

# Huge fruits, vegetables rot in Madhupur every year

Lack of marketing, processing facilities blamed

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Huge quantity of orchard-based agricultural products and different fruits produced in the forest rot every year as there is no agriculture-based industry or processing zone in Madhupur upazila.

About 2,500 tonnes of quality seeds of different crops and fruits, honey and rubber are produced here every year commercially by private concerns in competition with Bangladesh

Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC).

The farmers were introduced with the quality seeds, irrigation, fertiliser, insecticides and modern agricultural technologies after the BADC set up a massive agricultural farm at Kakraid in the upazila in 1980s.

The total amount of cultivatable land in the upazila is about 70,000 acres.

At present, pineapple is cultivated in 17,000 acres of land, banana in 11,000 acres,

jackfruit in 5,000 acres and mango, litchi, olive, papaya and guava in 5,000 acres of land every year, according to sources concerned.

Besides, ginger and turmeric are cultivated in 5,000 acres, vegetables in 2,500 acres, rubber in 7,000 acres and cotton, cassava and coffee in 2,000 acres, and crop seeds in 4,000 acres of land.

Some uncommon crops including shoti (one kind of crop used to produce baby food) are cultivated in the

Madhupur gazari forests.

May to September is the peak period to collect fruits in Madhupur.

Yakub Ali, chairman of Sholakuri union in the upazila, said different crops including fruits and vegetables worth about Tk 7 crore are being damaged in Madhupur for not having any cold storage in the upazila and also for lack of marketing and processing.

Director of Apiculture Development Organisation, a local NGO involved in honey business, Abul Hossain said over 150 tonnes of quality honey is produced commercially in Madhupur every year but the local apiculturists are not getting the fair prices of the product.

The profit is going to the middlemen and brokers rather than the farmers due to marketing problem although local growers have got a bumper production of ginger and turmeric this season, he added.

Dr Hazrat Ali, upazila agriculture officer in Madhupur, said there is a bright prospect to set up agriculture-based industries in Madhupur due to availability and supply of raw goods in cheaper costs.

Expressing the same hope about setting up processing industries, Madhupur Upazila Nirbahi Officer AKM Benzamin Reazee, said, "A proposal was sent to the ministry concerned to set up a BSCIC Industrial Town in Madhupur last year but we are yet to receive any response from the ministry."

