



This open air battery recycling factory at South Basudebpur village under Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur has wreaked havoc on the cattle farmers with 25 deaths of the domestic animals have been reported in a week.

PHOTO: STAR

Battery recycling factory killing cattle in Phulbari

Villagers claim at least 25 cows died in a week, many suffering

KANGKAN KARMAKAR

Fear gripped the cattle farmers of two villages in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur as 25 cows have died in a week of breathing difficulties and stomach ailments due to toxins released from a nearby battery recycling factory, veterinary experts and locals said.

At least 25 cows died in the last seven days, said the locals.

Villagers said the disease, which is still unknown to locals, is being spread from the battery recycling factory in the area.

The livestock experts have also said that the cows are dying due to the toxins released from the factory.

According to the locals, the incident was first reported on November 27.

The villagers of South Basudebpur and Moheshpur in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur said that ten cows of three families died in the two villages.

Md Badsha Mia of Basudebpur village said his three cows including a calf died on a single day on November 27.

Badsha said that the cattle were suffering from breathing difficulties and later they also developed stomach ailments. After suffering for a couple of days, they died.

"Within five days, all of my cows died", said Badsha.

Badsha claimed that his cows died due to ingesting the toxins released by the nearby battery recycling factory at the village. Like Badsha, other villagers also claimed the same.

The local village vet also echoed the villagers.

This correspondent visited the two villages recently and found that the battery recycling factory had been shut overnight as the news spread that cows were dying due to the toxic gas emitted from the factory.

None concerned of the factory could be reached for their comments.

Villagers said that the factory had been releasing toxic lead and acid in the air and on nearby grazing fields. The cows might have fallen sick after ingesting the grass mixed with toxic substance, said the villagers.

The whole area has become inhabitable for humans as well due

to the factory, said the locals.

Shafiqul Islam of Moheshpur village said that more cows in these villages fell sick and were being treated there.

"The poor people rear cow as their asset and these families would incur massive financial losses for the incident", said Shafiqul.

He demanded that these poor families be compensated for their loss.

Dr Md Ahsan Habib, the Livestock Officer in Phulbari upazila, said that he visited the two villages recently and examined the infected cows.

"It seemed to me that these cows fell sick after inhaling the toxic fumes while grazing beside the battery recycling factory. As lead and acid are very lethal to the cattle," he said.

Phulbari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Reaz Uddin said that he was aware of the incident. Action will be taken after forming a probe body, he added.

Locals demanded that the local administration shut the battery factory permanently. Otherwise, they threatened to go for agitation.

Bridge collapses a year of construction

Villagers compel to use a makeshift bamboo bridge to cross the canal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Nearly 16,000 people of different unions in Kurigram's Roumari upazila have been experiencing untold sufferings since the concrete bridge on a canal in Charshoulmari Bazar collapsed only over a year of its construction.

Local people have set up a makeshift bamboo bridge beside the collapsed bridge to go to their destinations including the upazila headquarters.

During a visit to the area this correspondent saw no three-wheelers or motorized vehicle can ply the makeshift bridge, only pedestrians or bicyclists move on it.

Locals alleged that the newly constructed concrete bridge collapsed within a short time due to use of substandard materials and unplanned construction.

Local resident Nurul Islam said about 16,000 people of Ghughumari, Char Ghughumari, Sukherbati, Char Gender Alga, Mayezer Char, Khedaimari and Sukher Char areas under Charshoulmari union are the worst sufferers due to the collapse of the important bridge.

Moreover, Charshoulmari Degree College and Charshoulmari Girls' High School are only 250 metres from the

bridge, he said, adding that hundreds of students of four government primary schools also use the bridge.

According to Roumari Upazila Project Implementation Office, the 60-foot-long bridge in Charshoulmari Bazar area was built under a project of the Disaster Management Department at a cost of Tk 54 lakh in 2016-17 fiscal year.

Contractor Monirul Islam completed the bridge construction work in March 2018.

Charshoulmari Union Parishad (IUP) Chairman Dulal Hossain said due to use of substandard materials the bridge collapsed only over a year of its construction.

The authorities concerned should built a new bridge in place of the collapsed one as soon as possible to ease peoples' sufferings, he added.

Contractor Monirul, however, denied the allegation of using substandard materials in the construction work, and said the bridge collapsed in a short time due to illegal sand lifting from near the bridge.

Roumari Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Azizur Rahman said the bridge was washed away by the onrush of floodwaters.



This bridge over a canal at Charshoulmari Bazar in Kurigram's Roumari upazila collapses only over a year of its construction, causing immense suffering to the locals.

PHOTO: STAR

Horror in room 2011

FROM PAGE 1

informed his mother Rokeya Khatun over phone about his safe return to the campus.

