

Pariza a boon to poor farmers

Reaping of the newly developed early yielding paddy begins

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Farmers have started reaping pariza, a newly developed paddy suitable for cultivation in between boro and aman crops, as different areas of northern region sees successful cultivation of the early yielding variety.

The variety, developed by voluntary organization RDRS (Bangladesh), is seen as a boon for the poor and marginal farmers as well as agricultural labourers, especially in the northern districts.

Through extensive research for three years, RDRS has evolved the new variety of paddy aiming at ensuring food security and drive out munga, a near-famine situation that prevails for a couple of months in the northern districts almost every year, reports our Gaibandha correspondent.

This season 1456 farmers in Rangpur division have cultivated pariza on 500 acres of lands on experimental basis after RDRS introduced this technology in Rangpur division under a pilot project. Harvest of the crop started in mid-August," said Dr M G Neogi, head of agriculture, RDRS.

"Farmers can cultivate pariza using natural fertiliser and rainwater and harvest it as an additional crop between the periods of boro and aman cultivation. Its harvest needs around 70 days after transplanting seedlings and the yield is three tonnes per hectare," he said.



Workers busy thrashing pariza, an early variety paddy developed by voluntary organisation RDRS (Bangladesh), on the premises of a house at Paranpur village in Niamotpur upazila of Naogaon district as farmers in a few northern districts started harvesting the off-season variety in mid-August.

PHOTO: STAR

It needs investment of only Tk 12,000 per acre to cultivate pariza, whereas cultivation of boro and aman require Tk 20,000 and Tk 15,000 respectively, said Dr Neogi.

"I have harvested 16 maunds of pariza paddy as an additional crop on .50 decimal

plot. I had to spend Tk 3,500 for the purpose," said Paritosh Chandra Mohanta, a farmer of Satirjan village under Sunderganj upazila in Gaibandha.

Because of cultivation of local rice pariza, 1.8 million tonnes of additional rice can

be produced on 0.6 million hectares of land under Rangpur division, Dr Neogi said, adding that if the new variety is cultivated throughout the country, it is possible to produce 9 million tonnes of additional rice on 3.5 million hectares of land.

Presently Bangladesh faces yearly rice deficit of around 2.0 to 2.5 million tonnes.

Our Thakurgaon Correspondent adds: Speakers at a function on the occasion of pariza paddy harvest at Gouripur village under Thakurgaon Sadar

upazila have urged the farmers to cultivate pariza paddy in a large scale to change their socio-economic conditions.

As the farmers of this region generally complete the harvest of boro paddy in April and start cultivation of T-aman paddy on the same land at the end of July, the land remains unused for two and a half months, they said at the programme organised by RDRS on Wednesday afternoon.

By cultivating pariza paddy on fallow lands during the period, farmers can be benefited and help create work opportunities for the farm labourers, especially in five northern districts that see seasonal munga almost every year, they said.

At the function presided over by Head of Thakurgaon Programme of RDRS Bangladesh Md Nazrul Goni, Project Coordinator Sadekul Islam explained the merits and methods of pariza cultivation.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Daliluddin, who attended the programme as chief guest, assured all of giving all kinds of administrative help to expand the pariza paddy cultivation at farmers' level in coming years.

"I cultivated the paddy on 6-bigha of land and expect to get 12-14 maunds of paddy per bigha within about 85 days of planting," said Dinesh Chandra of Gouripur village.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

NGO worker killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Sadullapur police yesterday recovered the body of a female NGO worker from a canal at village Baro Chatragacha and sent it to Gaibandha hospital for autopsy. The victim was identified as Anjona Rani Madol, 35, a field worker of Association for Social Advancement (ASA) Bakshiganj Bazaar branch under Sadullapur upazila. ASA Gaibandha district manager Ashrafur Islam said Anjona Rani went out to collect dues from the debtors on Thursday but she did not return to office with the collected money. Finding no trace of the missing worker he later filed a general diary with Sadullapur police station. Anjona Rani, mother of a child, was kidnapped and killed for Tk 13,000 and later dumped into the canal, said Hasan Inam, OC Sadullapur after primary investigation. Police arrested one Zafar in connection with the murder.

