

# GOOD BORO HARVEST AT HIGH PRODUCTION COST Luck may not smile on farmers

**ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi**

Farmers in Rajshahi have started harvesting boro with hope for a good output, but the joy of reaping may remain an elusive one, especially for the marginal farmers and sharecroppers, as paying off loans, irrigation charges and landowners' share will upset the profit to a great extent.

Last moment's rainfall and improvement in electricity supply for the irrigation machines helped the good yield on most lands, said Mohsin Ali, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Rajshahi.

"Boro cultivation on some 2,000 hectares of land on Padma riverbed came as a solace against the fact that the district's cultivation target on some 3661 hectares of lands could not be achieved over irrigation difficulties. However, earlier problem in irrigation due to frequent load-shedding in some Barind areas is likely to affect the total output by five to ten percent," he said.

During a recent visit to boro fields on the dried up Padma riverbed near Rajshahi city, this correspondent saw vast swathe of the riverbed green with standing boro crops while farmers at a few lands were reaping paddy. In absence of electricity, diesel-run irrigation pumps were used to ensure

last moment's water at many fields.

Moniruzzaman Lalon, a sharecropper, was taking some polythene sheets for making a shade to rid labourers at his boro field at Sreerampur Char from the scorching sun.

"Kalam, Shukur and I cultivated boro on 12 bighas of land that we took on lease. We expect 20 maunds of paddy per bigha and the yield is satisfactory. But I am in doubt about profit although the total output would be 240 maunds. Ninety-six maunds or its value is going to be spent to pay the landowner, irrigation machine provider and farm labourers. We the three partners will share the rest 144 maunds, having 48 maunds for each," he said.

Over a dozen farm labourers were seen gathering paddy sheafs at Lalon's field. Shukur and Kalam were also working with them.

"I have a family of 12 members and we need 50 maunds of paddy a year for our own consumption. If I sell part of my share, we will have to starve for some months before the next harvest," said Shukur.

Expressing his anxiety about paddy price, Kalam said, "We took a loan of Tk 20,000 from paddy trader Shamsul Islam for starting cultivation. After harvest, we



Labourers at a boro field on dried up riverbed of the Padma at Sreerampur near Rajshahi city have a hasty midday meal under the scorching sun as they have hardly any daytime respite during the harvest period. High production cost may upset the benefit of fairly good yield this year, farmers said.

are first to pay off the loan by selling paddy to him."

The three sharecroppers said they spent Tk 60,000 for the cultivation and if they can get the government rate of Tk 17 per kg of paddy, they will be able to make a profit of Tk 38,000 in total.

Alauddin, who cultivated boro on 4.5 bighas of his own land, went to Lalon's field for borrowing a maund of paddy. "I need some paddy to meet my family need till I reap my crop two weeks later. Last year's production was exhausted a few months ago," he said.

DAE Deputy Director Mohsin said measures are underway to ensure that farmers get the government announced price.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

### Schoolgirl gang-raped

**A CORRESPONDENT, Narail**

A 13-year-old girl student of Makrail High School under Shal-Nagor union under Lohagara upazila was gang raped by four youths early yesterday. Lohagara police said as the hapless girl came out of house at the call of nature four youths naming Kamal Mollah, 28, son of Motaleb, Ibrahim, 18, son of Kiam Mollah, Salim Mridha, 28, son of Arfin Mridha and Ismail, 22, son of Ayub Mollah, who were hiding in a bush, forcibly took her to a nearby place and raped her. Profusely bleeding, local rescuers sent her to Narail Sadar Hospital. A case was filed in this connection with Lohagara police station. None was arrested till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.

### Smuggled sarees seized

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 2,470 pieces of smuggled Indian sarees worth around Tk 1.5 crore and arrested two persons in this connection from City Gate area yesterday. On an information that huge Indian sarees are being smuggled from Chouddagram under Comilla district to Chittagong city, a squad of Rab-7 of Chittagong raided the area at around 6:00am, sources said. The Rab men seized the smuggled sarees from a truck and arrested two persons in this connection. The arrestees are Mohammad Babul, 30, son of late Oli Ahmed and Gias Uddin, 26, son of late Mohammad Ishaq, both from Mirsarai upazila in the district.

### Three get life for rape

**A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore**

Three youths were sentenced to life term imprisonment on Tuesday for raping a girl in Sadar upazila. The Children and Women Repression Prevention Court also fined each Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer 5 years more in jail. The convicts are Shariful Islam, Abdur Rahim and Hira of Bahadurpur under Sadar upazila. Among the convicts, Shariful is now in jail while others are on the run. According to the prosecution story, Shariful, Rahim and Hira of Bahadurpur and Laltu of Ghope area abducted Marry Khatun, 15, step daughter of Anoara Khatun of Khajura truckstand area on November 12, 2007. They took her to an orchard near Jess Garden and raped her. Marry herself filed a case against them with Jessore kotwali police station on the following day. Accused Laltu died during the proceedings while the court acquitted two others of charges.

