

# Madhupur pineapple growers not getting fair prices

Bad communication, unscrupulous traders' lust for profit blamed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Pineapple farmers of Madhupur upazila are not getting fair price of their produce in the ongoing season.

Madhupur is still famous for producing tasteful varieties of pineapples such as Honeyqueen, Giantque and Ghorasal.

Farmers said the cost of production of one piece of pineapple was around Tk 3 while they are selling a piece almost at the same price to traders.

Traders are selling pineapple at an exorbitant price at their will, producers alleged.

Pineapple farmers said they could not earn profit from the fruit because they were forced to sell the gardens at throwaway prices during its budding stage due to abject poverty.

While visiting different pineapple wholesale markets in Madhupur upazila, this correspondent saw a pair of medium size pineapple was sold at Tk 30 while a pair of big size pineapple was on sale at between Tk 40 to 50.

Farmers alleged they face problem in carrying pineapple to Dhaka and elsewhere in the country due to bad communication system.

After harvest, they have to carry their produce to Madhupur Sadar, Pakutia, Jalchhatra, Rashulpur and



Gabtoly markets by rickshaw vans through a 12-kilometre damaged and muddy road. This results in increase in transport cost, farmers said.

Besides, there is no designated place as pineapple market. So, they have to sell their produce at temporary markets along both sides of roads in Madhupur, Jalchhatra, Rashulpur, and

Pakutia which creates traffic jam on the Tangail-Mymensingh Highway.

Farmers have no storage facilities to preserve pineapple. The fruit should be consumed within four days of plucking, they said.

While talking to this correspondent a pineapple trader named Abdul Mazid of Madhupur Sadar said, 'A

large quantity of pineapple are damaged every year in absence of preservation facilities and due to bad communication system.'

Many pineapple farmers in Madhupur are now showing much interest in banana cultivation because of its profitability.

Officials at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Tangail, said farmers cultivated pineapple on 7,022 hectares of land in the district this year. Of those, 5,972 hectares in Madhupur and 1,050 hectares in Ghatail.

About 90,000 tonnes of pineapple were produced in the district last year. Of those, 76,000 tonnes of pineapple were produced in Madhupur and 14,000 tonnes in Ghatail.

A large quantity of pineapple were produced at Jalchhatra, Telki, Sholakuri, Rashulpur, Amritara, Beribaid, Aushnara and Kakrai areas in Madhupur upazila.

Many pineapple farmers are allegedly passing hard days, growers alleged. Pineapple farming is losing popularity among farmers due to its lower price, transport problem and unscrupulous businessmen's lust for much profit, growers said.

Stand beside flood victims

Dr Kamal urges govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Gono Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged the caretaker government to stand beside the flood victims across the country.

He said this while exchanging opinion with journalists at Tangail Press Club yesterday after his visited to flood-affected Charabari area in Sadar upazila.

Expressing concern over the present flood situation across the country, Dr Kamal said coordination committees comprising civil administration, army, NGOs and other voluntary organisations at district and upazila level, should work unitedly to combat the flood.

Dr Kamal said the government should be prepared to face the possible challenges of further price hike of essentials due to the flooding across the country.

Following damage to aman, jute and vegetable fields, Dr Kamal called upon the government to take immediate steps for providing seeds to the farmers in advance for the next aman sowing season.

He stressed on providing VGF, OMS, TR, and GR cards for flood-affected people after the deluge.

Dr Kamal urged the government to supply sufficient water purifying tablets in the flood-affected areas as diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases have already broken out everywhere.

Dr Kamal urged local journalists to help government combat the flood situation.

Among others, former whip Abdur Rouf, former lawmaker Mofizul Islam Khan Kamal, advocates Sagir Anwar, Shofiqullah, Jaglul Haidar and engineer Abul Hossain accompanied Dr Kamal during the visit.

Later, Dr Kamal left Tangail for Sirajganj, Bogra and Gaibandha.

## FLOOD IN DISTRICTS

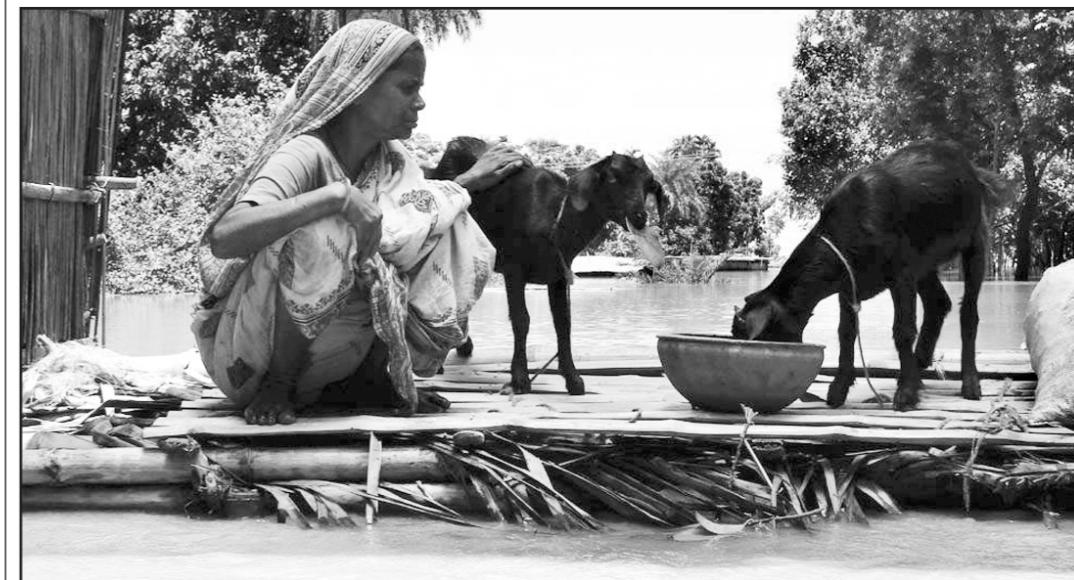


PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

(Top to bottom) Two little children studying on boat as their house went under floodwater at Barbulai village in Manikganj while a woman feeding her goats on a raft at Aliabad in Faridpur where flood situation worsened yesterday.

2 BJMC officials in Khulna to visit jute mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two high officials of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) arrived here yesterday from Dhaka to visit some state-owned jute mills of Khulna-Jessore industrial belt, a source in BJMC zonal office said.

They are General Manager (marketing) and General Manager (Admin) of BJMC.

Meanwhile, the publicity secretary and Khulna regional committee of Patkai Sangram Parishad (PSP), Abdur Rahman reiterated his call for a peaceful agitation from the next month if arrear wages, salaries and other financial benefits are not paid up within this month. Earlier, the government had committed to workers of the closed jute mills for payment of their arrears.

Rahman hoped the workers and employees of People's Jute Mills along with their family members would take part in the agitation.

Meanwhile, the general secretary of Daulatpur Jute Traders Association, Md Shamim Hasan said that closure of People's Jute Mills had economically crippled them. Peoples Jute Mills owes Tk 8 crore to suppliers of raw jute, Hasan said.

The president of the association, Md Akkas Ali said closure of the mill had not only affected suppliers but also growers of jute. Suppliers of spare parts were also affected economically to whom the mill owes several crores of taka, he said.

## Massive afforestation planned in Khagrachhbari

About four lakh saplings distributed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhbari

The government has undertaken a massive afforestation programme in Khagrachhbari Hill District.

Over three lakh acres of land would be brought under the programme in eight upazilas of the hill district.

The initiative was taken following success of the Participatory Afforestation Programme in the district in last five years.

Different government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) helped succeed the programme.

The stakeholders of the programme include nine horti-culture centres, agriculture extension units, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, Divisional Forest Office (DFO) and NGOs like Proshika, Epek and British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB).

They organisations distributed over 20 lakh saplings for free in last five years.

Meanwhile, a tree plantation movement and tree fair concluded here recently. Held at the Officers' Club here the fair was jointly organised by Khagrachhbari district administration and Divisional Forest office (DFO) to create awareness about benefits of afforestation.

Many socio-cultural organisations took part in the fair.

In the fair, government organisations distributed three lakh saplings among people while BATB

distributed 3.75 lakh saplings for free.

Khagrachhbari Hill District Council (KHDC) Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura said they will extend their all-out help to make the afforestation programme a success.

They said farmers, UP chairmen, members and people from all walks of life have been involved in the afforestation programme to make it successful.

They said they are getting necessary support from government and NGOs to make the programme successful.

### 196 sacks of fertiliser seized in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized 196 sacks of fertiliser from Birampur while being smuggled into India, police sources said.

Three people were also arrested, they said.

The arrestees are Md Hares Uddin, truck driver Md Ilias and helper of the truck Md Firoz.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab raided Birampur rail gate area in the town and seized 196 sacks of fertiliser, while being smuggled into India. Rab also seized the truck which carrying the fertiliser.

Later, the fertiliser along with truck was handed over to the Birampur police. A case was filed with Birampur police station accusing the arrestees.

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