

ATTACK BY PESTS AND WILD MONKEYS

Mandarin farmers face setback

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Pest attacks and import of Indian mandarins have caused severe setback for the mandarin growers in the district.

Moulvibazar Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Shahjahan Chowdhury said mandarin was cultivated on around 250 acres of land in Juri, Kulaura and Baralekha upazilas this year.

Of them, 150 acres were cultivated in Juri upazila, 75 acres in Baralekha and 25 acres in Kulaura. The entire district has 130 large orchards as well as several small ones. Last year, orange production was three to three and a half tonnes per hectare, while it has been around four to four and a half tonnes this year.

Farmers in the hills of Rupachara and Lalchara in Goalbari union under Juri upazila said all the mandarin trees are full of the fruit.

Murshed Mia, a farmer of Lalchara village, said he sold the produce from 1,000 mandarin trees for Tk 5 lakh this year, adding that he suffered a loss of Tk 3 lakh. They are not getting the fair price due to import of Indian mandarins, he said, demanding a halt to the import.

Faruk Mia, a farmer of Rupachara village,



A fruiting mandarin tree at Suknachara village in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar.

demanded revival of the project so that the farmers could get training and advice on mandarin cultivation.

Munun Mia said most of the farmers sell the fruit on advance payment, so they do not get the right price. He said they sold one bunch of 100 mandarins to local buyers for Tk 200 to Tk 1,000.

Baralekha Upazila Agriculture Officer (UAO) Debal Sarkar said farmers cultivated three varieties of mandarins there, among which Khasi variety was the most cultivated. Insects attack the fruit when it ripens, he said, adding that they regularly advise the farmers on how to prevent the attacks.

He said it is necessary to prune the trees and irrigate them during drought after the rainy season to ensure production of mandarins, adding that disease and insect attacks will decrease in the Bangla months of Poush and Magh. Use of cartap insecticide on the mandarin trees will prevent insect attacks, he added.

Juri UAO Krishno Roy said they are giving advice to mandarin farmers on how to prevent pest attacks.

Deputy director of Moulvibazar DAE said mandarins are falling off the trees due to lack of regular irrigation and irregular use of fertilizer and pesticide.

Man held with USD 20000; 2 others with gold at Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested an alleged Hundu trader from Benapole checkpost area under Benapole Port Police Station yesterday.

They seized US\$20,000, Indian rupees 7,500, Tk 18,000 and seven mobile sets from his possession.

The arrestee is Mohammad Haque, 50, son of Fazlur Rahman of Nilnagar area in Gazipur Sadar upazila.

Commanding Officer of BGB 49 Battalion Lt Col Ariful Haque said a team of BGB members conducted a drive in Benapole check post area and arrested Mohammad Haque along with the money.

Later, the arrestee was handed over to Benapole Port Police Station with the money. A case was filed.

Meanwhile, BGB members arrested two alleged gold smugglers and seized eight gold bars from their possession from Putkhali border area under Benapole Port Police Station on Friday night.

The arrestees are Yakub Ali, 30 son of Amirul Islam of Amla village, and Rony Akhter, 28, son of Anisur Rahman of Balunda village under the police station.

Commanding Officer of BGB 21 Battalion Lt Col Imran Ullah Sarkar said, on information, a team of BGB conducted a drive in the area and arrested them while they were smuggling the gold worth around Tk 40 lakh to India.

The arrestees were handed over to Benapole Port Police Station along with the gold. A case was filed in the regard.

No respite from attacks

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to The Daily Star, Khokon alleged that the law enforcers opened fire targeting him.

A s k e d , N o a k h a l i Superintendent of Police Ilias Sharif said police fired blanks to bring the situation under control.

The SP further said he didn't know whether anyone was injured in the incident.

Contacted, Sonaimuri upazila unit AL President Mominul Islam Baker denied the allegation that ruling party men intercepted the BNP procession.

The AL leader claimed that BNP leaders and activists led by Khokon vandalised an election campaign office of his party.

At a press conference at Noakhali Ainjibi Samity auditorium earlier in the morning, all BNP candidates in the six constituencies in Noakhali had alleged that the atmosphere in the district is not at all congenial for holding polls.

In the capital, Mirza Abbas, BNP candidate for Dhaka-8, came under attack yesterday noon when he along with his supporters was campaigning in Segunbagicha area.

Abbas, also member of the BNP Standing Committee, alleged that around 100 AL men suddenly attacked them without any provocation.

Seven to eight BNP activists were wounded, he told journalists after the incident.