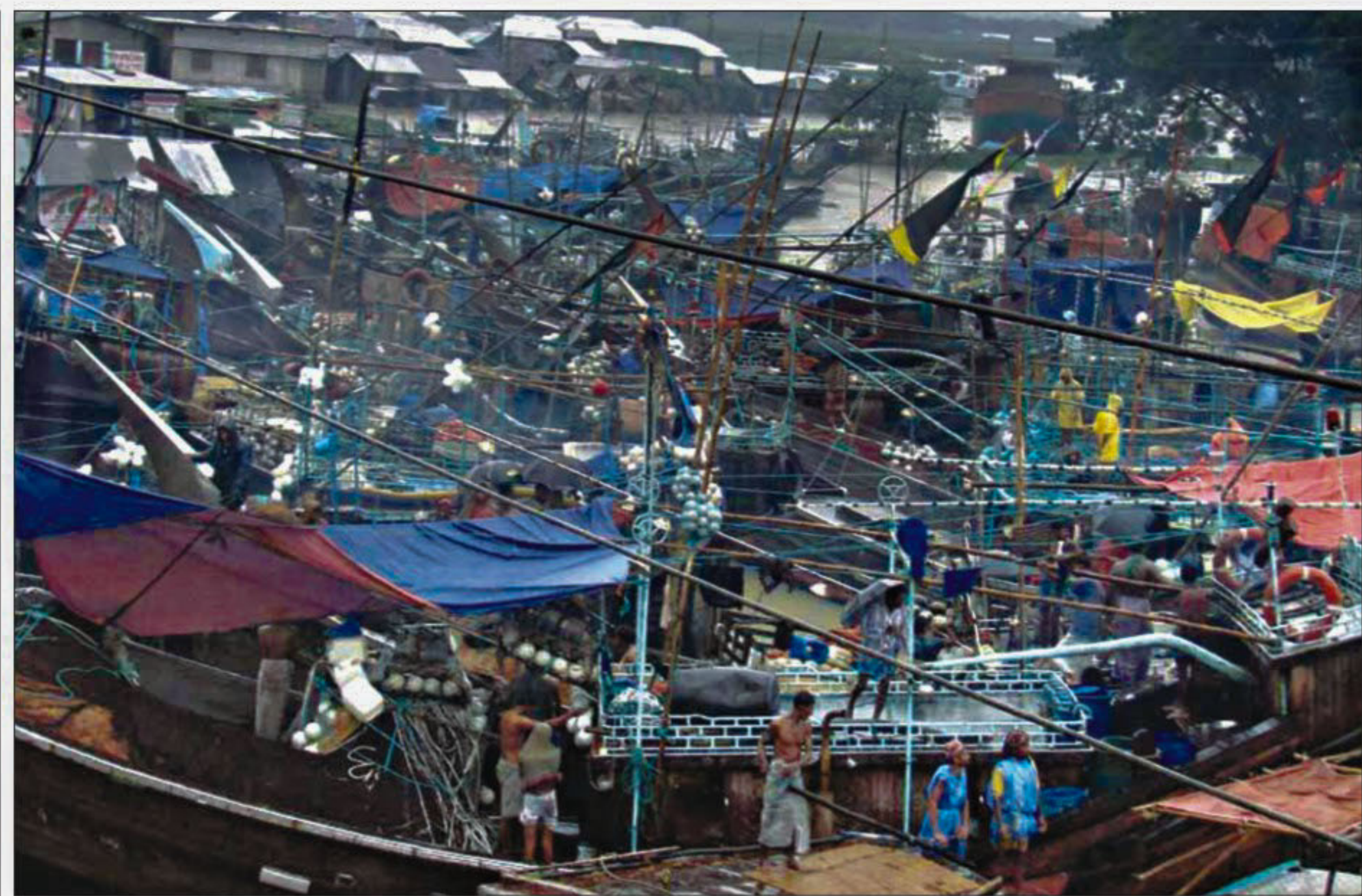


PHOTO: STAR

Launches and trawlers lie anchored at a canal near Barisal river port yesterday as the sea and rivers in the coastal districts have become rough under the influence of the low.

## DAMAGE OF POTATO AT UTTARA HIMGHAR

# Affected farmers give 72-hour ultimatum for compensation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Affected potato farmers yesterday warned of launching an indefinite road blockade programme if authorities of Uttara Himgar Ltd, a cold storage at Boroil village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila fail to give them compensation for rotting of their potatoes within Sunday.

At a rally after an hour-long human chain programme in front of Dinajpur Press Club, they gave the 72-hour ultimatum, saying that they would start an indefinite road blockade programme in Dinajpur from Monday if their demand is not met.

According to the agreement signed between leaders of affected farmers and Uttara Himgar Ltd authorities, the latter earlier agreed to pay compensation to the affected farmers by last May but it is yet to be given, the farmers alleged.

They urged the government to help them get compensation.

"Since last May, the cold storage authorities repeatedly deferred their dates to pay the compensation. This is October but we are yet to get our compensation," said Md Nazrul Islam, general secretary of Uttara Himgar Alu Khatigroshtho Sangram Committee.

Earlier last week, the leaders of affected farmers called on Dinajpur Deputy Commissioner Md Jamal Uddin over their compensation issue.

The farmers alleged that some 40,000 sacks of potatoes kept at Uttara Himgar Ltd at Boroil village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila rot in April this year due to negligence of the authority.

The cold storage authorities stored at least 53,000 sacks (each containing 84kg) of potatoes although its capacity is only 34,000 sacks, they said.

Following farmers' agitation, the then acting Deputy Commissioner of Dinajpur

formed an investigation committee headed by an upazila agriculture officer. The committee report, which held negligence of the Uttara Himgar Ltd authorities responsible for damage of the potatoes, suggested paying the affected farmers compensation of Tk 800 to Tk 1100 per sack, depending on varieties.

The cold storage authorities at a meeting with former deputy commissioner Md Shamsul Alam gave assurance of giving compensation to the affected farmers but it is yet to be given, said the affected farmers.

When contacted, Md Mira Ashfaq, acting executive director of Uttara Himgar Ltd, said, "A case was filed against Dinajpur Palli Bidyut Samity claiming compensation of Tk 11 crore as they failed to maintain smooth power supply during the peak season. If we get the compensation from Palli Bidyut Samity we will pay the compensation to the affected farmers."



PHOTO: STAR

Huge harvest of banana is being carried on trucks at a market in Madhupur upazila of Tangail district. The upazila produces over 1 lakh tonnes of banana a year but a large portion of it get as damaged due to lack of adequate facilities for marketing and processing.

# JCD men cut tendon of Sylhet BCL activist, stab another

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) men cut tendon of a BCL activist's leg and stabbed another activist in the city's Shibganj area on Wednesday night.

Locals and police said JCD activists swooped on Sylhet Government College BCL activists Raihan and Sabuj at around 8:00pm. They stabbed Raihan and severed tendon of Sabuj's leg.

They are now undergoing treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

The incident was a sequel to an attack on JCD men by BCL activists on Sylhet Government College campus

the same day, police said.

Immediately after the incident, BCL activists chased JCD men in Tilagarh and Shibganj areas. They also searched for rival JCD activists at student messes in the areas.

Police and Rab patrols in Tilagarh and Shibganj areas have been strengthened.

Police arrested three JCD activists in Tilagarh area at around 10:30pm. The arrestees are Shiplu, Pavel and Fahad.

BCL Sylhet Government College unit president Debangshu Das Mithu said Raihan and Sabuj came under attack by JCD men when they were going to gymnasium.

Earlier on the day, JCD

activist Fahad was stabbed by BCL men on Sylhet Government College campus. He was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

Meanwhile, the office of the daily Shyamol was also vandalised allegedly by a group of BCL activists at around 8:40pm on Wednesday.

Journalists of the newspaper alleged that Sylhet Government College BCL president Debangshu and general secretary Pankaj led the attack. Debangshu and Pankaj denied the allegation. After the incident, a police team was deployed in front of the office in Mirabazar area.



PHOTO: STAR

With huge catches of hilsa in the Padma River, a wholesale market at Chandpur sees abundant supply of the popular fish. The photo was taken yesterday.

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