

Lumpy skin disease worries Meherpur cattle farmers

The debilitating disease spreads through mosquito bite

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiya

Cattle farmers in Meherpur are worried over the recent appearance of lumpy skin disease (LSD).

Around a thousand cattle affected by the disease have been given treatment in last three months, said sources in the district's livestock office.

There are 210 dairy farms and 435 cattle fattening farms in Meherpur.

The disease, new in Bangladesh, was first detected at some places of Chattogram district in mid-July this year.

An affected cow gets fever and then lumps appear, which might spread all over the body, livestock officials said.

The animal loses appetite, suffers from debility and stops producing milk.

LSD is caused by a virus of the family Poxviridae, also known as Neethling virus. Insects like mosquito carry the virus when they bite an infected animal, officials said.

"I am worried as nine cattle of my farm have got the disease," said Sahabul Islam, owner of a cow fattening farm of Choksahymnagar village in Meherpur Sadar upazila.

Jahangir Alam, district livestock officer of Meherpur, said they suggest using antihistamine for treatment of the affected cows.

"We are holding discussions with cattle farmers and distributing leaflets to create awareness about the issue. No cow has died of the disease in the district so far," he said.



Meherpur District Livestock Officer Jahangir Alam checks a lumpy skin disease affected cow at Choksahymnagar village in Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: AMANUR AMAN

Hillock cutting going unchecked in three Tangail upazilas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Defying all applicable laws, destruction of environment and ecosystem through cutting of hillocks is going on unabated in Tangail's Ghatail, Mirzapur and Sakhipur upazilas.

With the authorities concerned turning a blind eye to the crime, earth traders, many of them locally influential, have been razing hillocks one after another in board daylight for their financial gains, which is ultimately causing irreparable damage to the flora and fauna of the areas, locals alleged.

Hill cutting is particularly rampant in Ghatail's Jiladengor, Makrai, Ghoramara, Panjachala, Horinachala Teghori, Deopara, Parbahulee, Chourasha, Sandhanpur, Maidharchala and Digor; Mirzapur's Tarapur, Takia Kodma, Digolchala and Bashtoil; and Sakhipur's Sapiarchala, Bagerbari, Indarjani, Boheratol, Arangchala, Amtol, Amgachhchala and Gilachala areas, they also said.

Earth dug out from the hillocks are being transported in large trucks to fill up lowlands in and around the upazilas. Aside from leaving a long-term negative impact on the overall environment, the excessive movement of earthmovers and trucks are also damaging rural roads and causing dust pollution in the area.

Reckless movement of the heavy vehicles are also causing frequent accidents to inhabitants of the villages, said the aggrieved locals.

According to a study conducted by Environmental Science and Resource Management department at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail, small and medium-sized undulating hillocks -- locally known as chala or tila that are usually covered with lush green vegetation -- are very common in Tangail and Gazipur.



A hillock being cut in Ghatail's Jiladengor village under Deopara union recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

The hillocks in these two districts are being destroyed in the process of growing commercialisation and urbanisation. Cutting of the hillocks as well as deforestation are causing destruction of ecosystems and natural habitats of innumerable organisms, the study revealed.

Only three decades ago, the hillocks, covered with natural sal trees, used to provide habitat for numerous wild animals including snakes and birds. With many of these hillocks and forestry on a large area destroyed, a number of species have also disappeared.

If continues to go unabated, the cutting of hillocks in the area will pose risks of environmental disasters such as landslides, the study finds.

Locals in Deopara union of Ghatail said amidst the ongoing

onslaught on the environment in the area, two large hillocks were flattened and a large number of trees on top of those were chopped down in Jiladengor village recently.

Abu Bakar, Abul Hossain and Nurul Islam -- who claimed to have inherited the hillocks, said they sold earth from the hillocks as well as the trees for money.

Another land owner, Sirajul Islam from Takia Kodma village in Mirzapur, said he got Tk 350 for each truck of earth from a hillock that he cut for constructing a house there.

Contacted, Nurnahar Begum, assistant commissioner (land) in Ghatail, said they would conduct drives against the plunderers.

However, Mirzapur AC (Land) Mainul Haque claimed that the destruction of hillocks has been

stopped in his upazila.

"I have sources deployed in different areas. Immediate action will be taken as soon as information of any such violation is received," he said.

Mujahidul Islam, deputy director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Tangail, said under the environment preservation laws, it is a punishable offence to destroy hills and hillocks, regardless of their ownership.

