

Farmers face acute crisis of jute seeds in two districts

Bheramara agri office in Kushtia besieged, BADC seeds on sale in black markets in Nilphamari

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Abnormal price hike of jute seeds has frustrated the farmers in Kushtia and Nilphamari in the ongoing peak season of jute cultivation.

Our Kushtia Correspondent reports: Hundreds of farmers on Thursday brought out a procession and besieged the Bheramara upazila agriculture office protesting excessive price hike of jute seeds.

After the procession, they handed over a memorandum to Bheramara Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sawdagor Mustafizur Rahman.

According to memo, the farmers are being of deprived of jute seeds from government approved dealers due to its artificial crisis.

However, unscrupulous traders supply it in exchange of higher prices.

According to farmers, a packet containing 800 grams of jute seeds is being sold at between Tk 330 to 350 against the official rate of Tk 30 only. They told local journalists, they lodged complaints to the upazila agriculture officer earlier, but they did not get justice.

Being frustrated, they brought out the protest procession. Following the procession, a meeting was held which was addressed, among others, by Bulbu Kabir, Asit Kumar Singho Roy, Tafser Matabbar, Saidur Rahman, Yakub Ali and Wasim Jahidul.

Following handing over of the memo, the UNO raided stores of several government dealers and seized 450 packets of jute seeds. He also formed a taskforce to ensure smooth supply of jute seeds, it has been learnt.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports: Helpless farmers are thronging the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) offices and different seed stores here daily, but they come back home empty-handed.

However, taking advantage of artificial crisis of jute seeds, a section of unscrupulous traders are compelling a few of the farmers to purchase inferior quality of Indian seeds at high prices.

A kilogram of jute seed was on sale at rural markets on Saturday at between Tk 300-350. Last year each kilogram of jute seed was sold at between Tk 60 to 65.

At the beginning of the jute cultivation season this year, seeds were sold at between Tk 100 to 120.

Demand for jute seeds rose following last week's rainfalls.

According to a source in the Agriculture Extension Department (DAE) here, the official target of jute cultivation has been earmarked at 10,620 hectares of land in the entire district.

According to BADC sources, about 1,15,830 kilograms of jute seeds are required to fulfill the target. But BADC supplied only 225 kilograms of jute seeds among farmers within 15 days.

Official rates of a packet of one kilogram of local variety of jute seeds is Tk 35, one kilogram of Tosha variety is Tk 32 and another type of seeds containing 775 grams per packet is Tk 25.

Following visit to different seed stores in the district town, this correspondent found 775 grams of seeds in each packet. Owners of Nilphamari Seeds Store, Mukta Seeds Store and Sonali Seeds Store claimed that the government supplied the packets. The packets were marked Tosha 0-9897 variety produced in BADC farm in Shibganj, Bogra. Seedstore owners were selling each packet at Tk 240.

However, each packet of seeds weighing two kilogram having marked 'Tosha 524-Navin' variety and produced in Maharashtra, India was being sold at Tk 580. In the rural areas the price was much more higher.

There are allegations that BADC had sold a major portion of the seeds in black markets.

Fund crisis: Repair of flood damaged dam hampered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fund crisis hampers repair work on a 70-kilometre flood damaged embankment here.

According to Patuakhali office sources in the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), last year's flood completely damaged 22 out of 32 polders of the flood control embankment in seven upazilas.

They sent a project profile (PP) of Tk 17 crore to repair the embankment to their higher authorities in November last year. But the authorities allotted Tk 40 lakh only.

The break-up of distributed amount in seven upazilas is as follows: Tk 12 lakh to repair four polders in Galachipa upazila, Tk 16 lakh to repair seven polders of Kalapara upazila, Tk 5.50 lakh to repair two polders of Mirzaganj upazila, Tk 1.50 lakh to repair a polder in Sadar upazila, Tk 2 lakh to repair two polders in Dashmir upazila, Tk 2 lakh to repair a polder in Dumki upazila and Tk one lakh to repair a polder in Bauphal upazila.

Sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) told this correspondent, if the embankment is not repaired before the rainy season, about 20,000 acres of agricultural land will be overflowed by salt water threatening 'aus' and 'aman' paddy cultivation.

Cop's wife held on murder charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The wife of a police officer was arrested on Tuesday on charge of killing her domestic help here on Saturday.