Around 8:00pm, some Chhatra League leaders and activists of the dormitory asked him to go to room number 2011 on the first floor. As he stepped out of his room and headed towards Room 2011, his roommate waited for his return.

Reaching Room 2011, Abrar saw some BCL leaders inside. One of them forcefully took Abrar's cell phone and started checking his Facebook account and messenger app. The BCL men began to interrogate him about his alleged links with Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The Chhatra League men were furious because one of Abrar's Facebook posts seemed critical of a recent government deal with India.

While quizzing Abrar, one of the BCL men started slapping him.

Another approached and began hitting him with a cricket stump. Then came the third attacker with another stump.

At one point, one of the stumps broke in two. The third BCL man kept on beating Abrar with that broken piece.

During the assault, two BCL men whipped Abrar with a skipping rope and others slapped him at regular intervals.

Abrar begged for water, but they didn't give him a single drop.

A numb Abrar fell to the floor. The BCL men forced him back on his feet and started beating him again.

Abrar then started throwing up and could not move anymore.

Realising his condition, the attackers called Abrar's classmates and along with them took him to the landing of the stairwell between the first and ground floors around 2:30am.

The BCL men then went out to have dinner. After it became clear that

Abrar died, the body was moved to the canteen of the dormitory.

Video footage captured by the dormitory's CCTV camera showed three youths carrying Abrar in a corridor and taking him towards the staircase. Another youth was seen next to them while six others were walking behind. It was not clear whether Abrar was alive at that time.

Later, BCL leaders called the hall provost and the resident doctor, who declared Abrar dead.

According to doctors, Abrar died of internal bleeding and excessive pain. There were injury marks all over his body, with bruises on his arms, legs and back.

The fateful night when her son Abrar was in excruciating pain, Rokeya Khatun had called him over phone around 9:00pm. Little did she know that when she bade goodbye to him in the morning, it would be the last time she would see him.

Pakistan accepts truce call of UN

FROM PAGE 12

Washington was taking a less pro-Pakistani position in the crisis. The envoy Mustafizur Rahman Siddiqi, according to the newspaper, said that Bangladesh had stepped up its appeal for United States recognition this week, as Mitro Bahini gained the upper hand in East Pakistan.

ON THE WAR FRONT

Indian aircraft attacked Karachi harbor and city early today, sinking one merchant ship and killing more than 60 civilians, the Pakistan radio reported. The radio said that a second ship had been set ablaze and a third, a foreign vessel, had been seriously damaged. In an earlier attack during the night, Indian planes struck a petroleum storage tank near the harbor and set it on fire, the radio added.

The commander of India's eastern forces Lieut. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora said tonight that the retreat of the Pakistanis in East Pakistan

had become a rout as Mitro Bahini continued to push the Pak troops into an ever-shrinking circle whose center is Dhaka. He added that the air force had had "a field day" the last 24 hours, shooting up river boats loaded with Pakistani troops trying to escape.

Mitro Bahini took three important towns on or near the Meghna --- Ashuganj, Chandpur and Daudkandi.

In the eastern sector, Moulvi Bazar was captured. In the western sector, a vast area west of the Madhumati River had been liberated.

NEUTRAL ZONE IN DHAKA

The US State Department said today that a "neutral zone", comprising the Intercontinental Hotel, the Holy Family Hospital and the headquarters of the United Nations relief operations, had been established in Dhaka to protect nearly 500 foreigners, including some 70 Americans. The zone would serve as an assembly area for the foreigners before they were taken to the airport to be flown out.

A spokesman said that the creation of the "neutral zone" was requested by the United Nations and the United States in expectation of ground fighting in Dhaka as Indian troops approached.

BANGLADESH MISSION INAUGURATED IN NEW DELHI

A mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was inaugurated in New Delhi today by the Chief of the Mission Humayun Rasheed Choudhury. He unfurled the flag of Bangladesh in the accompaniment of a band and the booming of guns. Expressing the gratitude of his government for the help given by India in the hour of peril, Choudhury said Bangladesh forces would be prepared to fight shoulder to shoulder with their Indian brethren to repulse Pakistani aggression in western front of India.

Shamsudoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

New telescope to unravel mysteries

FROM PAGE 12

observatory of its kind. The satellite will be able to see an often overlooked aspect of cosmic ray sources called polarisation.

"The launch of IXPE marks a bold and unique step forward for X-ray astronomy," said Martin Weisskopf, IXPE's principal investigator, in a

statement. "IXPE will tell us more about the precise nature of cosmic X-ray sources than we can learn by studying their brightness and colour spectrum alone."

X-rays are a highly energetic wavelength of light that are born from extremes. In space, this includes powerful magnetic

fields, collisions between objects, explosions, scorching temperatures and rapid rotations. This light is practically encoded with the signature of what created it, but Earth's atmosphere prevents X-rays from reaching the ground. This is why scientists rely on X-ray telescopes in space.

