

Mouth-watering litchis will be dear this year

30pc fall in output due to storm, worm forecast

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Litchi, the season's most mouthwatering fruit has started appearing in the markets, but agriculturists here forecast at least 35 per cent fall in production because of storm and worm.

Sweet but still small in sizes, the quality litchis have been selling at Tk 120 for a hundred in local markets for the last few days.

The price will go up further when better varieties will be available, according to market sources.

"About 10 per cent of litchis get damaged because of worm attack every year. In the beginning, the litchi plants were almost free from worm. But frequent storms followed by worm attack have down-sized production by over 30 per cent", said horticulturist Abdul Mannan, also a Rajshahi University botany teacher.

Moreover, because of absence of litchi processing facilities in the region, the dropped litchis cannot be utilised properly, he said further.

Usually, five lakh metric tons of litchis are produced in eight districts of Rajshahi region.

Local horticulturists informed that more than half of the total production of the country comes from Rajshahi and Dinajpur. Litchis grow in plenty also in the districts of Chapainawabganj, Natore, Naogaon, Pabna, Bogra and Joypurhat.

The deputy director (DD) of

the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) told The Daily Star local growers in Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj and Pabna districts are now cultivating litchi on commercial basis.

"They are interested in growing China-3 variety alongside BARI-1. Growers and middlemen earn between Tk one lakh and three lakh from each acre every year", he informed.



Poppy cultivated on 100 acres in Bandarban destroyed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in joint raids recently destroyed poppy grown illegally on 100 acres of land in inaccessible hilly areas of Thanchi close to border with Myanmar.

This was disclosed by the Commander of Bandarban Army Region Brigadier General Abul Kalam Mohammad Humayun in a press conference held here on Saturday.

Over 300 jawans of Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) took part in the operation carried out from March 24 to April 26.

The destroyed poppy was cultivated near 63, 64, and 65 pillars of Bangladesh-Mayanmar border. The joint forces also destroyed three abandoned camps of criminals and recovered a few sets of uniform of Bangladesh Army.

BDR jawans have launched a similar drive in 1997. At that time, they destroyed poppy cultivated on 200 acres land. The government planned an alternative to poppy cultivation for indigenous people in the area. But the plan was not implemented, at last.

According to a source, drug traders of Myanmar allegedly cultivate poppy along the Bangladesh border in collaboration with international drug smugglers and supply it to world markets.

2 brothers to die in Dinajpur for murder

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two brothers were sentenced to death by a court here on Saturday for killing their niece over a land dispute sometime in June, 2002.

The condemned convicts are Mofizuddin and Abul Kashem of village Punotree in Chirirbandar upazila.

They kept the body of victim Rima Khatun, 8, hidden in a jute field. Next morning her parents recovered it.

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Dinajpur GMS Farid pronounced the verdict.

Fire damages poultry farm

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

About 18,000 hens worth Tk 1.6 crore belonging to the North Bengal Poultry Farm of Kazi Group of Tentulia in Panchgarh district burnt alive on Friday, according to fire brigade sources.

According to the general manager (GM) and local people, the fire originated from electric short circuit. Ten sheds of the farm were gutted. The fire lasted for about an hour.

Being informed, fire fighters from Panchgarh rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control.

POOR RESULT MPOs of seven schools, one madrasa cancelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Monthly Pay Order (MPO) of eight educational institutions of the district have been cancelled because of poor performance in public examinations in last two years, according to the district education office sources.

The institutions are South Char Biswas Girls' High School in Galachipa upazila, Bayar Ghona High School and South Salampur Al-Fatima Dakhil Madrasa in Sadar upazila, Keshobpur Girls' High School in Bauphal upazila, Adampur Girls' School in Dashmina upazila, North Ghotker Andhua Senior Madrasa in Mirayagonj upazila and Dhankhali Gazi A Mannan Girls' High School in Kalapara upazila.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education cancelled the MPOs from February, the district education office sources added.

Reception to agriculturist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A reception was accorded to a national agriculture award winner, Md Abdul Karim by Nabonita Sangskritik Parishad, a cultural organisation at Adampur in Kamalganj upazila recently.

Abdul Karim, a retired army personnel of village Jalalpur received the award this year for his outstanding achievement in tomato farming.

While addressing, Karim declared that the award and the reception inspired him very much to do more outstanding job.