Romesa Begum, wife of sub-inspector (SI) Omar Ali was remanded for five days by a magistrate following arrest from her rented house in the morning.

Ill-fated Ratna, 14, daughter of late Imran Sheikh of Moksudpur upazila in Gopalganj was found hanging from the ceiling fan of Romesha's house.

Jessore 250-bed Hospital authorities have formed a 3-member medical board headed by Dr Monir Hasan to conduct the post-mortem of the body.

Meanwhile, Romesa, in collaboration with former colleagues of her husband, tried in vain to influence the physicians of Jessore 250-bed Hospital so that they issue a post-mortem report in her favour.

The Investing Officer (IO) of the case, SI Sohrab Hossain told this correspondent he had sent an urgent letter to the hospital authorities to send the autopsy report as early as possible.



Jatiya Paty chairman H M Ershad, left, addresses a public meeting at Imadpur Bazaar in Rangpur yesterday and a partial view of the audience, right.

Govt relief too meagre for tornado victims: Ershad

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad yesterday urged the government to provide more relief materials for the tornado-affected people in Rangpur and Gaibandha.

He told this while addressing a public meeting at Imadpur bazaar in Mithapukur upazila here.

During his address, Ershad deplored that the tornado-affected people are not receiving adequate relief materials according to their requirements.

He asked the government to be impartial while distributing relief goods among the distressed people in three upazilas in the two districts.

Ershad told the government is depriving the people of Rangpur of all the facilities for a long time because they voted the Jatiya Party (JP) candidates to parliament.

He hoped that goods days of the party will come soon, Jatiya Party will form the next government, Inshallah, he declared.

Handicrafts fair with a difference

Teenage girls of village Shilmandi in Narsingdi initiate the fair

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A handicrafts fair with a difference was held in Narsingdi recently.

Teenage girls of village Shilmandi initiated the fair under the joint auspices of the Papri Community Resource Centre and the Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Narsingdi Mir Mosharaf Hossain inaugurated the fair. Papri Community Resource Centre president Haji Md Shirajul Islam presided over the ceremony while Dhaka Ahsania Mission director (programme) M A Zaman and Shilamandi Union Parishad (UP) chairman Md Balbul Aziz were present as special guests.

Narsingdi Press Club president Adam Ali Sarkar, Narsingdi district correspondent of The Inqilab Md Abu Taher, Narshingdi Press Club vice president and the district correspondent of BSS were also present.

After the opening ceremony, one-minute silence was observed to condole the death of Shamsuddin Ahmed Ishaque, MP of Narshingdi-1.

Products of 12 other centers including Papri Community Resource Centre and Meri Stopes Clinic were on display there. The organisations are Pushpo, Panna, Chaderhat, Uttoron, Ajoy, Papri of Madhya Shilmandi, Shantiniketon of Khidirpur, Papia of Nagariakandi, Ashar Alo of Baghata, Anondo Mela of Charnadhabdi and Protisruti of Ghoradia.

A cultural function followed the opening ceremony.

BDR man deceives girl 'in name of marriage'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A member of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was sued for deceiving a schoolgirl in name of marriage and assaulting her when she tried to establish her legal rights as his wife at his house.

Majedul Islam of village Sardarpara in Dimla upazila flirted with a student of class nine of Dimla Girls' High School, Emili Akhtar, 18, by marrying her through a false marriage registration at Kaliganj in Jaldhaka last year. They lived together as a couple for a considerable period.

In the meantime, Majedul got a job in Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and was posted to Dinajpur. Working there for sometime, he returned home on March 21. Emili went to his house to establish her right. Instead of recognising her as wife, Majedul in collaboration with other family members beat up her badly and assaulted her.

Majedul's brother-in-law lodged a case against Emili. When police arrested her, local people vehemently protested to it. In face of public demand, police compelled to release her. Her father Nur Mohammad sent her to Dimla Upazila Health Complex for treatment. Then he filed a case with Dimla Police Station accusing Majedul and four of his family members.

Role of mass media in combating ‘a social problem’ underscored

Brac and Health Deptt of government jointly organise workshops on TB Day in five districts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mass media can play a vital role in creating awareness among people about tuberculosis (TB) which is not only a disease but also a social problem.

