



Seedbeds of Bari-5 variety of onion at the Regional Spices Research Centre in Magura. *Inset, isabgul (psyllium) plants grown at a plot of the centre.*

PHOTO: STAR

# All-season onion bears bright prospect

*Spices Research Centre in Magura develops the variety, adding to their success list*

AZIBOR RAHMAN, back from Magura

The Regional Spices Research Centre in Magura has recently distributed among farmers 300 kg of seeds of newly developed Bari-5 variety of onion that can be grown all the year round.

Since its establishment in 1996, the centre under Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) has been working to develop better varieties of spices along with means of protecting those from worms and insects.

Visiting the centre covering 16 acres of land a few days ago, this correspondent saw neatly arranged plots where seeds of different spices are sown on seedbeds and

tested scientifically.

The centre has developed the quality of 27 varieties of spices, including onion, garlic, black cumin, isabgul (psyllium), chili, turmeric, cinnamon, coriander seed, and cassia leaf, officials said.

They arrange training and provide quality seeds for farmers of Magura and nearby districts for growing better spices and seed processing.

After the harvest, a portion of the seeds are collected from the farmers.

In 2018-19 fiscal year, 350 farmers were provided training on spice cultivation from the centre while 300 others received such training the previous year.

Besides, 120 sub assistant agriculture

officers (SAAO) have been provided training so that they can assist the farmers at the field level.

"I have taken training from the spices research centre and advise the farmers as per the direction of the officials," said Prokash Paul, an SAAO in Magura.

Akkaj Ali, a physically challenged farmer, said after taking training on cultivation of different spices from the centre he is growing coriander on four acres, black cumin on two acres and onion on four acres of land.

"With the earning from selling spices, I have bought ten cattle and made a brick-built house," he said.

Alam Khan of Naliardangi village in

Magura Sadar upazila said he has cultivated black cumin on two bighas and onion on one bigha this year and hopes to get good yield.

Md Moniruzzaman, senior scientific officer of the research centre, said, "Recently we have developed Bari-5 variety of onion that will be grown all the year round. Besides, we have developed BARI-4 variety of turmeric, which has no smell and can be eaten raw. We have also added a new variety of isabgul."

"So far, the centre has succeeded in developing better and higher yielding varieties of 27 spices. We are also trying to develop draught and salinity tolerant varieties of black cumin, turmeric and garlic," he added.

## Potato harvesting goes on in happy mood

*Lalmonirhat growers are making profit as the crop has good demands*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Lalmonirhat farmers are harvesting potato in a happy mood as the crop has good prices this season.

The growers are earning Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 from cultivating potatoes on one bigha of land this year. It is mentionable that the same farmers did not get expected profit last year. However, the production cost was lower than this year.

Atiar Rahman, a farmer of Ambari village in Sadar upazila, said he cultivated potato on three bighas of land and got Tk 1.19 lakh by selling 12,550 kg of potato at Tk 9.5 a kg this year. The production cost was Tk 62,000.

"Last year, I got 12,650 kg of potatoes from three bighas of land and sold the total produce at Tk 88,500 at Tk 7 per kg while the production cost was Tk 48,000," said Atiar.

This time, the production cost is high as they had to spend more money on pesticide due to prolonged cold and foggy weather, he said.

At present, the crop is being sold at Tk 8 to Tk 10 per kg in the field, said another farmer Nazrul Islam of Mandolerhat area in the same upazila.

Although the production cost has increased this year, they are getting expected prices, said Nazrul.

Sekendar Ali of Bhadai village in Aditmari upazila said he cultivated potatoes on 10 bighas of land by spending Tk 2.15 lakh.

He has already got 16,400 kg of potato from four bighas of land and sold the total produce at Tk 9 per kg, said Sekendar.

"Hopefully, I will get the same yield from the rest bighas of land. I'm also expecting fair prices," he said.

Farmers have been getting good profit from potato cultivation since last year, said Sekendar.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension



Farmers harvest potato in a field at Ambari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

(DAE) in Lalmonirhat, potato has been cultivated on 4,800 hectares of land in the district this year, which was 4,620 hectares last year. Farmers have got 25 to 27 tonnes of the crop from one hectare of land.