The reception was presided over by Kamalganj upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Dr Azizur Rahman Mollik while it was attended by deputy director (DD) of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Moulvibazar Abdul Hamid Mollah as chief guest.

Nothing tames rising crimes in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Law and order has deteriorated in the district with the rise in various crimes including murder, clash and abduction.

At least eight murders, seven abductions and 12 clashes took place in 35 days from April 1 to May 5.

Deaths of criminals in 'crossfire' with Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) and police failed to halt downside in the law and order.

According to police, 15 criminals were killed in 'crossfire' in Kushtia since April 1.

A regional leader of outlawed Janajuddho of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed in a 'shootout' with police and his accomplices in the latest incident of 'crossfire' in Mirpur upazila early Thursday.

The incident raised the number of deaths in 'crossfire' in the district alone to 66, the highest number across the county.

However, the law enforcing agencies claimed improvement in the law and order.

Kushtia superintendent of police (SP) Sahabuddin Khan claimed incidents of extortion, snatching,

abduction for ransom have declined considerably.

"It is impossible to change the situation in the district overnight where at least 10 underground parties equipped with huge illegal arms unleashed a reign of terror for the last 30 years, the SP told this correspondent over telephone.

According to high police officials, who preferred not to be named, crimes like extortion, robbery and abduction for ransom and tender manipulation marked fall due to 'extra-judicial action' by members of the law enforcing agencies during the last several months.

Erosion leaves hundreds homeless in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Erosion has taken a serious turn along the western bank of the hilly river of Someswary in Durgapur upazila because of sudden swelling of the river.

At least 200 dwelling houses have been devoured by the river in last one week rendering more than 1,500 people homeless. The erosion victims have taken shelter in the nearby flood shelter.

During a visit to the area, this correspondent found that people from over 100 houses have shifted to safer places.

The badly affected areas are Khamarkhali, Shibgonj and Birishiri.

Local people have dumped sand, bamboo and timber to protect the area, but the strong current of the river foiled their bid.

Khamarkhali bazaar was once a big village market in the upazila. But the river has devoured two thirds of it.

Over 500 families used to live at village Shibganj five years ago. But the river engulfed 800 acres of land leaving 350 families landless and homeless.

When contacted with the execu-

tive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Netrakona, Mohammed Alauddin said that they had already started a project titled, 'Durgapur Town Protection Embankment.'

River erosion has turned into a common phenomenon in the area for years together, but the government is yet to take any tangible measure to halt it, local people complained.



Erosion by Someswary has devoured vast areas of Shibganj village in Durgapur upazila of Netrakona.

Import, export thru' Hilli resume after 18-day strike

BSS, Hilli

Normal import-export activities resumed at Hilli Land Port (HLP) after the longest-ever strike came to an end yesterday.

Officials and the businessmen said due to the 18-day strike, called by the Hilli Exporters' and Customs Clearing Agents' Association (HECCAA) on the Indian side since April 20 last, international trade and commerce through the HLP suffered a big jolt.

They said the HECCAA enforced the strike protesting double tax on the Indian exports through HLP. After hectic meetings between the leaders of HECCAA and Indian authorities, the strike was withdrawn on May 6 when the problems were assured to be resolved soon.

But the normal function at HLP was delayed for two days more as the drivers of more than 450 stranded trucks with loaded export goods on the Indian side refused to enter Bangladesh demanding compensation for the losses they incurred during the strike period.

Sources said the compensation issue was resolved Saturday night at a meeting held among the truck drivers' association, truck owners' association, HECCAA and the concerned authorities.

The Indian trucks with export goods started entering Bangladesh yesterday morning, resuming the normal activities at HLP, they said.

Robbers gun down youth in Comilla

BSS, Comilla

A young man was shot dead allegedly by robbers at Rajapur village under Burichang upazila of the district in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said, the robbers numbering 10 to 12 entered the house of Nurul Islam at around 12:30 am and shot his son Mohammad Kaosar, 27, as he tried to resist them.

The robbers, however, fled the scene when the villagers rushed to the house of Nurul Islam after the inmates raised a hue and cry.

Kaosar was rushed to the Burichang Upazila Health Complex at 1-30 am where the attending physicians declared him dead.

Family sources said Kaosar came home from Saudi Arabia one and a half months ago and had married a few weeks back.

The body of Kaosar was sent to the morgue for autopsy.

12x3

10x4