Subrata Chowdhury, Jatiya Oikyafront-backed candidate for Dhaka-6, alleged that miscreants attacked his election rally in the city's Hatchhola area.

Meanwhile, BNP candi-

date for Chandpur-2 Jalal Uddin and nine other party men were injured in attacks allegedly by AL men at Ladhuva village in Matlab upazila.

Talking to journalists, Jalal alleged that he and his supporters were attacked twice in the presence of police.

He also claimed that the law enforcers even assisted the attackers.

Chandpur Superintendent of Police Jihadul Kabir, however, refuted the allegation and said police protected Jalal from the attackers.

Matlab (north) Jubo League President Dewan Juhur Islam said the incident might have stemmed from internal feud in the local BNP unit.

In Manikganj, BNP candidate for Manikganj-1 SA Kabir Jinna and about 20 party men were wounded in an attack allegedly by ruling party men at Daulatpur last evening.

Earlier on Friday, three BNP candidates -- Romana Mahamud in Sirajganj-2, Habibul Islam Habib in Sathkira-1 and Jeba Amin in Jhalakathi-2 -- suffered injuries in attacks allegedly by AL activists, according to media reports.

Yesterday, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed claimed that around 150 party candidates so far came under attack from AL men across the country.

Such attacks are being carried out in all the constituencies right under the nose of law enforcers, he said at the party's Nayapaltan central office in the capital.

BNP candidates in Bogura, Sirajganj, Gazipur, Jamalpur, Manikganj and Patuakhali alleged that a level playing field was

absent in the districts and law enforcers were working in favour of the ruling party.

In Chattogram, at least 10 people, including a son of Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed, were injured in an attack in Satkania upazila's Keuchia upazila.

At least 10 BNP men were injured as AL men allegedly swooped on a meeting of BNP candidate for Patuakhali-1 Altaf Hossain Chowdhury at Badarpur village in Patuakhali.

In Bholia, the BNP alleged that at least 20 party men were injured in an attack by AL men in Lalmohor launch terminal area yesterday.

Besides, 12 Jatiya Party men, including its candidate for Barguna-2 Mizanur Rahman, were injured in an attack allegedly by AL men at Baichutki ferry ghat.

Last night, Joly Talukder, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) candidate for Netrakona-4, and her supporters came under attack while campaigning in Mansiri Palpara area of Netrakona.

On Friday evening, BNP men allegedly attacked an AL election camp in Ramerkandi Mor Bazar area in Sherpur, leaving 10 AL men injured.

Local BNP leaders denied party men's involvement in the attack.

Moreover, four persons were injured in an attack allegedly by BNP men at Duhuri village in Dinajpur.

Witnesses said a group of BNP supporters was campaigning at the village in Biral upazila yesterday. As they sought vote for 'sheaf of paddy' -- the BNP's electoral symbol, one of the voters there said he would vote for 'boat' -- the AL's electoral symbol.

Contacted, Kazi Alamgir Hossain, general secretary of district unit AL, denied the allegation and said no AL man was involved in the incident.

At this, the BNP supporters got angry and beat him up. Three others got injured while trying to save the man.

In Jhenidah, a rickshaw-

puller was injured at Helai village as AL men allegedly attacked a rickshaw carrying a loudspeaker used in campaigns for the BNP candidate for Jhenaidah-4 yesterday.

At least 10 BNP men were injured as AL men allegedly swooped on a meeting of BNP candidate for Patuakhali-1 Altaf Hossain Chowdhury at Badarpur village in Patuakhali.

Taher's son Abul Hossain Bahadur thinks his father was implicated because of his involvement with BNP politics.

"If police want, they can dig my father's grave and take his corpse to the police station. It is really shameful that my dead father has been made an accused," he said, standing by his father's grave around 5:30pm.

Bahadur is the general secretary of Jubo Dal's Kadir Hanif union unit.

About two hours after he spoke to The Daily Star, police arrested him in the case, although he was not a named accused. Saifur Rahman, sub-inspector of Sudharam Police Station, confirmed his arrest.

The case also names Qatar expatriate Harun, who has been living in the Middle-Eastern country for more than five years. He last came to the country in December last year and left for Qatar around six months ago, his family said.

"Then how come he was present at the spot on that day?" said Harun's younger brother Rasel Mahmud, also

FROM PAGE 1

"clash" between Awami League and BNP men the previous day.

Mohamad Hanif, general secretary of ward-9 Jubo League of the same union, was killed when BNP men attacked an AL campaign

passing by a BNP programme, according to the case statement.