College teacher suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A college teacher, arrested on Thursday for his indecent remarks on the Father of the Nation at a meeting on August 15, was suspended by the college yesterday. Accused Asadullah Al Galib, son of AKM Abdul Wahed of Bakal area in the town, is a teacher of management department of Safurunnisa Mahila College. He made the remark at a discussion on the National Mourning Day held at the college auditorium with principal Ashrafunnahar in the chair. In his speech, Galib allegedly said that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was gunned down for his sin. I will never recognise him as the Father of the Nation, he added. He was later arrested following a sedition case against him.

Two electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidha

A young man and a child were electrocuted in separate incidents yesterday at Hingerpara village under Harinakundo upazila and at Collegepara under Kaliganj upazila. The deceased were identified as Akkas Ali, 28, son of Cheton Joarder of Hingerpara village and Tabibur Rahman, 4, son of Rabiul Islam of Collegepara. Officer-in-charge (OC) Jahangir Alam of Harinakundo police station said, Jahangir came in contact with an electric wire while he was removing it from his yard. According to Kaliganj police, Tabibur was electrocuted when he touched a multi plug at his house.



PHOTO: STAR

BDR men seize 28 sacks of smuggled Indian fertiliser at Digholtari border village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat yesterday morning. Nine by-cycles used by the smuggler were also seized but the gang managed to flee the scene.

Bid to kidnap woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police rescued a woman while being kidnapped by a gang led by her former husband from Dumurkhali Bazar area in Manirampur upazila under Jessore district at dead of night on Thursday. Police also arrested two people with a private car from the spot. Rescued Rikta Khatun, 20, is daughter of Motaleb Hossain of village Shuvankarkati in Kalaroa upazila. The arrestees are Abdul Ahad, 32, son of Abbas Ali of village Khalsi and driver Biplob, 20, son of Eman Ali of village Shankarpur in Jhikargachha upazila in Jessore district. Quoting locals police said, Rikta was married to Anisur Rahman of Jhikargachha upazila about a year ago. As Rikta's parents failed to pay dowry, Anisur divorced her. On Thursday night Anisur along with a gang of criminals tried to pick up Rikta forcibly on a private car. On suspicion, neighbours stopped the car and rescued the victim and held two abductors while Anisur fled the scene.

Two held after gunfight

UNB, Gazipur

Rab members after a gunfight arrested two injured criminals from in front of Maya Hotel at Tongi Bazar on Friday night. The arrestees were identified as Rony, 25, and Sayed, 27. Acting on a tip-off, members of Rab-1 in plainclothes conducted a drive in the area at about 9pm when a gang of arms peddlers were preparing to sell arms to another gang. Sensing presence of law enforcers the gang opened fire on Rab forcing the elite force to fire back that left the two injured. Rab also recovered one foreign-made revolver and six bullets from their possession.

Surma, Kushiya devour areas as flood control project limps

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet.

Much-talked flood control and irrigation scheme styled 'Upper Surma-Kushiya project' in Sylhet sees only 35 per cent of work done in nine years although it was scheduled to complete by 2005-2006 fiscal year (FY).

After revision for the fifth time, the project is now set to complete by June 2012 but officials said it is impossible to complete the remaining 65 per cent work by the time.

Lack of timely allocation for the project and its repeated revisions mainly delayed the implementation while repeated floods, water stagnation and large-scale erosion along the banks of two major rivers caused huge damage to crops, households and croplands in the region during the period.

As WDB revised the project for the 5th time, its different features have been trimmed. Tk 49.02 crore has so far been spent under the project, sources said.

