



Farmer Abdus Salam gives a bleak look as brown plant hopper has already destroyed a large portion of his Aman field at Dakkhin Berubandh village in Jaldhaka upazila of Nilphamari.

PHOTO: STAR

Pest attack worries Aman farmers in 2 Nilphamari UZs

Locally available medicines fail to check fast spreading of brown plant hopper

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Massive attack of brown plant hopper worries paddy farmers in Jaldhaka and Sadar upazilas of Nilphamari as Aman harvesting season is a couple of weeks away.

The pest, locally known as 'current poka', spreads fast while pesticides found in local markets hardly work, said farmers.

Visiting different affected villages like Balarpukur, Ghughumari, Chairmanpara and Dakkhin Berubandh of Jaldhaka upazila, and Charcharabari, Mahabbat Bajitpara, Bajitpara and Uttar para of Sadar upazila, this correspondent found attack of brown plant hopper at many fields.

"The pests suck up fluid of the paddy plants and corns at milk stage, causing

them to dry up and ultimately fall on ground. The pests ruin crop on a bigha (30 decimal) of land in only in three to four days," said farmer Abdur Rahim, 55, of Chairmanpara village.

As the pests destroy paddy fields too fast, farmers call it 'current poka' to mean that it spreads as fast as electricity, he added.

Abdur Rahman, 58, of Dakkhin Berubandh village expressed similar views.

Arif Rabbani, sub assistant agriculture officer of Nilphamari Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said, "This year we set a target to cultivate Aman paddy on 1,12,375 hectares of land in six upazilas of the district. But farmers have exceeded the target and the expected production is 3.36 lakh tonnes of rice."

Abdus Salam, 22, of Dakkhin Berubandh village in Jaldhaka upazila said he cultivated Aman on 20 bighas of land and the growth was healthy.

"But only a couple of weeks before the harvesting time, 'current poka' attacked BR-11 and Swarna varieties of Aman on eight bighas of land in late last month. A large portion of the plants has been ruined as insecticides prescribed by local shopkeepers work very little while agriculture department staffer are not available for consultation," he added.

Another farmer Mazedul Islam, 30, of Chairmanpara village in the same upazila lamented that the pest damaged paddy on his four bighas out of total 12 bighas of land, making the green plants and

immature corns as dry as straw.

"I am cutting paddy on my three-bigha land two weeks before the actual harvesting time as brown plant hopper attacked the field," said Habibur Rahman, 45, of Mahabbat Bajitpara village.

On contact, Jaldhaka Upazila Agriculture Officer Shah Md Mahfuzul Huque admitted attack of brown plant hopper in some fields.

He, however, claimed that the affected area is not much and the situation is mostly under control as his field staffers suggest farmers to spray insecticide of Imichlorapid group.

Excessive use of urea fertilizer, damp and cloudy weather make way for such pest attack, he said.

CASE UNDER ICT ACT

IU BCL leader sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Kushtia court yesterday sent a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Islamic University (IU) unit, to jail in a case filed under the ICT Act and Special Power Act for his derogatory comments about fellow party leaders.

A team of Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Rakibul Islam Rakib, general secretary of BCL IU unit, from Pyiaratala area of Kushtia town around 9:30pm on Friday.

Earlier on November 2, Jewel Rana Halim, former BCL general secretary of IU unit, filed as the case with Islamic University Police Station against Rakib for making 'derogatory' comments against some local Awami League (AL) leaders and former IU BCL leaders over a leaked phone conversation with another former BCL leader of the university unit.

After hearing the recording of the phone conversation, Kushtia Senior Judicial Magistrate Selina Parvin ordered to send Rakib to jail after police produced him before the court.

Drug addict kills father for money

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A man, who was severely injured allegedly by his drug addict son in Rajapur upazila on Friday night, died at a hospital in Barisal early yesterday.

The deceased, Delwar Hossain Khan, 41, was son of Abdul Hai of Kaibortakhali village in the upazila.

Quoting victim's neighbours, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Rajapur Police Station Jahid Hossain said

Delwar's son Hridoy Khan, 19, used to take drugs and often demanded money from his day labourer father for the purpose.

After failing to get money, Hridoy swooped on his father and hit him on the head with an iron rod on Friday night and fled the scene, leaving him critically injured.

Family members rescued injured Delwar and took him to Rajapur Upazila Health Complex from where he was shifted to Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital the same night.

Delwar succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment there early yesterday, the OC said, adding that after conducting autopsy the body was handed over to the deceased's family.

They were conducting drives in different areas to arrest the culprit, said the officer.

Abducted girl returns from India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A ninth-grade student, abducted and trafficked into India through Hili border in September, was handed over to her family on Friday after she made it back to Bangladesh the day before.

A case was filed by her father with Biral Police Station, accusing her private tutor Ashutosh Chandra Roy and three others of abducting her on September 4.

On September 26, the case was transferred to Police Bureau Investigation (PBI).

The abductors crossed into India through Hili border on the same day of abduction and took her to Siliguri in West Bengal, the girl had told her parents over phone recently.

Waheduzzaman, sub-inspector (SI) of PBI in Dinajpur and the investigation officer of the case, said they helped the girl return home and rescued her on Thursday night, hours after she arrived in Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila of Bangladesh.

PBI was trying to arrest the abductors, the SI also said.



A beekeeper from Bagerhat sets honey bee boxes beside a mustard field at Ukiara in Garpara union under Sadar upazila of Manikganj. The picture taken last week gives a typical picture in different areas of the district during the winter as honey produced from mustard has good demand in the market.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

Road crash kills civet in Lawachhara forest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A masked palm civet (called Gandhogokul in Bangla) was killed, apparently being crushed under the wheel of a vehicle, on a road in Lawachhara forest in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila early yesterday.

Fifteen-km-long Kamalganj-Sreemangal road passes through Lawachhara National Park and different kinds of vehicles ply it.

"While we were on a patrol early Friday, we saw a dead palm civet lying in blood on the road. The wheel of a car appears to have passed over its head," said Anwar Hossain, beat officer of Lawachhara forest.

The nocturnal animal would be saved if vehicular movement through Lawachhara was banned, he said.

Earlier on several occasions, animals were killed in accidents with vehicles on the road.

"Most of the wild animals come

out in search of food at night. During the time, vehicles often move fast, causing risk for the creatures," said Anisur Rahman, assistant conservator of Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department in Moulvibazar.

"Civet generally grows 100 to 120 centimetres long and its tail is 48 to 50 centimetres. The animal is native to South and Southeast Asia and it lives on different fruits, meat and vegetables," he said.

Amputee JSC examinee has high hopes for future

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Both hands of Zahidul Islam had to be amputated in an electrocution incident when he was a student of first grade. But that could not deter him from his pursuit of getting education.

Seven years later, Zahidul is attending this year's Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations under Jashore Education Board at Monirampur Government Girls' High School centre.

Out of 20 eighth graders from Dhaligati Secondary School in Monirampur upazila of Jashore, Zahidul ranks sixth in the merit list.

Zahidul secured 4.5 GPA when he appeared for Primary Education Completion examinations from Lauri Government Primary School, said Dilip Kumar Paul, the school's headteacher.

Born to brickfield worker Mahbubur Rahman and Rashida Begum from Agarhati village in Monirampur upazila, Zahidul has three siblings.

His father Mahbubur, who makes only Tk 400 a day to support his family and his elderly mother, said despite the fact that he could not spend much for Zahidul's education, his son has always been a good student and loss of his hands or financial troubles of the family could not dampen his spirit.

The doctors amputated his son's hands to save his life. Despite physical challenges, Zahidul has good attendance at school and he is good in sports. He can ride a bicycle too, Mahbubur also said.

Haider Ali, headteacher of Monirampur Government Girls' High School and also in-charge of the JSC



Hand amputee Zahidul Islam at the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations centre of Monirampur Government Girls' High School in Jashore a few days ago.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

exam centre, said they were ensuring that Zahidul gets all necessary support while taking exams at the centre.

"As per rule, physically challenged students like him will get an additional 20 minutes to complete their answers," he added.

While speaking with this correspondent, Zahidul said he

believes that education is the only way to a brighter future and although he has physical disabilities, he hopes to contribute to the wellbeing of his family as well as the country after getting higher education in agriculture.

His parents said Zahidul is the eldest among his siblings and they all have high hopes for him.