This case brings to mind the dozens of cases filed in September where dead men, bed-ridden patients and expatriates, some of them involved with BNP politics, were made accused.

Asked about the latest case, a local BNP leader said it was meant to harass former and current BNP leaders and supporters as well as their families in Noakhali-4 constituency.

Police intensified their raids on the houses of BNP men since filing of the case, he alleged.

"Only 40 to 50 BNP men were holding a programme when the killing [of the Jubo League man] took place in Poschim Ismail Nagar. But they made 365 BNP men accused in the case," said the BNP leader.

Asked why he named a dead man and an expat in the case, complainant Ariful Islam Sumon said he was in a meeting and asked this correspondent to call him an hour later.

But he did not receive any call afterwards.

This correspondent yesterday visited the killing spot, which is virtually a deserted place. Jubo Dal leader Abdur Rahim Rejvi's house is just behind the spot. Three more houses are

beside Rejvi's.

The area is five to six kilometres away from the main road and is surrounded by crop fields, with only a handful of houses faraway.

Even four days after the clash, 30 to 40 damaged chairs were found scattered in front of Rejvi's house where BNP leaders said, they were holding a meeting attended by local BNP men.

They alleged that AL men, armed with firearms, attacked them and that Hanif was killed by AL men themselves.

But no one from the village was willing to talk to this newspaper fearing reprisal.

"I don't know" or "I don't want to say anything" were the replies of all the three people The Daily Star talked to yesterday.

One woman from a nearby house said, "Please go away. If they will harm us, we will harm us."

She walked away without saying anything when asked who would harm them.

Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sudharam Police Station, said the names of dead or expatriate, if any, would be dropped after investigation.

Denying the allegation of harassing BNP men, the OC said police were acting neutrally.

At a press conference at Noakhali Ainjibi Samity auditorium yesterday, Mohammad Shahjahan, a BNP candidate from Noakhali-4, alleged the

ruling party men launched the attack on them on that day (Dec 11).

He blamed Hanif's death on the ruling party's infighting and alleged the case was filed with a political motive.

But AHM Khairul Anam Chowdhury Selim, president of Noakhali district AL, refuted the allegation. "No one from our party made the attack. My party activist was the victim of BNP's brutality instead."

He said three of their men were pasting posters after campaigning in the area when the BNP men chased and caught one of them. They tortured him and shot him to death, he alleged.

Hundreds

FROM PAGE 16

including two Ro-Ro ferries, were plying non-stop since morning, but it did not help normalise the traffic congestion, said Barkat Ullah, assistant general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation.

The rush of people heading for the southern districts has increased to a large extent thanks to the three-day holiday weekend, he added.

"The authorities are trying to normalise the situation," said Arman Hossain, sub-inspector of Mawa Naval Police Outpost.

The pressure started mounting since Thursday night, he added.

ment should strengthen the organisational structure of the regulatory bodies, Salehuddin said.

Among others, Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM, Ghulam Quader, a former advisor to a caretaker government, Asif Ibrahim, a former president of DCCI, Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, M Ramizuddin Chowdhury, editor of daily Purbokone, Nasim Manzur, former president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Abul Kasem Khan, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry; MA Taslim, former chairman of Tariff Commission; and AB Mirza Azizul Islam, advisor to a former caretaker government; also addressed the event.

The upcoming govern-

Ghost cases, again

FROM PAGE 1

about the structure of the political parties. We are lagging behind our competing countries because of weakness in our political institutions," he said.

The Election Commission's infrastructure is the largest in comparison to the others in the subcontinent. Despite that, the EC has failed to discharge its responsibility properly," Sakhawat said.

The country does not have any policy on institutionalising the commission, creating crisis to take timely decisions, he said, adding that the businesspeople were now panicking about the situation after the polls.

The ICCB vice president also said the massive development of the country has taken place in the last few years was not a bi-product of good governance.

The ICCB vice president also said the massive development of the country has taken place in the last few years was not a bi-product of good governance.

"One of the prime philosophies of taxing is to reduce income inequality," she said.

To harness benefit from the demographic dividend, she said the government must create job opportunities for the ever growing number of unemployed youths.

The ICCB vice president also said the massive development of the country has taken place in the last few years was not a bi-product of good governance.

"The central bank has framed a lot of rules and regulations to supervise banks. But banks hardly follow those as many defaulters often reschedule their nonperforming loans more than three times breaching the rules," he said.

The upcoming govern-

ment should strengthen the organisational structure of the regulatory bodies, Salehuddin said.

A demographic discrimination between Dhaka and the other parts of the country has been created, he said.