

# Farmers worried as govt yet to fix boro price

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

The farmers in northern districts are selling their paddy for prices lower than that of the last boro season as the government is yet to start procuring food crops for 'fair prices'.

To recover production cost, most paddy growers are struggling to preserve their produces in their own capacity, waiting for the government's procurement drive.

"The government is yet to decide about procurement of food crops whereas in last year, the authorities started the procurement on May 1, aiming to collect 6.61 lakh tonne of boro paddy and 52,000 tonnes of rice," a

senior official of the food directorate told over cell phone yesterday.

"A high level meeting will be held on May 15 to fix the price and procurement target in this boro season. Most of the food crops including rice will be purchased from food surplus areas of the northern region," said Md Badrul Hasan, director (Procurement).

Farmer Shamsul Islam, 30, of Kamargari village in Bogra Sadar upazila, said he sold BR-28 variety of paddy at Tk 700 per 40 kg last year whereas this year he has to sell the same variety and quantity of paddy at Tk 600 in the local market.

Md Abu Bakkar Siddique,

52, a wholesaler at Fuldighi market in Shahjahanpur upazila of Bogra district, said he bought a variety of paddy at Tk 700 per 40 kg this year in early stage but now he is buying the same variety at Tk 650 due to shortage of buyers.

Zahidul Islam Bhola of Kantunagar village in Chalon Beel area of Natore district said, "I sold hi-breed hira paddy at Tk 450 per 40 kg last year but this year I sold the same item at Tk 400. Most of the farmers in Chalon Beel area have to sell their paddy in prices lower than last year's."

"I sold coarse paddy at Tk 500 per 40 kg this season whereas I had sold the same variety and quantity of

paddy at Tk 650 last season. I think the main reason of the price fall is that the government is yet to start food crop procurement," Abdur Rashid Fakir, 60, of Rasombari village in Shahzadpur upazila in Pabna district told over cell phone.

Salauddin Mondal Shelly, of Mondial village under Khetlal upazila of Joypurhat district said he has to sell paddy shati at Tk 480 per 40 kg this year but last year it was Tk 600. "I think high production is one of the cases of low price of paddy," he said.

Md Al Amran Sarker Raton, of Kalinzira village under Goraghat upazila in Dinajpur district said he has to sell BR-28 variety of paddy at Tk 620 per 40 kg whereas it was Tk 680 last year. "I got 1.40 tonnes of paddy by cultivating BR-28 variety on my 50 decimal of land which was 1.20 tonne last year," he said.

Local wholesalers are buying BR-28 variety of paddy at Tk 600 per 40 kg at Jatrapur market in Kurigram Sadar upazila. Grower Abdul Zabbar, 56, told that he sold the same variety of paddy at Tk 750 last year.

"I have preserved three tonnes of BR-28 paddy and waiting for the government's food crop procurement drive as the market is low now. Hundreds of farmers in Kurigram are also preserving their products with the hope to get fair price when the government's procurement drive starts," he said.



PHOTO: STAR  
Newly harvested boro paddy, sold at a wholesale market at Fuldighi in Shahjahanpur upazila under Bogra district, being taken to a godown.

## DINAJPUR MAYHEM AFTER 'ROBBERY' Bid to 'save' cops while protesters fear arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

### Follow-up

A section of ruling Awami League (AL) leaders in Birganj and Kaharol upazilas are allegedly trying to save the policemen of Birganj upazila who were said to be involved in the May 3 robbery at Ghasiara village in Kaharol upazila under Dinajpur district.

Md Aftab Ahmed, chairman of Dimla upazila parishad in Nilphamari, and president of the upazila unit of AL, held a meeting with a few leaders of Birganj upazila AL from around 9:00pm Sunday to around 3:30am on Monday, over the turbulence centring the robbery, said party insiders.

Blaming another faction of the upazila AL for inciting locals to besiege Birganj police station on May 3, the participants at the meeting decided to save policemen including officer in charge of Birganj Md Aktaruzzaman Prodhan, also son-in-law of Aftab

Ahmed, party insiders said. Meanwhile, the villagers of Ghasiara, who burst into protest after catching five policemen on suspicion of their involvement with the robbery and burnt a police van and the microbus which was hired by the alleged robbers, are passing their time in panic of arrest, sources said.

