish production in the rivers and canals.

The annual demand for fish in the district is now around 10,766 tonnes but its production till last year was 4,446 tonnes.

The official at the Department of Fisheries in the district hope to meet the deficit of 3,318 tonnes and even achieve a surplus production of fish by rapidly increasing the enclosures.

Under a project this year,

arrangements were made to produce monosex tilapia in 28 nurseries and eggs of white fish in 108 ponds, they said.

Besides, initiatives were taken to produce fish fry in different ponds of the district.

This year, fish enclosures were expanded on 106 hectares of land in the district while those who already had set up enclosures had been expanding those to make more profit.

Those who used to cultivate fish in their ponds are now cultivating fast growing monosex tilapia in their paddy fields.

Some are expanding the

enclosures to cultivate Cat fish, locally known as shing, koi and magur.

In different upazilas, where fish production was nominal, cultivation of fishes in those areas has marked a noticeable growth.

Abul Bashar of Gabkhan village in Sadar upazila, who recently returned from America, has started fish cultivation digging holes in three acres of paddy field. Spending Tk 6.00 lakh, he released 42,000 fish fries.

Rezaul Karim of the same village has been successful in cultivating tilapia fish.

He has started cultivating monosex tilapia, by setting up enclosure on 3-4 acres of a

paddy field beside his house.

UP member Zahidul Islam of Deoulkathi village said, he started cultivating fish on one bigha of land, adopting the same method, following advice of the local fisheries office.

He said that in his union alone, more than 10 acres of land were brought under fish cultivation by this process this year.

Jhalakathi district fisheries officer Rezaul Karim said, this year fish production has increased remarkably and efforts are on to maintain it.

He also expected that from this year Jhalakathi will turn into a 'fish surplus' district after meeting the deficit.

Housewife murdered

Mysterious death of another

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A housewife was murdered allegedly for dowry at Dakkhin Basudevur village in Hakimpur upazila of the district on Wednesday night.

The victim, Kakoli Begum 21, wife of Parvez Rahman 29, also hailed from the same village.

She was married off by her parents to Parvez, son of Abdul Mannan of the village a year ago.

Recently, Parvez demanded Tk 50,000 as dowry from his father-in-law and sent Kakoli to her parents' house on Wednesday morning to bring the money.

As Kakoli returned empty-handed in the evening, Parvez started beating up her. At one stage, he tied a string around her neck and she fell unconscious. Parvez took Kakoli to Hakimpur Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared

her dead.

Parvez had gone into hiding soon after the incident. The body was sent to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Kakoli's uncle Md Mofazzal Haque alleged that police refused to accept their case.

Our Rangpur correspondent adds: Mystery shrouds the death of a housewife at Rasulpur village under Mithapukur upazila early Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Jesmin Akhter, 20, wife of Ershad Ali, 27 of the village.

Police quoted locals as saying that Ershad Ali, son of Abdul Hamid, married Jesmin, daughter of Abdul Jalil of Malipara village under the upazila seven months ago.

In the morning, Ershad and his family members told their neighbours that Jesmin committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room.

6 outlaws arrested, arms seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) early Wednesday arrested six outlaws along with firearms from Shirail area of Shibchar upazila here.

The arrestees are members of outlawed Sarbahara Party, Rab-8 sources said.

They were identified as Saidur, 19, second-in-

command of the party's Monir Mollah fraction, Shafiqul, 22, Ibrahim Bepari, 21, Sohag Bepari, 17, Shahin, 17, and Monir Khalifa.

At a press conference at Madaripur camp, Rab said acting on a tip-off, the elite force raided Shirail area around 5:00am and held the six outlaws along with three pipe guns and two homemade rifles.