### Schoolboy drowns

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur**

A schoolboy drowned in a pond in his school compound in the town yesterday. Shahreaz Prodik, 14, son of Md Abdul Kalam Azad of village Nimnagar Balubari was a class eight student of Dinajpur Police Lines School. Locals said Shahreaz along with his friends was playing cricket inside the school compound after their examination. He drowned as he went to fetch the ball that fell into the pond. Later, the divers of Dinajpur Fire Brigade recovered his body.

## Torturers now out to foil case, abduct the girl

**A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat**

Tortured Nurunnahar, undergoing treatment at Aditmari upazila health complex, is now getting abduction threat from the culprits.

"Men hired by the torturers are moving in front of the health complex. They are giving threat to abduct me from the hospital. We are poor. But the torturer family is rich and powerful. With the help of some ruling party men, they are trying to foil our case in the police station," said a tearful Nurunnahar lying at the health complex bed yesterday morning.

Reading newspaper reports of torture on Nurunnahar, Dilruba Parvin, senior manager of women's right at RDRS, visited Nurunnahar at Aditmari upazila health complex yesterday morning.

"I saw marks of torture even at sensitive parts of her body," she said.

She told the victim's parents Sohrab

Hossain, a marginal farmer, and Honufa Begum that RDRS will bear all the expenditure for her treatment and legal aid.

The torturers are moving freely in the village although a case was lodged on Monday night, Sohrab and Honufa said, adding that it will be difficult for them and their relatives to stay at their houses at Baro Kamlabari village if the police favours the torturers.

The victim's cousins Abdul Hai, Abdus Sattar and Abdul Gofur said they and other relatives of Nurunnahar at Baro Kamlabari village are also receiving threat from the torturers as police is not active enough to arrest them.

Asked about the matter, Aditmari police station Officer-in-Charge Mahfuzur Rahman said police has continued drives at suspected areas to arrest Nurunnahar's torturers since Monday night.

Lalmonirhat Superintendent of Police Israil Hawlader said he ordered Aditmari police to arrest the torturers anyhow.



Criminals claiming themselves as landless people have set up small thatched huts on the land of Dhaka-New York Agrofisheries at Subarnachar in Noakhali to grab the land owned by Khondaker Ruhul Amin.

## So-called landless people occupy AL man's land

**A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali**

So-called landless people grabbed 250 acres of land belonging to a member of Noakhali district Awami League in Subarnachar upazila on Tuesday night.

Landowner Khandker Ruhul Amin alleged that a gang of criminals led by Mohammadpur Union Parishad members Noor Alam and Khurshid Hazari occupied his fisheries and dairy farm named "Dhaka-New York Agro Fisheries" on 250 acres of land on Char Luxmi and Char Bayezid at

dead of night.

The grabbers, identifying themselves as landless, also built small thatched houses on most of the land of the project, he said.

Amin claimed that he leased the land from the deputy commissioner and set up the fisheries and dairy farm on it. "A local influential person had earlier demanded a huge amount of money and 100 acres of the project land from me. As I refused to comply with his demands, the criminals on his instructions grabbed my land," he told local journalists yesterday.

Amin said he has already informed the police superintendent and the officer-in-charge of Char Jabbar Police Station of the matter.

Project Manager Abdul Haque and employees Siraj and Noor Hossain, beaten up by the criminals, were admitted to Noakhali General Hospital. Noor Hossain was yesterday shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

UP member Khurshid Hazari could not be contacted despite several attempts over cellphone.

## GAS-WATER-POWER CRISIS

### BNP processionists ransack shops, damage vehicles

**STAR NATIONAL DESK**

BNP leaders and workers yesterday ransacked 10 shops, damaged two covered vans, two motorbikes and a truck at Ghorashal in Narsingdi.

In Thakurgaon, a BNP protest rally yesterday demanded cancellation of Bhola-3 by-election results.

BNP men brought out an angry procession in Ghorashal municipal town demanding uninterrupted supply of gas, power and water.

The processionists attacked and ransacked at least 10 shops and several vehicles.

Palash police station OC Atiqur Rahman said the BNP leaders and workers who joined the procession led by Ghorashal municipal Jubo Dal president Mohiuddin and general secretary Jahangir made an attack on Sharif electronics shop.

