

# Preserving aroma of the golden past

42 varieties of local paddy still grown in Moulvibazar

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With the advent of IRR1 in 1960s, most local varieties of paddy have virtually disappeared from fields, with an exception to greater Sylhet region. Traditional varieties are still in cultivation in Sylhet, though in a limited scale.

Cultivation of these varieties are now on the rise as farmers are becoming interested, thanks to the efforts by officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Moulvibazar district.

Farmers in the district still grow at least 42 varieties, most of which have nice smell and elegant names. Some of these varieties are very favourite to people. It is part of local culture to serve rice from these varieties during functions like wedding ceremony. Limited quantities are also exported to the United Kingdom for Bangladeshi expatriates there.

DAE officials said they have collected a total of 80 varieties of paddy seeds in the district with cooperation from Bangladesh

Seed Industry Development Corporation. Forty-two of these are traditional local varieties. These have been collected from different areas of Moulvibazar district.

These include Beer Kajal, Sonamukhi, Jorina, Bansful, Moyna Shail, Tulsimakha, Vagyaswari, Thakurbhog, Modhumaloti, Samudra Fena, Chinigura, Porbotzira, Kalizira, Lakhir and some varieties of Binni paddy. Specialty of Binni rice is that it is gluey when cooked. Productivity of Binni paddy is very low. Binni rice is very popular. It is cooked to entertain guests in any festival. Each farmer in Moulvibazar cultivates Binni paddy, though in small scale, to meet family needs.

The DAE officials said that of late, cultivation of some varieties like Joyanti, Dhumni Chengri, Kartikshail, Guashail, Raja Shail, Arai, Goroi, Dudh Luky, Khasra and Chengamukhi have increased in Moulvibazar.

People of the district have urged the DAE to preserve local variety at any cost as these paddy

have a glorious tradition in rural Bangladesh.

DAE official Anil Kumer Das said the government have also given importance to preservation of local varieties of paddy and the DAE is inspiring farmers to do that.

To motivate farmers, DAE is training them on preservation of the seeds and improved methods of their cultivation, he told this correspondent. The method outlined by DAE now helps farmers to preserve the paddy seeds for two years, he said.

DAE is also holding seed fair in different areas.

The DAE experts are of the view that with modern cultivation methods and favourable weather and soil conditions in Moulvibazar district, yield from the local varieties will increase without loss of their quality and aromatic flavour. These varieties would also be able to earn foreign exchange, they hoped. Cultivation of these varieties will also help preserve the environment, they said.



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil addresses a public meeting on the Shahid Minar premises in Netrakona town on Friday. PHOTO: STAR

## Unite to root out terrorism, communalism: Jalil

AL holds public meeting at Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Awami League, if voted to power, will eliminate violence, terrorism and communalism from Bangladesh, said its general secretary.

But for that unity of all progressive and democratic forces is necessary, Abdul Jalil MP said while addressing a public meeting on Shahid Minar premises in Netrakona town on Friday.

It was organised by the AL-led 14 party alliance to protest incidents of bomb blasts and fuel price hike.

Jalil pledged that Awami League would work tirelessly to combat all types of terrorism and build Bangladesh as a country of peace, prosperity and communal harmony.

He claimed that fundamentalist forces have organised themselves under the protection of ruling BNP. Now they are doing destructive activities, which is branding Bangladesh as a country of religious extremists abroad, the AL leader said.

These forces are using religion and misinterpreting it to go to power by misleading the people.

He accused the prime minister of sheltering plunderers of national

resources, who have deposited a huge amount of money to a bank in Malaysia.

"The Malaysian government is now investigating deposit of a huge amount of money by a ruling party

RU Shibir holds 'closed-door' meet with VC

RU CORRESPONDENT

Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) leaders at Rajshahi University forcibly entered the administrative building and met RU Vice-chancellor at his office yesterday.

Police tried to intercept them but failed, campus sources said. No other official or journalists were allowed to enter the VC's office during the meeting.

This is violation of protocol, many of the officials later told this correspondent.

When contacted over telephone RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain said they (ICS) discussed their demands.

leader in Bangladesh", Jalil told the meeting. This has also tarnished the image of the country abroad.

