

More 50 lakh tonnes onion to be produced in Rajshahi division

Summer variety onion attracts farmers

BSS, Rajshahi

Additional 50 lakh tonnes of onion worth around Tk 450 crore could be produced in 16 districts under Rajshahi division by bringing about five lakh hectares of fallow lands under its cultivation in summer season, experts said.

Officials of Northwest Crop Diversification Project (NCDP) said some five lakh hectares always remain fallow during the Kharif season every year. Onion can easily be cultivated in these lands during the season before the next crop.

Talking to BSS, NCDP Manager Dr. Shaharuk Ahmed said onion can be cultivated in the lands in summer and harvested after 120 days.

He also said farmers in the region cultivate onion of local varieties only in winter season, which can not meet the country's increasing demand.

They cultivate value added crops like onion, chili and pulses etc only in five per cent of their total lands. This is the lowest percentage compared to any other region of the country.

Considering the agricultural, environment and socio-economic condition of the region, NCDP has taken a massive program. The work on about Tk 500 crore Char Jibikayan Project (Char Livelihood Project) is set to begin in January.

A meeting to implement the Project in five districts was held in the conference room of Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir presided over the meeting while CLP team leader Roland Hodson was the chief guest.

The meeting was addressed, among other, by CLP Coordinator Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) and Union Parishad chairmen.

The meeting was told that the British donor agency DFID would spend about Tk 500 crore under the project for poverty alleviation in char lands in the districts of Jamalpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Sirajganj and Bogra.

About 20 lakh poor people

including women and children in the char areas of the Jamuna and Brahmaputra river will be benefited after implementation of the project.

Activities like formation of farmers team, training, crop preservation, development of market system are progressing fast to make the programme a success, he said.

According to official sources, a total of 105 demonstration plots have been selected under the programme in 16 upazilas to motivate farmers.

More 500 demonstration plots are there in 50 upazilas under community programmes.

Cultivation of summer variety onion will save a huge amount of foreign exchanges now being spent

for onion import.

Bangladesh now produces around 1.6 lakh tonnes of onion in 34 thousand hectares against an annual requirement of 3.5 lakh tonnes. The rest is imported at a cost of around Tk 500 crore, officials said.

Some growers like Abdus Samad, Alal Hossain and Moniruzzaman told BSS that onion cultivation in the summer season has created great hopes in their areas.

Regular visit by the experts and official and supply of seed and other inputs to farmers has inspired them to cultivate the cash crop in lean period, they said.

Tragic! Mother kills daughter, herself

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A poor housewife killed herself and her 10-year old daughter by jumping under a running train.

Her four-year-old son narrowly escaped death but lost a leg. The tragic incident took place near Poradah railway station on Friday.

Police and witnesses said 33-year-old Hamida Khatun took the decision as her husband Zafar Ali of Kalinathpur village in Mirpur upazila tortured her often.

The witnesses said Hamida along with her daughter Joly and son, Rajib was waiting near the outer signal at Poradah railway station.

As a Khulna-bound goods train from Rajshahi came at around 4 pm, she grabbed her two children and jumped onto the track before people around could understand anything.

The mother and daughter were cut to pieces. The minor boy narrowly escaped death but his left leg was cut away.

As the train passed, people and railway police recovered pieces of two bodies and the minor boy in a critical condition.

Rajib is now being treated at Kushtia General Hospital.

Mirpur police said they are looking for Hamida's husband but he is absconding.

Some local people told this correspondent that Zafar used to torture his wife often. A case has been filed against Zafar with Mirpur police station.



Women Union Parishad members arguing with UP chairmen for work and their rights at a meeting held at Bauli UP office.

Why are they elected?

Women UP members are kept in dark, not even invited to meetings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

We are kept in the dark about development programmes, VGF card distribution and other activities in our areas.

This was the common allegation of all women Union Parishad members in Gaibandha Sadar upazila, raised at a meeting with the UP chairmen. The meeting was arranged by a local NGO-- Samaj Kallan Sangstha-- held at Bauli UP office on Wednesday.

The women UP members told the meeting that they are not assigned any responsibility relating to development activities by the local governments.

Presided over by Salma Begum, member Boali UP, the meeting was addressed by, among others, Bandhana Rani, Member of Shahapara UP, Azadi Begum of Ramchandrapur, Nur Banu Akhter Nuri of Kuptola, Rashida Begum of Kholahati and Shahinur Begum of Boali UP.

They alleged at the meeting that despite repeated appeals, chairmen of the 13 UPs under Gaibandha sadar upazila are yet to complete lists of the poor for VGD programmes though the last date for submission lists expired on November 30.

Meanwhile, irregularities in preparation of VGD lists is being alleged from different areas, they said.