"Tk 20 crore has been sanctioned for the 2010-2011 fiscal year for construction of a pump house at Zakiganj, excavation of 30 km irrigation canal and construction of some small irrigation structures in the project areas," Md Shafiqul Islam, executive engineer of WDB, Sylhet, said yesterday.

Successful implementation of the project would provide irrigation facilities for 38,000 hectares of land through the irrigation canals and drainage canals, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Kushiya River continues to erode its bank at Senapatirchak in Sylhet as 'Upper Surma-Kushiya Project' designed for flood control and irrigation in the area sees very little progress in nine years.

'Upper Surma-Kushiya project' was designed for flood control, improvement of drainage system and better irrigation facilities in vast areas of five upazilas of Sylhet - Zakiganj, Kanaighat, Beanibazar, Golappanj and Sylhet Sadar. It begins from the starting point of Surma and Kushiya at Amolshid border in Zakiganj upazila and

runs up to Golappanj and Sylhet Sadar along the banks of two rivers.

Started in 2001-2002 FY with an estimated cost of Tk 111 crore, the project was scheduled to be complete by 2005-2006 FY.

But the project work, started with an initial allocation of only Tk 50 lakh, proceeded in a very slow pace.

In 2006, the project cost was raised to Tk 181 crore, with a target to complete it by 2009-10.

As the water resources ministry asked for cutting down the expenditure in 2007, it was made Tk 135-crore project. Again it was revised to a Tk 132-crore project the same year.

As per advice of the councillor, Tafsir asked Danish to come to Babupara to take the money. Danish sent one Sahin to take the money. As he (Sahin) reached in front of the house of Tafsir at about 7:00 pm on Friday, neighbours led by councillor Sachchu caught him.

They beat up Sahin and later handed him over to the police.

Police yesterday produce the extortionist in a court that sent him to jail.

9 Nilphamari AL men get life for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A Nilphamari court sentenced nine Awami League men to ten years rigorous imprisonment on extortion charge on Thursday.

The convicts are Pancha Pukur union Awami League General Secretary Tahidur Rahman Shah, activists Abdul Hannan Shah, Sumon Shah, Milon Shah, Shahidur Rahman Shah, Tahmidur Rahman Shah, and Kalikapur union AL activists Mokbul Hossain, Mazedul Islam and Chhoto Babu.

According to the prosecution, the AL men took money from one Abdul Kader Shah

while he was building a warehouse in Pancha Pukur area under Sadar upazila on December 9, 2007.

After examining the witnesses and evidence, Joint District and Session Judge Abdur Rashid pronounced the verdict.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that local people caught an extortionist in Babupara area under Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga district Friday evening.

Police said Siddik alias Danish, a gang leader of the area, demanded Tk. 2 lakh from Tafsir Ahmed, a Bangladeshi expatriate to Kuwait, after he came to the

country on August 1.

Tafsir informed his relatives and Alamdanga municipality councillor Mahmud Ali Sachchu of the matter.

As per advice of the councillor, Tafsir asked Danish to come to Babupara to take the money. Danish sent one Sahin to take the money. As he (Sahin) reached in front of the house of Tafsir at about 7:00 pm on Friday, neighbours led by councillor Sachchu caught him.

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Hizbut Tahrir activist arrested in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

Police arrested an activist of banned Islamic outfit Hizbut Tahrir on Friday when he was distributing anti-government leaflets in front of town's Kandirpar Jame Mosque.

Arrestee Jamal Hossain is son of Delwar Hossain of Chitoshi village in Shahrasti upazila of Chandpur district.

He is a student of Ibne Taimia School and College in Tamsam bridge area of Comilla town.

Police said they arrested Jamal when he was distributing anti-government leaflets among the devotees and the pedestrians in front of the mosque after Jumm'a prayers.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers preparing Kashmiri jilapi, an iftar delicacy introduced by famous Chilis Restaurant in Rajshahi city as the item, prepared with high quality rice and maskolai dal, is in great demand.