When the traders chased the BNP men they attacked 10 shops and vehicles including two covered vans of Pran Foods.

A case has been filed with Palash police station in this regard. Police also arrested Jubo Dal leader Jahangir, 36, and Sramik Dal leader Piru, 32.

In Thakurgaon, district BNP yesterday held a rally demanding cancellation of Bhola-3 by-poll results and resignation of chief election commissioner and his two deputies, reports our correspondent.

The speakers at the rally said politicisation is on in all sectors including judiciary.

Law and order is rapidly deteriorating while the government has failed to supply electricity, gas and water.

The activists of BCL and Jubo League are busy in tender scam, violence and grabbing of public property, they said.

The speakers said almost all the national dailies reported that voters in Bhola were resisted while going to vote centres.

The AL activists also tortured the BNP supporters during the election campaign. They also forced polling agents to leave the vote centres. The AL activists also raped a mother and her daughter at the constituency as they were supporters of BNP candidate, they alleged.

The government must cancel the result of the by-election, otherwise BNP would launch a tougher movement to bring back people's voting rights, they warned.

General secretary of district BNP Toimur Rahman, joint secretary Obaidullah Masud addressed the meeting.

Earlier, a procession was brought out in the town that paraded the main streets of the town.

## 65,000 acres remain uncultivated in CHT every year

**UNB, Rangamati**

Around 65000 acres of land remain uncultivated in the three hill districts every year for lack of agricultural inputs and farmers' knowledge of modern technology.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said if these arable lands could be brought under cultivation additional crops worth about Tk 30 crore could be produced per year.

Sources said most of the arable lands remain uncultivated in Bilaichhari, Borkol and Langadu upazilas of Rangamati, Panchhari, Dighinala, Mohalchhari and Ramgarh of Khagrachhari, Roanachhari and Thanchi of Bandarban district.

Locals said despite having their own land many farmers cannot cultivate them for high prices of agri-inputs and absence of bank loans.

They said aush, aman, boro paddy, wheat, sugarcane, ginger, turmeric and various types of vegetables could be produced abundantly if the uncultivated lands were brought under cultivation.

Meanwhile, a scheme has been taken up to bring 2,244 hectares of land under ginger cultivation in seven upazilas of Bandarban with an output target of 28,050 metric tonnes.

According to the officials at the Department of Agriculture Extension, farmers will be able to achieve bumper production of ginger this season due to favourable weather.

They said cultivation of ginger is increasing in the district each year as the farmers are earning windfall profit due to its high quality.

Meeting the local demand, ginger is also being supplied to other parts of the country including Chittagong, they added.

Many farmers of the district have become self-reliant by cultivating ginger with the patronisation of the government, the officials said.

### Top outlaw arrested

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna**

Police arrested a 'regional leader' of outlawed Purbha Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Janajudhha faction from a remote village of Atghoria upazila early yesterday.

Arrestee Md Rajai, 35, is son of Mozammel Haque of village Sujapur in the upazila.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Atghoria police station Md Enamul Karim said, following a tip-off a team from Atghoria and Chatmohar police stations raided Sujapur village at about 3:30 am. They arrested the outlaw from a house of the village moments after he held a secret meeting there.

The arrestee is a 'regional leader' of outlawed PBCP Janajudhha faction and accused in 8 cases including 6 for murder. He would produce him to court on Thursday, the OC said.



FREAK OF NATURE: A nearly dead gourd plant at Uttar Bakharernadi in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur district has borne around a hundred gourds, sized between one to five inches long.

### Day labourer murdered

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

A day labourer was slaughtered in his father-in-law's house at about 6:00 am yesterday at Bhasa village under Kachua upazila of Bagerhat district. He was identified as Tofazzal Shikder, 50, son of Noor Mohammad Shikder of the same village. Police said, unknown assailants killed him while his wife Roushan Ara went out to respond to nature's call. The man had earlier filed a general diary with Kachua police station in December, 2008 seeking security of his life. He had a land dispute with his in-laws, they said. Police took wife Roushan into custody for interrogation.

### Wild elephant kills villager

**UNB, Sherpur**

A farmer was killed by a wild elephant at Kharamura village in Jhenagati upazila early yesterday. The deceased was identified as Kabir Ali, 50, son of Umed Ali of the village. Tarikh Al Mamun, UNO of the upazila, said a herd of wild elephants from Indian side entered the bordering village in search of food and extensively damaged paddy on a vast tract of land. When the villagers tried to drive out the elephants with flaming torches one angry elephant trampled Kabir to death.

On the occasion of official birthday of Queen of the Netherlands Her Majesty, Beatrix Wilhelmina Armgard 30 April 2010.....

# Queen's Day

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