Petition filed with HC

FROM PAGE 12

investigate the complaint lodged against Murad by ex-Dhaka University student Zulius Caesar Talukder on Tuesday for making derogatory comments about DU and its female students.

Shahbag police sent the complaint to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner yesterday for necessary measures, said Moudut Hoawalader, officer-in-charge of the police station.

A runway way too vulnerable

FROM PAGE 12

thieves may have stolen the wire on top of that section of wall.

This correspondent also saw ditches dug beneath the wall which people can use to gain access to the airport.

Sohel Rana, a local, said the spot was far from the main tarmac and so officials concerned rarely visited there.

The wall near Baraishal at the eastern side of the airport was most vulnerable as the lower portion was open, allowing

outsiders to regularly go inside to graze their cattle while some others trespassed merely to see flight operations.

Faruk Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP, said the DC of the cyber and special crime unit will collect the complaint from the commissioner today and assign an officer to investigate it.

"After investigation, the officer will submit the probe report to the judge of the cyber tribunal, Dhaka who will instruct whether a case will be filed," Faruk told The Daily Star last night.

Tigers crash to innings defeat

FROM PAGE 12

miracle from Taijul Islam and Ebadot Hossain.

Bad light was just about to force the umpires to draw stumps and end proceedings in a draw before the scheduled time, but no miracle would be forthcoming after Sajid Khan began the visiting celebrations after picking up the final wicket of Taijul.

Sajid ended with twelve wickets following an eight-wicket haul in the first innings and his figures of 12 wickets for 128 runs were the second-best figures registered by a Pakistani against Bangladesh.

With the result, the visitors completed clean sweep, featuring whitewash wins in the three-match T20I and two-match Test series.

The Tigers will have little time to regroup as they are scheduled to travel to New Zealand today for another tough two-Test assignment, leaving no room for Mominul Haque and Co to overcome any demotivation brought on by the dramatic defeat.

Shakib Al Hasan was Bangladesh's biggest hope after they were forced to follow-on. His 63 was the only fight that the batters showed, with the top-order crumbling horribly.

Shakib and Mehedi Hasan Miraz's 51-run seventh-wicket stand provided some stability and the pair saw off the first hour of the final session positively, but Miraz's dismissal proved the turning point of the game.

This must not

FROM PAGE 1

fate of those who brutally beat his son to death in the university's Sher-e-Bangla hall on October 7, 2019.

Abrar's mother Rokeya Khatun, while speaking to The Daily Star, said she expected that all the accused would be sentenced to death.

"I'm satisfied, but I wanted death penalty for all... They [all] destroyed my family."

"We have faith in the higher court, who, we hope, will award all of them death penalty."

She said she hoped that convicted Amit Saha, one of the five sentenced to life term, will be handed down death penalty.

"Though he was not on the spot that day, he was the one who directed others over the phone."

The family members of the convicts burst into tears after the verdict was announced in the packed courtroom.

Some of them shouted that their sons are innocent and framed, and that they would go to a higher court to challenge the verdict.

"My son was in Rajshahi during the incident and was in no way involved; he was framed in the case," said Rabiul Islam, father of death-row convict Morshed Amartya Islam.

"We have been deprived of justice," said Abu Taher, father of Muhtasim Fader, who was sentenced to life in jail.

Convict Amit Saha's mother Debi Rani Saha claimed her son was framed falsely in the case and that he was in his Netrakona home during the incident.

"His fault is that he was involved in Chhatra League politics."

PROSECUTION AND DEFENCE REACTION

The prosecution expressed satisfaction over the verdict in the Abrar murder case, while the defence claimed the judgement was not appropriate.

"This incident has traumatised people. The tribunal awarded highest punishment to the accused to prevent any recurrence of such brutality," said Chief Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, while talking to reporters on the court premises.

Faruque Ahmed, a lawyer for three accused, said, "Those who masterminded the murder were not brought under the trial. We had placed the issue before the court during our argument. We thought the judge will address it, but he did not do so... We will appeal to the High Court, challenging the verdict."

Govt goes

FROM PAGE 12

The Dhaka-Mawa highway is directly linked with the under-construction Padma bridge and to Narayanganj via Dhaka-Narayanganj Road.

The connections between the major highways and thus the north, south and west of the country means the expressway will have some effect on diverting traffic from Dhaka and thereby reduce congestion in the capital, according to the feasibility study.

The project is a component of the strategic road network planning of the Dhaka Structure Plan (2016-2035) and the Asian Highway Network.

During the feasibility study, the cost of the project was estimated at \$2.04 billion, which is equivalent to Tk 16,388.5 crore, while the per kilometre cost was estimated at Tk 417.6 crore.

Out of the total cost, \$1,465.77 million was estimated to be spent for construction and \$375 million for land acquisition and rehabilitation, according to the study.