



A lumpy skin disease affected cow gets numerous nodules across the body. Inset, a deep sore in the leg of an infected cow.

PHOTO: STAR

# Lumpy skin disease a serious concern for Ctg cattle farmers

30 thousand cows already infected by the debilitating syndrome

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Thousands of cows in about 3,000 farms across Chattogram have been affected by lumpy skin disease (LSD), triggering panic among farmers.

The affected cows do not want to eat or drink anything and do not produce milk. Other symptoms of the disease are chronic debility, poor growth, infertility, abortion, and sometimes death.

Farmers fear that in near future their cattle might stop reproducing if enough vaccines are not supplied by the district livestock office.

LSD has affected 30,000 cows and calves out of the 10 lakh cows present in 1,600 registered and over a thousand unregistered farms since July, according to Chattogram District Livestock Office.

"First it hit Karnaphuli upazila, the second largest dairy hub of the country," said Livestock Officer Dr Reazul Huq. "It has so far spread in 15 upazilas; Karnaphuli, Anwara, Sitakunda, Mirsarai,

and Patiya are the worst affected ones."

During a recent visit to different villages of Sitakunda, this correspondent found affected cows in almost every household.

LSD is an infectious disease in cattle caused by a virus of the family Poxviridae, also known as Neethling virus. "The cows suffer from fever, enlarged superficial lymph nodes and multiple nodules grow on their skin and mucous membranes," said Dr Reazul.

About a hundred farmers, under the banner of Chattogram Dairy Farmers Association, demonstrated in front of the livestock office in the port city's Khulshi area on Sunday demanding a greater supply of vaccines.

The vaccines necessary for preventing the disease was not widely available despite the outbreak. Especially, the farmers of rural areas did not have any access to them, they said.

Nayeem Mohammad Obaidullah, owner of Ashfaq Dairy Farm at Daulatpur

village in Karnaphuli, said three cows in his farm were infected by LSD in July.

"At first, the cows caught fever and gradually pox-like lumps started appearing all over the body. They did not want to eat or drink anything. I contacted the livestock office as soon as I noticed the symptoms. Antihistamine is mainly used for the treatment. I was advised to give them immunity boosters and apply ice on the bumps," he said.

Nurul Islam, another farmer of the same village, said that two cows and one calf were affected in his farm. "They suffered for 12 days. During those days, they could not produce any milk. The calf is yet to recover," said Nurul.

Officials from the Department of Livestock and World Food Programme visited the farms in Karnaphuli on July 22 and collected samples, said Jalal Uddin Rokon, owner of Sufia Dairy Farm in the upazila.

"Most of the 500 farms here have been affected. In my farm, five cows and two calves were affected but they are fine now," said Rokon, also the organising secretary at Karnaphuli Upazila Dairy Farm Association.

"The infection is carried by insects, mosquitoes in particular. When an insect bites an affected cow, it becomes the carrier and affects other cows," said Dr Reazul.

About the farmers' demonstration, he said that vaccines were available at the upazila livestock offices.

"We have supplied goat pox vaccine to farmers to prevent the disease. Once affected and recovered, a cow will never catch the disease again in its lifetime and so, most of the cows do not need any treatment," he said.

The livestock officer could not confirm if any cow had died due to the disease in the district so far.

"Farmers should focus on cleanliness to prevent the disease," he suggested.

BARGUNA RIFAT MURDER

## Hearing on charge framing Jan 8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna juvenile court on Monday fixed January 8 for hearing on charge framing against 14 accused in the much-talked-about Rifat Sharif murder case.

Judge Md Hafizur Rahman of the court fixed the date after ending hearing from both state and defense sides.

Mojibur Haq Kislul, lawyer of the plaintiff, said the judge has re-fixed the date based on prayers submitted by both the state and defense sides in presence of all 14 juvenile accused in the court.

Earlier, police brought them from Jashore juvenile correction centre and produced them before the court.

During the hearing, the court also rejected bail prayers of Arian Hossen Shrabon, Abu Abdullah Rayhan, Syed Maruf Billah and Maruf Mallik and asked the authority to send all the accused to Jashore juvenile correction centre.

The juvenile accused are Rashidul Hasan Rishan Farajee, 17, Rakibul Hasan Rifat Hawlader, 15, Arian Hossen Shrabon, 16, Abu Abdullah Rayhan, 16, Syed Maruf Billah, 17, Maruf Mollik, 17, Oliullah, 16, Joy Chandra Sarker Chandon, 17, Md Nayeem, 17, Tanvir Hossain, 17, Rakibul Hasan Niamot, 15, Prince Mollah, 15, Nazmul Hasan, 14, and Ratul Sikder Joy, 16.

Of all the accused in the murder case, the 14 are now in Jashore juvenile correction centre, nine in Barguna jail and Aysha Siddika Minni, wife of slain Rifat Sharif, is now on bail.

On June 26, Rifat Sharif, 25, an internet service provider, was hacked to death in broad daylight in front of his wife Minni in Barguna town.

In a CCTV footage, Minni was seen screaming and trying to save her husband from the attackers.

Police arrested Minni on July 16. The following day, a Barguna court placed her on a five-day remand. Three days later, the court recorded her statement under section 164.