The government allocated 2,925 VGD cards among for the 13 unions and the upazila officials ordered preparation of the lists through a committee. But ignoring the order, the UP parishad chairmen are preparing lists as per their sweet will, the speakers alleged.

The said as per notification of the local government ministry women members should be responsible for 50 per cent of VGD work of total allocation. But the chairmen did not pay heed to the instruction.

They demanded rescheduling of work by Ups, particularly for women members.

Even the women UP members do not get any notice for meeting on different issues including relief work and distribution of VGF cards.

Complaints were lodged with the Upazila Nirbahi Officer several times to address the issues, but to no effect, they said.

As per rule, women members should be assigned to implement one third projects under ADB allocation, but the chairmen keep them in the dark, they alleged.

3 Rab members hurt in attack by people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Three members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were injured in an attack by a group of people at the Biswa Road crossing on Dhaka-Sylhet highway Thursday night.

Police said the group attacked the Rab team following an altercation over buying cigarette by a member of the team from a shop.

The injured Rab members are AB Masud, Mojibur Rahman and Zahidul Islam.

The Rab team, led by SSI AB Amin of Rab-3, was going to Dhaka after completing training at Shamshearnagar in Moulvibazar district.

Police later arrested five persons from the spot. They are Nizamuddin, Jasimuddin, Abul Kalam Bhuiyan, Jahangir Alam and

Motiur Rahman.

Rab SSI AB Al-Amin filed a case with Brahmanbaria thana under the Speedy Trial Act accusing 11 people.

Another acid victim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Miscraent threw acid on a housewife at Kalabaha village under Sadar upazila in Jamalpur on Wednesday. The victim is Sakina Begum, 38, wife of Nazrul Islam, a fourth class employee of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

Quoting her police said the miscraents threw acid on her as they failed to evict her family from a govern land near under BWDB, Jamalpur.



Marking the World Human Rights Day, Taskforce Against Torture, a local NGO, formed a human chain in Rajshahi city on Friday protesting detention without trial.

IUTA polls: Split in pro-govt teachers

A CORRESPONDENT, IU

The pro-government teachers at Islamic University have fallen apart ahead of the head of election of IU Teachers Association.

The have submitted nomination papers separately under three panels. The election is scheduled to be held on December 15.

The panels are BNP-backed Zia Parishad, Jatiyatabadi Peshajibi Parishad and Jamaat-e-Islami backed Green Forum.

Teachers belonging to Awami League (AL)-backed Bangabandhu Parishad and Progressive Shapla Forum submitted their nomination papers under one banner.

'Reduce price of IU admission forms'

A CORRESPONDENT, IU

Four student organisations of Islamic University (IU) including Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Chhatra Front, Chhatra Union and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) yesterday demanded of the authorities to reduce the price of forms for admission into first year honours course for 2004-'05 session.

Earlier, the university authorities took a decision to fix the rate at Taka 250 per form to take part in admission test under seven units on Wednesday. The date of distribution of admission forms was fixed at between December 12 to 30. The decision was taken at a general meeting of the admission committee presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof M Rafiqul Islam.

However, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) agreed with the university authorities' rate fixed at Tk 250 while other student organisations demanded its refixation at Tk 200.

BCL and ICS threatened a tougher agitation if their demand is not met immediately.

SNAPS New tax lawyers body elected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The Moulvibazar Income Tax Practitioners Association at its annual general meeting on Thursday elected a 12-member executive body. Ashraful Islam is the new president and Badrul Hussain is the general secretary.

Tk 5 cr touchstone statue recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Rajshahi police recovered a statue of black stone worth Tk 5 crore weighing five maunds from Duttagram village under Rajshahi upazila on Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, police went to the house of Raj Miah, son of late Shaque Miah of the village and recovered the costly statue from a cow shed there.

Discussion on Begum Rokeya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion here on Thursday paid rich tributes to Begum Rokeya. The discussion was jointly organised by local NGO Sushilan, BDPC and WRTCP at Sushilan office.

Under-trial prisoner dies in Bagerhat jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An under-trial prisoner died at Bagerhat District Jail on Thursday evening.

He is Bellal Howlader, 32, son of Abdul Majid Howlader of Barukhali village under Morrelganj upazila in Bagerhat. He was arrested in a dacoity case of Morelganj Police Station on November 15.

Bellal was tortured allegedly by the Deputy Jailor in the morning on the day for his refusal to pay money for enjoying special facilities in the jail. He died without treatment.

30 hurt in Kushtia clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 30 people including two police personnel were injured in a clash between two factions of ruling BNP at Raripara village in Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah district over possession of a beel (big water body) on Thursday.

