



PHOTO: STAR

As the rainy season is drawing closer, a boatman is busy repairing his boat at Kachari ferry ghat (terminal) on the Brahmaputra River in Mymensingh.

Luck smiles on farmers of Hakaluki Haor

Bumper boro production after two years of water logging

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI,
Moulvibazar

Farmers of Hakaluki Haor (water body) are in joyous mood as they are harvesting boro paddy after two years of water logging problem.

They are all smile as the area saw a bumper production this time due to favourable weather condition and solution to the water logging. There has not been any untimely rain or hail storm. Farmers, even housewives, are busy drying and storing the paddy with great interest.

Due to flooding caused by unplanned Pitaitikor Burikiary embankment in Fenchuganj upazila, croplands of Hakaluki Haor faced severe water logging. Farmers of the area could not cultivate boro paddy there in last two seasons. But before this year's boro cultivation, water logging problem was finally resolved, thanks to the authorities for creating a waterway by cutting a portion of the dyke.

Musharraf Hossain Khan, upazila agriculture officer at Baralekha, said due to favourable weather condition and government's

patronisation, more than 30 thousand hectares of land have been brought under boro cultivation in three upazilas.

He said, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) had set a target of 17 thousand hectares of Hakaluki Haor areas under Kulaura,

Juri and Baralekha upazilas to bring those under boro cultivation this year.

"We expect around 40 thousand metric tonnes of paddy in Hakaluki Haor area this season" Musharraf Hossain said adding "The real statistics will be available within a week".

Juri upazila agriculture officer Basirul Alam said, approximately 70 percent of boro harvesting have already been completed.

During a visit to the haor area, this correspondent found a festive mood prevailing among the farmers. They were drying paddy on

huge prepared grounds locally known as 'kha' near the cropland. Some were cooking in the makeshift tents while others having lunch and dinner with the working farmers and labourers in the field.

Street vendors have also been coming to the croplands to sell sweets, biscuits, puffed rice, jilapi (a kind of sweet) etc to exchange them with the farmers for newly harvested paddy.

Farmer Nasib Ali of Sujanagar village told this correspondent "I am happy to cultivate boro paddy on 25 'khar' (each khar equals to 30 decimals) land. I expect a bumper harvest this time although I could not cultivate paddy in last two years because of water logging".

Ranajoy Kumar Das, a school teacher of Baralekha upazila, said he also hopes a bumper production.

"We got seeds and fertilisers in time and the weather also favoured us this year", he added.

He also thanked the agriculture officials for their earnest support to the farmers of Hakaluki Haor.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers harvest boro paddy in Juri area of Hakaluki Haor (water body) in Moulvibazar district. Favourable weather condition and end to the water-logging problem in the area have contributed to bumper production of the crop.

Abducted college student rescued in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Khulna

A Rab-6 team early yesterday rescued an abducted college student from the first floor of a house in Chandmari area in the city.

The house belongs to one Abdus Samad of that area, Rab sources said.

The source boy identified as Ikramul Sheikh Prince, 18, was kidnapped on Saturday night from Moilapota area under Khulna Sadar PS for a ransom of Tk 20 lakh. He is a student of first year class at Khulna Government City College.

Rab also recovered a dagger and 120 bottles of phensidyl from the house where the college student was confined at gunpoint.

According to Company Commander Noor-e-Alam of Rab-6, a gang of four kidnapers threatened to kill the college student in case of failure by his mother Asma Begum to pay

the ransom.

Being tipped off, a special team of the elite force raided the house in Chandmari area and rescued the boy from there.

Prince, narrating the episode, told UNB that he was staying in his maternal uncle's home at Tootpara in the city. His father Abu Sayeed is employed in Saudi Arab and mother lives in village home at Ransen of Rampal upazila in Bagerhat district.

At about 8 pm on Saturday, he met with Abdullah of his village and his three friends at Moilapota square. Abdullah wanted to show a house on rent, which his maternal uncle needed. He agreed and they took him to the first floor of a building owned by Abdus Samad in Chandmari area of the city.