Lalmonirhat DAE Deputy Director Bidhu Bhushan Roy said although potato farmers have spent additional production cost this year due to rough weather, they are happy to get good yield and fair prices.



The now functional railway engine after a massive repair work at Central Locomotive Workshop in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur. *Inset, condition of the engine after it got badly burnt in 2013.*

PHOTO: STAR

## Badly burnt locomotive returns to track after 7 years

*Experts at Parbatipur workshop succeeds in the challenging task*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A locomotive of Bangladesh Railway (BR), which was badly damaged in a fire after a derailment in 2013, has been finally made functional by the experts of Central Locomotive Workshop in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur.

After a successful trial run, the engine was officially handed over to BR authorities yesterday.

"The repair work here took eight months and cost Tk 3 crore," said Mohammad Kudrat-e-Khuda, chief executive of the workshop.

According to the BR officials in Parbatipur, the locomotive (engine No 2933) of Parabat Express plying Dhaka-Sylhet route got badly damaged as it caught fire due to burst of its fuel tank after derailment near Noapara station in Habiganj district on October 7 in 2013.

After its salvage, the engine was taken to a workshop of BR in Pahartoli of Chattogram

for repair but the experts there failed in the task as the damage was too extensive.

The BR authorities, however, decided to make further attempt to repair it locally and the engine was brought to Central Locomotive Workshop in Parbatipur on May 15 last year.

"Considering the nature and extent of the damage, it was a challenging task for us to repair the engine. Experts of the workshop disassembled the entire engine to identify the damaged spares, which took a lot of time and efforts," said Kudrat-e-Khuda.

"Experts at the factory made the required spares and reassembled it. Besides the engineering part, the repair work involved electrical and electronic sections of the locomotive, which was burnt badly due to the fire incident," said the chief executive of the workshop.

According to the BR officials in Parbatipur, Tk 33 crore would be needed to import such an engine.

## 2 murdered in Manikganj, Dinajpur dists

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two people have been killed in Manikganj and Dinajpur, report our correspondents.

A woman was found dead in a ditch at Bailat village in Ghior upazila of Manikganj on Tuesday night.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately, said police.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ghior Police Station Muhammad Ashraful Alam said locals found the body floating on the ditch and informed police.

Later, the law enforcers rushed to the spot and recovered the body and sent it to Manikganj District Hospital for autopsy.

Criminals might have killed the woman and dumped the body in the ditch, said the OC.

The reason behind the murder could not be known immediately, said the police official.

In Dinajpur, a gang of criminals hacked a man to death in Biral upazila of the district on Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Golam Kibria, 37, son of late Abdul Hannan of Haljay village in the upazila.

Police said Kibria was returning home on his motorcycle around 9:00pm on Sunday. His friend Dulal Hossain was a

pillion of the bike.

As they reached Haripukur village in the upazila, a gang waylaid them. The criminals then started hacking Kibria with sharp weapons. The gang later left the spot.

Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot and sent critically injured Kibria to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur.

He later succumbed to his injuries at the hospital around 10:30pm.

The body was sent to the hospital for autopsy, said Sheikh Nasim Habib, officer-in-charge of Biral Police Station.

Kibria might have been killed out of personal enmity, said the OC.

Md Kamruzzaman, elder brother of the deceased, filed a murder case with the police station against unidentified people, said the police official.

Police were raiding different areas to arrest the accused, he said.

Earlier on the night of February 14, a gang of criminals hacked Mojnur Rahman, general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of Bochaganj upazila unit in Dinajpur, dead in the upazila.

Police arrested a man in connection with the killing.



A large number of people of Keshabpur and Monirampur upazilas in Jashore and Tala, Patkelghata and Kalaroa upazilas in Satkhira are suffering due to lack of a permanent bridge over the Kapotakkho river at Trimohany in Keshobpur. Urged by necessity, locals make or repair a bamboo bridge at the spot with their own funds every year.

PHOTO: MOHSIN MILON