Police said the clash ensued when local BNP leader Hamsar Ali of Bethuli village went for fishing at Katakur beel with his supporters. The beel was under the possession of another BNP leader, Abul Bashir of the same village.

The clash broke out as Bashir's supporters resisted Hamsar's men. The rival groups used lethal weapons during the clash.

Being informed, police from Kaliganj thana rushed the spot and tried to quell the violence. Bahadur Rasekuzzan and constable were injured when caught in the melee.

Police fired three blank shots and brought the situation under control.

Additional police have been deployed.

Separate cases have been filed with the police station.

The on-duty doctor in emergency of Bagerhat General Hospital refused to receive Bellal's body when it was taken there at about 10.30 pm.

However, Nurun Nabi Bhuiyan, Jailor of the district jail told this correspondent Bellal died of cardiac arrest inside the toilet of Ward No 5.

Bagerhat Deputy Commissioner (DC) Moinuddin told The Daily Star he was not aware of such incident.

'We are waiting for the autopsy report to ascertain the cause of his death', the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Bagerhat said to this correspondent.

Free soil test for farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A three-day free soil test programme for farmers, organised by the Soil Resource Development Institute, concluded here on Wednesday.

Padma, a vehicle mounted mobile laboratory, provided the service on the premises of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU).

PSTU Vice-chancellor Prof Dr. Wahid-uz-Zaman opened the programme as chief guest.

Dr Sultan Ahmed, Deen of Agriculture Department and Senior Scientist Sikder Rafiquzzaman were special guests at the inaugural function.

Prof Nizam Uddin, Chairman of Soil Science Department at PSTU told this correspondent that most of the farmers do not know the condition of soil of their lands. They apply chemical fertiliser at random, which reduced soil fertility and its natural ingredients.

Under the programme, the scientists test oil samples brought by farmers and also prescribe fertiliser.

Prof Nizam Uddin said the free soil test programme will be organised twice a year.



An inside view of the vehicle mounted soil testing laboratory at PSTU.

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Tk 10 cr for Moulvibazar town projects

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An amount of Tk 10 crore has been allocated to implement Moulvibazar Town Infrastructure Development Project.

Fayzul Karim Mayun, General Secretary of Moulvibazar district BNP and Chairman of Moulvibazar Poursava told this while exchanging views with journalists at his office on Sunday.

According to the municipality chairman, the grant will be spent to build and develop roads, expand and reconstruct roadside footpaths and for upgradation of water and drainage management.

He sought cooperation of town dwellers to implement the project as the dwellers might have to sacrifice their lands during expansion of roads and construction of drains. He also expressed his gratitude to Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and local lawmaker Naser Rahman MP for allocation of the grant.

Tk 20 lakh cell phones stolen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

About 500 mobile sets and 2,000 prepaid phone cards worth about Tk 20 lakh were stolen from the showroom of M.K Traders, about 200 yards away from Jessore Kotwali Police Station on Thursday night.

Sixteen persons including two night guards of the area Intaz and Shaquie were arrested by police.

Bandits broke open the wall of the show room and committed the dacoity.

B'baria Press Club polls held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The annual general meeting (AGM) and election of Brahmanbaria Press Club were held on Friday.

The elected office bearers include: President--Mansur Kamal (The Bangladesh Observer), Vice-presidents-- Sheikh Md Shahidul Islam (The Daily Star).

Publication ceremony held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

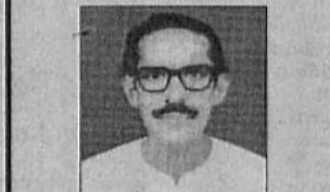
Publication ceremony of Chander Poroshey Tumi Romoni Holey, a book of poems composed by Poet Pulak Kanti Dhar was held at Shilpakala Academy auditorium here on Wednesday.

Presided over by Md Abdul Motin, convener of the publication ceremony organising committee, the function was attended by Prof Parimal Kanti Dey, Principal of Moulvibazar Government Women's College as chief guest and Prof Md Quresh Khan, Principal of Rajnagar Degree College as main speaker.

Former chairman of Moulvibazar municipality and President of district Awami League Syed Mohsin Ali uncovered the newly published book.

Among others, advocate Rezaur Rahman Chowdhury, Prof Ranjit Kumar Singh, Prof Rajat Kanti Goswami, General Secretary of Moulvibazar Press Club, journalist Humayad Ali and writer Shah Abdul Wahid addressed the function.

IN MEMORIAM



Today 12th December, 2004 is the 20th death anniversary of our dear uncle Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed of Mohiuddin & Sons, New Market, Dhaka. His contribution in the promotion of quality English books on literature and arts in our country is noteworthy. May Allah grant his soul eternal peace. Amin.

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