The DoE, however, is unable to file any case against the violators when a specific hillock is not classified as hillock in government land records, the official added.

"We, however, can conduct mobile court drives against it [violations]. We already wrote to the district administration, seeking necessary executive magistrates."

SM Sultan's 95th birth anniversary observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

The 95th birth anniversary of renowned artist SM Sultan was observed at Sultan Smriti Sangrahashala and Shilpakala Academy premises in Narail yesterday.

On the occasion, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organised two-day-long 'Sultan Utsab-2019'.

Sultan Foundation also organised various programmes including placing of wreath at the grave of the artist, reciting from the Holy Quran and a discussion.

Yesterday, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organised daylong programmes at Sultan Smriti Sangrahashala and art competition, boat ride for children on the Chitra river, prize giving ceremony, workshop for children, folk song concert, poetry recital, screening of documentary show and art exhibition on the academy premises.

Today, a discussion session is scheduled to be held at 5:00pm on the district Shilpakala Academy premises.

SM Sultan was born on August 10 in 1923 in Narail's Masimdia village. His full name is Sheikh Mohammad Sultan and his father's name is Sheikh Messer, a mason by profession.

In 1928, Sultan's formal schooling began at Narail Victoria Collegiate School where he studied for only five years. Being greatly influenced by his father's works in building houses, he started drawing and painting during his free time.

At the age of ten, while Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee -- the illustrious son of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, a renowned Bengali scholar and thinker -- was visiting Narail Victoria Collegiate School, Sultan drew his pencil sketch. The pencil sketch impressed Dr Mukherjee and others.

Sultan was unable to fulfil his wish of studying art in Kolkata due to financial constraints of his family.

Finally, in 1938, zamindar Dharendra Nath Roy, an art aficionado, became the patron of Sultan's works and brought him to his residence in Kolkata where he stayed for three years.

He soon embarked on a career of freelance painter of portraits and landscapes in Kolkata. He also joined the



Khaksar Movement in 1943.

In 1950, Sultan toured New York, Washington, Chicago and Boston in USA where he held exhibitions of his works. Later on, he held exhibitions of the same in London, UK.

The artist joined international conference of painters in USA in 1950 as the representative of the erstwhile Pakistan government. In 1951, he left for Karachi, where he taught art at Parsee School for two years.

He returned to Narail in 1953. A lifelong bachelor, Sultan settled down in an abandoned building overlooking the Chitra river. He lived there with an adopted family along with a number of pet animals including dogs, mongoose and monkeys. Sultan later built a mini-zoo near his home. There he also built a school for children.

In 1984, the Bangladesh government conferred the Ekushey Padak on SM Sultan and Cambridge University declared him the Man of Asia.

He was honoured with Swadhinata Padak in 1993 and Charushilpi Sangsad Sammanana in 1986. The Bangladesh government accepted him as the resident artist.

Sultan died in Jashore Combined Military Hospital on October 10, 1994. He was buried at the yard of his own house in Masimdia-Kurigram area of Narail town.

Ensure rights of indigenous people

Speakers demand at Thakurgaon meet of Adivashi Parishad

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Leaders of small ethnic communities at a conference at Thakurgaon Press Club in the town yesterday reiterated their nine-point demand including recognition as indigenous people and steps for ensuring their rights, especially on land and education.

The indigenous communities are still lagging behind in the society as their economic, educational and political rights are yet to be established, speakers said at the third district unit conference of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, a platform of the small ethnic peoples living in plain land.

Many indigenous families had to leave their ancestral homesteads as local influential people grabbed their lands, in collusion with a section of officials, the community leaders said.

They demanded immediate formation of a separate land commission to protect their rights and allocation of khas lands among the landless indigenous people.

They demanded withdrawal of all false cases against the indigenous people.

They also urged arrangement of mother tongue-based primary education for their children and the community's quota in higher education and government services.

Indigenous people played a significant role during the Liberation War in 1971 but they are yet to be given constitutional rights, speakers said.

Rabindranath Soren, advisor of the central committee of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, attended as chief guest at the programme with convener of the conference Jacob Khalkor in the chair.