On August 29, the High Court granted bail to Minni on conditions that she cannot talk to media and she will remain in her father's custody.

On September 1, police pressed charges against Minni and 23 others for their alleged involvement in the murder of Rifat Sharif.

The name of the prime accused Sabbir Hossain Nayan alias Nayan Bond has been excluded from the charges as he was killed in a "gunfight" on July 2, six days after the murder.



## Four injured in boiler explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three labourers and a boy sustained burn injuries as the boiler of a rice husking mill exploded in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat yesterday.

The injured are Abdul Latif, 45, and his wife Salma Begum, 38, and Osma Begum, 36, and her three-year-old son Sagar of Sitahar village in the upazila.

They were admitted to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogura.

Abdul Latif Khan, officer-in-charge of Kalai Police Station, said when the three labourers were heating the boiler of the mill of Shamim Hossain at Duranj village, it exploded suddenly with a big bang. The boy was present there with her mother at the time.

Later, locals rescued the four and sent them to the upazila health complex, said the OC.

They were later shifted to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, said the police official.

## FF, family on hunger strike demanding return of son's job

The FF also threatens to refuse state honour after death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A freedom fighter (FF) along with his family members and relatives started an indefinite hunger strike in front of Bangladesh Bank office in Rangpur city on yesterday morning, demanding reinstatement of his elder son to the job at the bank.

The freedom fighter, Rangalal Mohanta, 70, hailing from Shailmari village under Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila, also threatened to refuse the state honour after his death if his son's job is not returned with due respect.

"I got the job of a currency note counter at Bangladesh Bank office in Rangpur in 2012. In May this year, the bank authority dismissed me as Tk 1000 was found short in a bundle," said Rangalal's elder son Sadhan Chandra Mohanta.

"Each currency note bundle is counted by two persons. I was the first person to count the bundle. The second man

to count the same bundle also failed to detect the short."

"If I was punished for the mistake, the second man must be punished too. But, the bank authority kept him in the job," said Sadhan.

Demanding reinvestigation into the incident, Rangalal said, "Dismissal of my son is illegal. I will accept the decision if reinvestigation finds my son guilty. If not, I urge the bank authority to return the job to my son."

"We are leading a hard life after our son's dismissal," said Sandha Rani Mohanta, wife of the freedom fighter.

Contacted, Fazlar Rahman, deputy general manager of Bangladesh Bank in Rangpur, declined to talk over the issue.

Talking to another journalist, Golam Haider, the then executive director of Bangladesh Bank's Rangpur branch, said, "Sadhan was dismissed following due procedure as a probe committee found him guilty."



PHOTO: STAR

Freedom fighter Rangalal Mohanta, his wife, two sons and relatives start an indefinite hunger strike in front of Bangladesh Bank in Rangpur on Tuesday morning, demanding reinstatement of the job of his son Sadhan Chandra Mohanta.

## Sujon's admission at NSTU faces uncertainty

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

From primary to higher secondary, completing the 12 years of education was not easy for Sujon Robidas, son of an indigenous tea labourer from Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila.

Yet, financial difficulties finally became an obstacle to the young man's dream of obtaining a university degree and joining the civil service.

Relatives, locals and well-wishers, till date, helped the young man with his education expenses because of his consistent good grade of achieving GPA 5 at primary school, in the Junior and Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations.

He even passed Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination from science group and secured GPA 4.58 from Sreemangal Government College this year, but missed the admission deadline for honours education at his college under National University.

"I could not arrange the admission fee," explained the young man.

However, there is still hope because Sujon passed the admission test of Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) held on November 2.

He has till December 1 to complete the admission formality, including a payment of Tk 16,000 fees.

"My interview for admission to NSTU was held and I passed it, but I am still uncertain about fulfilling my dream to study at the prestigious institution due to my



In this recent photo, Sujon Robidas, with his poor parents, stands in front of their hut at Bharaora Tea Garden in Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

parents' hardship," said Sujon.

Sujon's father, Narayan Robidas, is the only regular earner in the family. His mother Shanti Robidas works as a house-help and his brother works at a shop whenever they can manage such jobs. Jointly, they earn about Tk 5,000 per month with which they have to feed their six-member family.

"Sometimes, we have to pass our days half-fed, but my child never lost concentration in his study," said Shanti, referring to Sujon.

"My elder and younger son dropped out from study for financial crisis. But I can't see that

happening to Sujon," she said, with tears in her eyes, when this correspondent visited their house on Friday.

"I have appealed to my relatives and some of the neighbours for help, but did not get any response from anyone yet," said the anxious mother.

After studying till Class VII, Sujon's elder brother had to join work. His younger brother also had to drop out after Class IX. Only his younger sister is still studying at a school.

"I don't have the ability to bear the expenditure for Sujon's education. I told him to get

admission at an institution in Sreemangal, where the cost would be less," said Narayan, adding that he gets a daily wage of Tk 102 only.

Besides the admission fee, the cost of tuition, accommodation, travel, books and other materials for studying at NSTU would come to about Tk 7,000 to Tk 8,000 per month, estimated Pranesh Goala, chairman of Kalighat Union Parishad (UP) in Sreemangal.

The UP chairman, who often helped out Sujon with his education expenses, said, "Sujon is a meritorious student. Bright future awaits him if he gets financial support for higher education."