Abdullah and his friends at gunpoint blindfolded him, gave him phensidyl to

swallow and pushed a seductive injection, he said. According to Prince, he regained his senses yesterday morning and found none in the room. He managed to open the door closed from outside, came out and contacted his mother by cell phone.

Later Rab rescued him from the house.

His mother Asma Begum said she received cell phone call from the unidentified abductors on Saturday night. They demanded a ransom of Tk 20 lakh for release of her son, failing which, they threatened to kill Prince and throw the body in the river.

After hard bargaining the abductors agreed to release Prince on payment of Tk 10 lakh, she said.

Meanwhile, a close relative filed a GD with Khulna police station and suggested her to wait for some more time.

In aid of the poor FFs

A private group starts monthly honorarium

CORRESPONDENT, Jamalapur

A private organisation has introduced monthly honorarium for poor freedom fighters of Melandah upazila of the district.

Tuba Group, Dhaka, launched the scheme at a function on the premises of Hazrabari College premises in the upazila on Saturday.

Initially, the company will give Tk 1,000 in monthly honorarium to each of 50 poor freedom fighters of the upazila. The FFs will draw the money from their respective bank accounts.

Shafiqul Islam Khoka,

commander of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad Jamalpur district unit command, addressed the function as chief guest with Tuba Group Managing Director (MD) Delwar Hossain in the chair.

In his speech, Khoka said the government is giving allowance to the freedom fighters and also trying to rehabilitate them. But these steps are not enough for ultra-poor freedom fighters who are struggling for their survival, he added.

He urged the business farms and social welfare organisations to provide

financial help for the ultra poor freedom fighters.

Paying due respect to the freedom fighters, Tuba Group MD Delwar Hossain said the well off people should come forward to help rehabilitate the poor freedom fighters.

Abdul Mannan, commander of Melandah upazila muktijoddha unit command, and principal of Hazrabari College Abdul Aziz also addressed the function.

At the function, Tuba Group gave three computers to "Amra Muktijoddhar Santan" Melandi upazila unit for its computer learning centre.



PHOTO: STAR

Several students of food technology and nutritional science department at Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology fall sick on the third day of their fast unto death yesterday.

FAST UNTO DEATH AT BHASANI UNIVERSITY Eleven students fall sick

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Tangail

Several agitating students of the Food Technology and Nutritional Science (FTNS) department at Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology (MBUST) fell sick yesterday on the third day of their fast unto death programme.

Eleven of the sick students were admitted to Tangail General Hospital till 3:00pm yesterday, hospital sources said.

The agitating FTNS students alleged that neither

Follow-up

the university medical unit nor any of its doctor came to treat the sick students. A medical team from the district health department is providing treatment to them, they said.

They also vowed to continue their fast unto death programme until removal of the vice-chancellor (VC) of the university and giving BSc (Engineering) degree instead of BSc (Honours) degree to the FTNS students.

Over 200 students of the department have been boycotting their classes since July 12 last year and holding series of agitation demanding renaming of their degree.

To realise the demand, they started fast unto death at Shaheed Smriti Pouro Udyan in the town on Saturday morning for the second time.

Meantime, the university authorities yesterday declared the demands of the students unrealistic and urged them to return to classes.

SNIPPETS

Housewives commit 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two housewives allegedly committed suicide at Purbo Nalta village and Pania village in Kaliganj upazila yesterday and the day before. The victims were identified as Khadija Khatun, 28, wife of Firoz Babul of Purbo Nalta village and Saira Khatun, 55, wife of Md Arijulla of Uksa village in Kaliganj upazila. Quoting local people police said, following family feud Khadija took poison and died on the spot at about 12:15 pm yesterday. In the other incident, Saira Khatun went to her relative's house at Pania village on Friday and she allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of the house at about 11:00 pm on Saturday. The cause of the suicide could not be known immediately.