LAND DISPUTE

Two siblings killed by uncle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

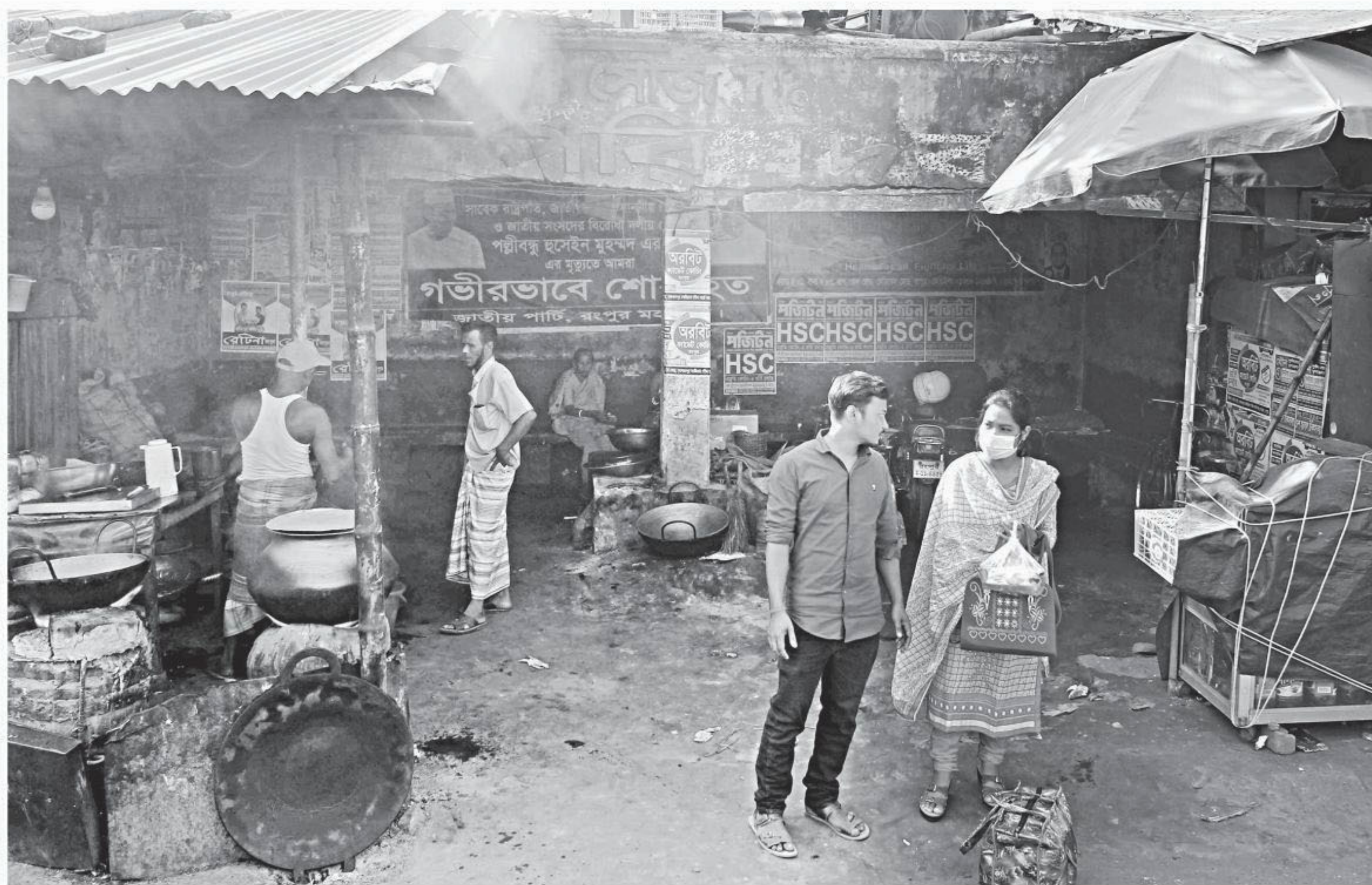
Two siblings were killed and three others injured in an attack over a disputed land in Sanandabari area of Dewanganj upazila on Friday.

The deceased were Yousuf Ali, 40, and Abdul Jalil, 35, sons of Haran Ali of Sanandabari Dakkhinlamba village in the upazila.

Police and locals said there was a longstanding conflict between Haran Ali and his younger brother Zakir Hossain over the land.

On Friday morning, when a group of people, led by Haran and his two sons, were erecting a house on the disputed land, Zakir and his men, on information, rushed to the spot and attacked them with lethal weapons, leaving five people, including Haran and his two sons, injured.

Critically injured Yousuf and Jalil later died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said MM Mainul Islam, officer-in-charge of Dewanganj Police Station.



Finding no space available under the passenger shed, two helpless commuters wait for vehicles on the road. A restaurant is being run occupying almost the entire space of the shed in Dhap area of Rangpur city. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKAR