



Farmers separate 'good' potatoes from damaged ones at Shawon Himghar, a cold storage in Domar upazila of Nilphamari district, as they are in dire need of seed potatoes in the current cultivation season, right, a bag of potato without any tag of government's seed certification department is ready for sale at Taraganj Bazar in Rangpur district.

PHOTO: STAR

Potato likely to be dearer as growers face acute seed crisis

E A M ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Potato growers of eight northern districts are facing crisis of quality seeds at the very beginning of cultivation season this year as the supply by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) is too inadequate.

Against the demand of around 2,25,959 tonnes of potato seeds in the region, the BADC has supplied only 2,074 tonnes, which is less than one percent of the requirement in the peak potato cultivation time November.

Farmers are deceived with low quality seeds while prices remain high as farmers earlier sold a big amount of potatoes kept in the cold storages, local sources said.

The regional office of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) in Rangpur has set a target to bring 1,50,639 hectares of land in Rangpur, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts under potato cultivation which is 10,000 hectares higher than that of the previous year.

Farmers are now preparing their lands for potato cultivation as harvest of early variety BRRI Dhan-33 and Bina Dhan-7, meant for combating monga, a near famine situation, has already completed.

Talking to The Daily Star, many farmers said that they usually prefer the seeds supplied by BADC as those are cultivated and preserved in a scientific way to make

them free from virus and fungus and ensure high yield.

"Potatoes on my one bigha (30 decimal) land was damaged badly due to fungus attack last year. And I could not preserve those potatoes for seeds," said Ramjan Ali, a potato farmer of Sutbari village of Dimla upazila.

Like Ramjan Ali, many other farmers are now facing seeds crisis this season.

BADC sources said they have decided to sell 25 percent of its seeds directly to the farmers and 75 percent through some 550 dealers in the region this year.

But in most cases, farmers cannot afford to avail the opportunity as BADC has put a condition that one will have to buy at least 520 kgs of seeds which will cost between Tk 16,600 and Tk 20,000.

The price of 'A' grade potato seeds is Tk 38 per kg and that of 'B' grade is Tk 32 this year.

Farmers said potato seeds will ultimately go to the hands of dealers and traders as the dealers get advance order from big farmers or seed companies to sell their allotted seeds at high price.

The BADC seeds are rarely seen selling at its fixed rate in the local markets.

When asked about the seed crisis, Faruq Zahedul Huq, deputy director of BADC's seed marketing department in Rangpur region, said that the farmers could collect rest of the seeds from other sources like NGOs or private firms.

Agriculture officials, however, could not provide any information about the quantity and quality of seeds to

be available from NGOs and private seed companies.

During a visit to seed markets at Tengonmari Haat of Nilphamari, Mohish Khoch Haat of Lalmonirhat and Saka Haat of Panchagarh, this correspondent selling of low quality potato seeds, mostly affected with virus and fungus.

A bag of 80 kg low-quality potato seed is selling for Tk 2,400 to Tk 2,600. The bags have no tag of the government's seed certification department that monitors the quality of seeds of different crops.

"My office certified only 375 tonnes of potato seeds of five private companies in the district. Over 90 percent seeds available in the market are without certification and of low quality," Muradul Hasan, seed certification officer for Nilphamari, said.

"Most potato fields in this region were affected with virus and fungus just before harvest last year. The affected potatoes were preserved in cold storages for using as seeds later. If those are sown, the plants might be affected again with various diseases," said Tauhidul Islam, a big potato farmer of Mohendra Nagar village in Lalmonirhat district.

When contacted, additional director of the regional office of AED in Rangpur Shakhawat Hossain said, "There is every possibility of the farmers being cheated by purchasing low quality seeds. Subassistant agriculture officers will visit door to door to suggest farmers about protection of their potatoes."

Diarrhoea kills one, attacks 25 in remote Khagrachhara

UNB, Khagrachhara

Diarrhoea has claimed one life and attacked 25 others at inaccessible Baropara village in Sadar upazila.

A medical team of health department rushed to the area as the water-borne disease took an alarming turn in the last three days, official sources said.

Meanwhile, several seriously affected people were brought to Sadar hospital for treatment.

Chief of the medical team Dr Shaheed Talukder said, Dayaram Tripura died of diarrhoea at Harikunjapara

Monday.

District Civil Surgeon Dr Abu Taher, confirming the outbreak of the disease said, intake of contaminated water was the main reason for it.

6 of a family get life for bid to kill housewife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A Bogra court yesterday sentenced six people to life term imprisonment for attempting to murder a housewife after failing to realise Tk 50,000 dowry.

The court also fined each of them Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six more months in jail.

Bogra Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-2 judge Jeb-un-Nesa handed down the verdict.

The convicts are Ahimul Haque, 24, his brothers Enamul Haque, 18, and Nazrul Islam, 30, and their father Ibrahim, 60. Ibrahim's wife Fazila Khutun, 50, and his brother Asab Ali, 55.

According to prosecution, since marriage a year ago, Shampa's husband Ahimul and other convicts were putting pressure on her to bring Tk 50,000 from her parents as dowry.

As Shampa did not agree to their proposal, they beat up her mercilessly on June 15, 2006 and then set her afire in a bid to kill her.

Shampa's father Shahadat Hossain filed a case against the aforesaid six immediately after the incident.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

3 houses torched in Matiranga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhara

Three houses were burnt to ashes by criminals Monday night at Kabutorchhara village under Matiranga upazila. Khagrachhara District Fire Service Department sources said, a gang of 12-15 set on fire the houses of Mokhlesur Rahman, 45, Montazuren Nesa, 34, and Abul Khair, 43, at about 10 pm damaging property worth around Tk 3 lakh.

On information, police and army members rushed to the spots but none could be arrested till filing of the report at 5.30 pm yesterday.

Lawyers stage protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Tangail district unit of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Ajinjibi Forum yesterday organised a human chain protesting alleged government interference in judiciary, torture by police in custody in the name of remand, deteriorating law and order and price hike of essentials. Over a hundred of local lawyers took part in the programme held in court area in the town. They also held a rally there. Presided by president of Tangail Advocate Bar Association Golam Mostofa Miah, the speakers at the rally alleged that the law and order in the country is deteriorating every day while the law enforcers are torturing innocent people in their custody in the name of remand. Besides, prices of all essential commodities are increasing every day causing serious suffering for the poor.



Human chain in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Students and teachers of Chanchkoir Nazimuddin School and College under Gurudaspur upazila formed a human chain and held a rally yesterday demanding punishment to killers of Sabuj, a student of the institution Tuesday noon.

Witnesses said, Sabuj, a student of class six went missing after he came out of his house on November 1 for playing football. Later, some people located his body in front of his school and informed police. Abu Taher, father of Sabuj, filed a case with Gurudaspur police station accusing six people, including neighbour Sajedur Sardar but police are yet to arrest any of the accused.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তাৰ কাৰ্যালয়
বনাঞ্চানী বাবহাসপনা ও প্ৰকৃতি সংৰক্ষণ বিভাগ, সিলেট
সদৰ দণ্ডন-মৌলভীবাজার

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং: ০১/পলিপ্ৰোপাইলিন ব্যাগ-২০০৯-২০১০

তাৰিখ: ২৯/১০/২০০৯

দৰপত্ৰ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তাৰ কাৰ্যালয়, বনাঞ্চানী বাবহাসপনা ও প্ৰকৃতি সংৰক্ষণ বিভাগ, সিলেট সদৰ দণ্ডন-মৌলভীবাজারে নিম্নলিখিত নথিৰ তফসিলে বৰ্ণিত সংঘৰ্ষ ক্ষেত্ৰেলোক কাজে বাবহাসপনা ও প্ৰকৃতি সংৰক্ষণ বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তাৰ কাৰ্যালয়, বনাঞ্চানী বাবহাসপনা ও প্ৰকৃতি সংৰক্ষণ বিভাগ, সিলেট, সদৰ দণ্ডন-মৌলভীবাজার।

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নথিৰ তফসিল অনুমোদন আৰু বাবহাসপনা ও প্ৰকৃতি সংৰক্ষণ বিভাগ, সিলেট, সদৰ দণ্ডন-মৌলভীবাজার।

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