2 PCP leaders hurt in attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Two leaders of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), associate body of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) were attacked and injured allegedly by the armed cadres of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in Narikal Bagan area under Dighinala upazila on Sunday evening. The injured were identified as Babul Chakma, 28, president of PCP Dighinala thana unit and Parantu Chakma, 25, senior vice-president of PCP Dighinala college unit. They were admitted to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital. President of Khagrachhari district unit PCP Sumir Chakma condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. On other hand, press secretary of Khagrachhari district unit UPDF Niran Chakma denied the allegation and said that the incident was a sequel to internal conflict in PCJSS.

10 get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A court here on Sunday sentenced 10 people to life term imprisonment for murder case and seven years imprisonment each for abduction. The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment (RI). The convicts were identified as Abdus Sattar, Kalam, Yusuf Ali, Azim Uddin, Gani Miah, Mohammad Ali, Abdul Haque, Moksed Ali, Iman Hossain and his wife Majeda Begum. According to the prosecution, the convicts abducted Hanif Ali, son of late Amin Ali of Kutuberchar village in Dewanganj upazila due to enmity on June 8, 2005. Two days later, police recovered Hanif's body from nearby Boral River. Later, the deceased's elder brother filed an abduction and murder case in this connection.

Wife burned to death for dowry

UNB, Keraniganj

A housewife was burned to death allegedly by her husband for dowry in Doleshwar area of Dakkhin Keraniganj early yesterday. The deceased was Halima Afroz alias Omi, 20, wife of Mamun of the area. Family sources said Omi, daughter of Sajid, was married off with Mamun one and a half years ago. Mamun took Tk 2.50 lakh dowry from Omi's family since the marriage. Recently, Mamun put fresh pressure on Omi to bring Tk 1 lakh more from her father. On the fateful night, Mamun locked in an altercation with Omi over the issue and physically tortured her. At one stage, he hit Omi with an iron rod in the head. As she lost consciousness, Mamun poured kerosene on the body of Omi and set her on fire. Being informed by locals, victim's father rushed her to Mitford Hospital in a critical condition where the on-duty doctor declared her dead.

Victim of acid attack demands justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Manikganj

Acid victim Ekhlas Sarker, 25, who is now undergoing treatment at Manikganj Sadar hospital, has demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

He came under acid attack allegedly by one of his brothers at Bahora village of Daulatpur upazila on the night of April 12 as he came out of his house to respond to the call of nature.

Narrating the incident to this correspondent at the hospital on Friday, Ekhlas said he is the youngest of the four sons and two daughters of Nehed Ali, a farmer of the village who died recently.

He said his father gave three bighas of land to each of his four sons three years ago and since then they have been living separately.

Ekhlas claimed that his brothers Belayet, Delwar and Harun took their father Nehed Ali to Daulatpur sub-registry office four months ago and took all his proper-

ties in their names.

"As I informed the villagers of the matter they--Belayet, Delwar and Harun had threaten me with death and the acid attack was part of the plan," Ekhlas said.

He was admitted to Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex and then referred to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

"After admitting my husband to Sadar Hospital, I went to Daulatpur police station to file a case, but police refused to record my case," said Ekhlas' wife Bobita.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Shawkat Alam denied the allegation, saying that nobody came to the police station to file any case relating to acid attack.

Bobita, however, filed a case with a Manikganj court accusing Belayet, Delwar, Harun and their two neighbours Moti and Monnaf. Police are yet to arrest any of the five accused.

3 arrested on rape charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Three youths were arrested here yesterday on charge of raping a teenage girl on Saturday.

The arrestees are Momin Miah, 25, of Chandpur district, Khukon Miah, 34, of Kalenga Koraltilla village under Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar district and Hanif Miah, 24, of Brahmanbaria district. All of them are CNG run three-wheeler drivers.

According to police, the 14-year-old victim, who served as a domestic help in the capital, came to Moulvibazar from Dhaka by a bus on Saturday. When she took a rickshaw from the bus stand to go to her uncle's house in Sunapur area of the town, the three culprits started to follow her.

As the rickshaw reached Kodupur area on Dhaka-Moulvibazar highway, the youths took her to Barshijura eco-park near the town forcibly and gangraped her.