This was revealed by the speakers at workshops held recently in Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur and Barisal districts to mark the World TB Day.

Brac, a major NGO in collaboration with the health department of the government, jointly organised the workshops in the five districts. This year's theme was 'Stop TB: Ensure Your Participation'.

The workshops were aimed at creating awareness among the civil society representatives about the measures to prevent and eradicate TB as well as ensuring and increasing their participation in this regard.

In Chittagong, the workshop was held at Chittagong Press Club auditorium.

It was presided over by Dr MA Zafar while the Deputy Director (Health) of Chittagong division Dr Tariqul Islam was the chief guest.

Chittagong City Corporation chief health officer Dr Md Sarfaraz Khan Chowdhury was the special guest.

Among others, senior health coordinator Md Abdus Salam, ward commissioner Rehana Kabir Ranu, The Daily Suprovat chief reporter M Nasirul Haque, BMA leader Dr Md Jasim Uddin, Teachers' Training College lecturer Mr Abu Saleh Shisir, Islamic Foundation deputy director Joyanal Abedin and senior health coordinator of Brac Dr Mahfuza Yasmin addressed.

In Khulna, the workshop was held at Khulna Press Club auditorium. Khulna division commissioner Md Alimushan was present as the chief guest while divisional health director Dr AKM Sirajuddin, Principal of Khulna Medical College Dr Md Jafrullah, Khulna Medical College Hospital superintendent Dr Md Fazlur Karim, Khulna Press Club president Sheikh Abu Hasan and advocate Firoz Ahmed addressed as special guests.

Among them, CDC consultant Dr Anwarul Azad, WHO consultant ABM Touhidul Islam, Senior health coordinator of Brac Badiuzzaman and Khulna Medical College Hospital consultant Dr GC Biswas addressed.

In Sylhet, the workshop was held at Grameen Janakalyan Sangsad auditorium.

Presided over by Sylhet civil surgeon Dr A J Mahabub Ahmed, the workshop was attended by district health director Dr Md Asad Uddin as the chief guest. Divisional director of the Family Planning department Md Shamsul Haque, city commissioner Ariful Haque Chowdhury, Dr Sudhamoy Mojumdar, Sylhet City Corporation chief health officer Dr Azizur Rahman, Bangladesh Medical Practitioners' Association president and district president of Natab advocate Abdul Hye Khan were present as special guests.

Brac health coordinator in Sylhet division Nazimuddin Bhuiyan gave the welcome speech while Brac senior health coordinator in Dhaka division Bivakur Roy presented the keynote papers.

In Rangpur, the workshop was held at Rangpur civil surgeon's (CS) office auditorium. Head of Medicine department of Rangpur Medical College Dr Kazi Md Jahangir was the chief guest.

Secretary of Rangpur unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Dr Samsuzzaman, TB Control Programme president Sadrul Alam Dulu, United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) representative Nurul Islam and non-government physicians' representative Dr Mafizul Islam were special guests.

In Barisal, the workshop was held at the Social Welfare Department auditorium. It was presided over by Barisal civil surgeon Dr Abdul Malek while Health director Dr Moklesur Rahman was present as the chief guest.

Senior health coordinator of Brac Head Office Tapan Kumar Ghosh presented different activities of Brac in this sector. Chest Disease Clinic junior consultant Dr Siddiqur Rahman focused on the role of city corporation and other organisations in combating the disease in the city.



A workshop titled, 'Stop TB: Ensure Your Participation' jointly organised by Brac, a major NGO and the Health Department of the government progresses in Chittagong recently. Four similar workshops were held in Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur and Barisal to mark the World TB Day.

SNAPS

9 Manikganj villages totally sanitised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Nine villages in Sadar upazila here have been totally sanitised. The village are Kagzinagar, Pillai, Kayra, Rauhadaha of Ward No 6 and Patrail, Ramonpur, Laota, Dulapara of Ward No 3 in Dighi union and Borongakhola of Ward No 5 in Nabagram union. It was possible due to collective work of NGOs including MDPOD and HRDS, Local Union Parishad (UP) and government officials also collaborated in their work, according to sources in the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE). 'We only created awareness among the villagers about sanitation and people spontaneously built healthy latrines themselves,' DPHE sub-assistant engineer Abdul Mannan told this correspondent.