They are transferring money when the people are finding it difficult to meet both ends due to price hike of essentials.

If AL returns to power, all transferred money will be brought back to the country, Jalil said.

The meeting was also addressed by, among others, Workers Party General Secretary Bimol Biswas, Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, NAP Presidium member MA Gani, gano Forum leader Mofidul Islam Kamal, JSD leader Jafar Sazzad, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Shafi Ahamed and others local leaders of the 14-party alliance.

Bimol Biswas said leaders of ruling BNP were alerted about rise of fundamentalist forces under its protection. But they did not care.

"Now they (fundamentalist forces) will eat up BNP", he said.

Bomb blasts are now regular incidents but the government instead of trying the perpetrators is pointing finger at opposition political parties, he said.

## Oust protectors of militants from power: Matia

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Awami League (AL) Presidium member Matia Chowdhury has said time has come to dislodge the government as it is protecting 'fundamentalist forces' who are involved in acts of violence in the country in the name of religion.

Bomb blasts and murders done by these forces under government's protection have already tarnished the image of the country abroad. This is affecting foreign trade and inflow of foreign investment, she said while addressing a public meeting at Gouranga Bazar in Kishoreganj Friday evening.

The meeting was organised by the AL-led 14-party opposition alliance to protest the serial bomb blasts across the country on August 17 and price hike of fuel and essentials.

She called upon the people to intensify agitation to dislodge the government.

Matia alleged that the four-party alliance government is suppressing opposition's voice and harassing its leaders and workers by implicating them in false cases to cling to power. But their dream will not come true as people have become conscious about the motive of the ruling parties, she added.

She also alleged that some

senior leaders of ruling BNP are transferring money to foreign banks. Without naming, she said a front ranking BNP leader has transferred Tk 2.50 crore to Malaysia.

With advocate Abdul Hamid in the chair, the meeting was addressed by, among others, Sayed Ashraf Islam MP, Gano Forum central leader Abdur Rouf, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) central leader Iqbal Hossain Khan, Workers Party leader Hajera Sultana and Nurur Rahman Selim of Ganatantri Party.

Matia said law and order has deteriorated after takeover by the four-party alliance government because the ruling party men are protecting criminals.

She also criticised the prime minister for her 'face saving' speech in the Jatiya Sangsad regarding the August 17 serial bomb blasts. This proves the government is reluctant to try the perpetrators of the August 17 incident, she alleged.

The people were scared after the August 17 incident and they expected stern action from the government against the criminals. But her (prime minister) speech in parliament has frustrated all, Matia said.

There has been virtually no progress in the trial of Kibria murder.

"We do not feel the need to demand justice from the present government", the former minister said. "People will try all murders and incidents of bomb and grenade blasts during the tenure of the government", she said.

Such incidents will continue so long the government remains in power, she said.

## Workshop for Hindu religious leaders

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

The Hindu Religious Welfare Trust in Gopalganj yesterday began a five-day training workshop for religious leaders to develop human resources.

The training, funded by the UNFPA, is being held at Trust's office in Gopalganj town.

Fifty participants from five upazilas of the district are participating in the training workshop.

The training includes gender equality, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, control of drug use and abuse, protecting girls from early marriage and campaign against dowry, maintaining law and, usefulness of breast-feeding and creating awareness against repression on women.

Mangal Chandra Chanda, secretary of the Trust, presided over the inaugural session. Additional deputy Commissioner Md. Jamsher Ahmed was the chief guest.

## Abducted trader rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A young businessman who was abducted from Sirajganj five days ago was rescued here on Friday night.

Nzmus Sakib, 25, was abducted from Bagorbari village under Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj. The abductors brought him at Alokdia Char in the Jamuna under Shivalaya police station here.

On a secret information, Shivalaya police rescued him a house in the shoal at 9:00 pm where they confined him.

Earlier, the abductors demanded Tk. 7,00,000 as ransom for his release.

However, police could not arrest any abductor.



A human chain was formed and shops kept closed for six hours in Manikganj town yesterday demanding punishment to the killers of Jubo Dal leader Khurshed Alam Rana. He was shot dead in the town Thursday night. PHOTO: STAR

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