Later the villagers confined 15 people including driver of the microbus, OC of Kaharol and ASP (Birganj Circle) Khairul Islam. Members of Border Guard Bangladesh from Dinajpur and Thakurgaon Battalion rescued them.

Deputy Commissioner Md Jamal Uddin Ahmed, who had also gone to the spot, told the agitating people while leaving the place that the policemen confined by the villagers would be arrested. But none of them was arrested.

Even the microbus driver,

who had been confined inside the house of robbery victim Rajendranath Devnath, was later released by police, sources said.

Microbus driver Md Saiful Islam told the villagers that Birganj OC Md Aktaruzzaman Prodhan hired his microbus.

Question arose why policemen from Birganj on a hired microbus entered another upazila, which is outside their jurisdiction.

Binooy Krishna Bala, DIG of Rangpur, who visited the spot on Sunday, said that six policemen including two OCs had been closed in this connection.

Prionath Devnath, elder brother of Rajendranath Devnath, filed a case with Kaharol police station on Monday evening against at least 16 unknown people for the May 3 robbery, police said.

But the statement of this case, filed under alleged influence, mentioned that no policeman was seen during the robbery.

## Top outlaw held in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Police arrested a member of an outlawed party with two firearms and five bullets at Protappur village under Sadar upazila on Tuesday night.

Arrestee Karom Ali, son of late Hakim Ali Prodhon of the village, is a 'regional leader' of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), police said.

Sub-inspector (SI) Kamruzzaman of Jhenidah Sadar police station said, acting on a tip-off, a team raided Protappur village on Tuesday midnight and arrested Karom Ali from the house of Nabis Uddin where a group of terrorists were holding a meeting.

On the basis of his confessional statement, police later recovered a sawn off rifle, a shutter gun and five bullets from a cowshed of Nabis Uddin, the SI added.

Karom Ali is accused in five cases including three for murder, the SI said.

## To escape arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A youth who jumped from the rooftop of a six-storied hotel in the city to avoid police arrest on Tuesday died on way to hospital.

The deceased was identified as Shayamol, 28, a resident of Shikdar Bari area and call man of Parabat launch company.

Police said, they raided Hotel Bahadur at Fazlul Huq Avenue to nab sex workers and their clients. In a bid to avoid arrest, Shayamol went the rooftop of the adjacent six-storied Hotel Golden Tower and jumped on the road from there.

Fatally injured, he died on way to hospital.

## They chopped off wrist, still threaten him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha



Ashek Ali

Rickshawpuller Ashek Ali and his family members, who came under a brutal attack by the hired goons of his cousin following a land dispute at Naldanga village in Sadullapur upazila on April 5, still face threat by the gang.

The victims came to the local press club yesterday and alleged that the attackers are asking them to withdraw the case or face dire consequences.

with his cousin Abdul Hamid over the ownership of a three decimal land at their homestead on April 5. On the following day, the

hired goons of his cousin attacked Ashek, chopped off the wrist of his right hand and a few fingers of the left. The gang also injured three others of the family and left the scene.

Ashek was admitted to Sadullapur Upazila Health Complex and then shifted to Rangpur Medical College and Hospital.

Though a case was filed with Sadullapur Police Station against five people including Hamid the same day, police are yet to arrest any of the accused.



PHOTO: STAR  
A house was damaged as a big tree fell on it during Tuesday night's storm in Bera upazila of Pabna. The storm lashed five upazilas of the district.

## Violent storm lashes Pabna Two upazilas hit in Thakurgaon

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A violent storm lashed Pabna district Tuesday night killing at least one person, injuring scores and damaging hundreds of houses in five upazilas.

The affected upazilas are Chatmohor, Bhangura, Faridpur, Bera and Sujanager, reports our correspondent.

The storm left a trail of destruction at Chatmohor upazila. At least 500 houses were destroyed totally in three unions of the upazila. Electricity supply remained snapped from Tuesday night as the storm uprooted around 50 electric poles in the upazila, said REB officials.

Lightning killed Sarwar Hossain, 40, son of Chand Ali

of village Hashupur in the upazila while scores of others were injured during the storm.

Chatmohor upazila nirbahi officer Md. Firoz Shah said at least 300 houses in Nimaichara union and 250 houses in Handial union were totally destroyed while more than a thousand others in Handial, Chaikola and Nimaichara union were partially damaged.

In Bhangura upazila, some 300 houses were destroyed in Bhangura, Ashtomonisha and Dilpashra unions, said upazila nirbahir officer Anand Kumar Biswas. The storm also destroyed a huge number of trees and crops on vast tract of land, he said.

Bera upazila chairman

Azizur Rahman Aziz said at least 12 fertiliser godowns were blown away by storm which swept 6 unions damaging paddy on several thousand acres of land.

He said 2 lakh sacks of TSP, DAT, urea and other fertiliser worth several crore taka were completely damaged in the godowns.

In Thakurgaon, a woman was killed, houses were demolished, electric poles and trees uprooted and mango and litchi orchards damaged as a nor'wester lashed several unions of the Sadar and Baliadangi upazilas on Tuesday afternoon, reports our correspondent.

During the seasonal storm lightning at Durgapur village under Pironj upazila

killed a housewife while she was returning home from nearby field with cattle.

The deceased was identified as Shapna, 32, wife of Poresh Chandra.

The most affected unions are Razaogon, Salondar, Auliapur, Balia, Shukanpukhuri, Debipur, Akcha under Sadar upazila and Barapolashbari, Kashipur, Doushuo, Amjankhor, Barabari, Baliadangi union and Chaliad under Baliadangi upazila.

Deputy Commissioner M u h a m m a d Shahiduzzaman told this correspondent that over 1200 houses were damaged in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila while about 1000 houses in Baliadangi upazila.



PHOTO: STAR  
Senbagh municipal election which was postponed following ballot box snatching and firing at the polling centre on January 18 was held peacefully yesterday. Awami League-backed candidate Abu Jafar Md Titu won the poll and was declared mayor-elect of the municipality in Noakhali.

## Taslim putting pressure to withdraw case, says Lipi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

### Follow-up

Lipi Sultana Setu, wife of police sergeant Molla Taslim Hossain, has alleged that her husband is now putting pressure on her to withdraw the case that she filed against him with Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, Sylhet, on April 21.

Addressing a press conference at Sylhet Press Club yesterday, Lipi said some of his (Taslim) colleagues are also pressing her to withdraw the case, saying that there is no possibility of getting justice.

Lipi alleged that her husband Taslim had been in UN peace mission in Congo

for two year until 2009 and developed an affair with a colleague who also served in the same unit.

She said her husband returned home in 2009, started living separately, and also threatened to divorce her. "I informed the officials concerned of the matter and filed written complaints with IGP, police commissioner and the state minister for law, but no action has been taken yet," she said.

Lipi told the press conference that Taslim called her to his hotel room in Sylhet city on April 13 this year to settle the matter.

On arrival at the hotel, Taslim and his brothers gave some conditions to settle the issue, she said, adding: "They beat up me as I refused to accept the conditions".

Lipi said she went to Kotwali police to file a case against her husband immediately after the incident, but police did not record the case.

"I was compelled to file the case with the tribunal, bringing torture allegation against my husband as police refused to take my case." Refuting the allegation, Sergeant Taslim said he had divorced Lipi a year ago. She concealed the fact while filing the case, Taslim added.

## No work at Akhaura land port till May 17

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Export and import through Akhaura land port will not take place for seven days till May 17 as Indian side to stop functioning due to central home minister's visit.

Due to the weeklong closure, Bangladesh side of the land port will lose revenue of at least Tk 7,00,00,000, port sources said.

They said Indian superintendent of customs sent a letter to land customs officer (LCO) of Akhaura land port on Tuesday informing suspension of work at the land port because of the minister's visit on May 17.

The Indian side will be busy for seven days for maintaining security and making the port neat and clean for the minister's visit, they said.

## One held with 10 pistols, 26 bullets

BSS, Jessore

Members of the elite force Rab on Tuesday arrested an arms peddler with 10 pistols and 26 bullets at Manikia village under Sharsha upazila.

A team of Rab-6 of Jessore, led by Lt Commander Noor Mohammad Tariq Aziz, raided the village on the basis of a secret information and arrested Sujon along with the arms.

Rab and police sources said, Sujon had been doing illegal arms trading in the area for long.