



Boro harvest still goes on in some places of Mymensingh. But farmers are worried whether they would get a fair price of their produce. The photo was taken from Char Anandipur area of the district a few days ago.

# Farmers' hope begin to fade as Boro sells at low price

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Smiles of farmers harvesting a bumper Boro crop here are fading fast as they are not getting fair prices for their produce.

As the food department is yet to start food procurement many small and marginal farmers are not getting due prices. Because they have to sell paddy immediately after the harvest to recoup farming costs and repay debts.

District Food Controller Mohammad Hanif said, "We are still waiting for directives from the authorities concerned to buy Boro from the farmers."

While visiting local markets, it was found that coarse paddy is being sold at Tk 500-520 per maund while the fine variety at Tk 680-700.

The market price for the paddy is at least Tk 150-200 less than last year for all varieties, farmers said.

"A labourer has to be paid Tk 400 per day to reap paddy while the harvest needs other processing too to make it ready for marketing. If proper price is not

fixed, farmers do not get profit from a bumper production," said Farhad Hossain, a farmer at village Char Anandipur in Sadar upazila.

Khokon, a young farmer of village Raghobpur in Sadar upazila said, "I sold 52 maunds of coarse paddy at Shambhuganj bazar at Tk 510 per maund. The price is disappointing compared to my production cost."

Abul Hashim, a sharecropper of village Balikhon in Phulpur upazila said that he cultivated Boro on 50 decimals of land. "The production was good but I had to sell the paddy at Tk 500-530 just after harvest to realise the production cost," he said.

"Like me, other farmers are also facing similar troubles due to low price of Boro and high cost of harvest," he added.

"Many traders having limited cash are also in deep crisis for lack of buyers. Both the farmers and traders are suffering," said Ranjit Chandra Sarker, a rice trader at Shambhuganj bazar.

Ranjit said most busi-

nessmen did not have enough space to stock paddy for a longer period. "Only big businessmen will profit from this bumper harvest," he said.

"Farmers will have no more paddy to sell when the government begins purchasing," he observed.

According to Mohsin Uddin Khan, director of DAE, cultivation of Boro in

12 upazilas of the district reached 11,00,000 metric tons this year, exceeding the targeted 9,98,000 tons.

"Favourable weather, use of balanced fertilisers and low price of fertilisers compared to earlier years led to the bumper harvest," he said.

A DAE official requesting anonymity remarked "when nature has favoured

the farmers with a good harvest, our bureaucratic tangles are depriving them of their due prizes".

"Farmers being the main force behind this bumper production should be encouraged with fair price for the better interest of the country's economy which is largely based on agriculture," added the DAE official.



A shop full of paddy sacks at Shambhuganj Bazar in Sadar upazila of Mymensingh. The traders also do not have enough money or space now to store Boro crops.

# Election to 7 UPs in Dinajpur today

## 25 fined for violating poll code, 10 hurt in pre-poll clash in 3 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Election to seven union parishads (UPs) in Hakimpur and Ghoraghat upazilas of Dinajpur will be held today, reports our correspondent.

All preparation to hold the elections is complete, said Nuruzzaman Talukdar, district election officer of Dinajpur. Campaign in these two upazilas ended on Sunday night, he added.

According to DEO, 19 candidates are vying for chairman post of three union parishads in Hakimpur upazila. Forty-six women are contesting for nine reserved seats, while 136 others are contesting for 27 member posts.

At least 41,123 voters of three union parishads would cast their vote through 27 centres. Although three centres are vulnerable, the upazila wore a festive look as the election is being held here after eight years.

In Ghoraghat, 20 candidates are contesting for four chairman posts of four union parishads. Sixty-seven women are vying for 12 reserved member seats while 175 others for 36 member posts.

At least 60,819 voters would cast their votes

through 37 centres. Seven centres have been marked vulnerable, upazila election officials said.

Voting would start at 8.00am and continue till 4.00pm, sources said.

Most chairman candidates are backed by either ruling Awami League or opposition BNP, party sources said.

Meanwhile, three people including a chairman candidate of Nawabganj upazila were fined on Sunday night for violating election code.

Md Abdur Razzak, Gopalpur UP chairman candidate was fined Tk.8,000, Liakat Ali, a worker of member candidate Md Mokbul Hossain was fined Tk5,000 while Ful Mia, a worker of Abdul Goffar, chairman candidate of Shalkhuria UP, was fined Tk5,000.

A mobile court led by executive magistrate Md Abdul Halim handed down the punishment.

In Panchagarh, 22 candidates including five chairman aspirants in Debiganj, Debiduba, Dandapal and Shaldanga unions of Debiganj upazila were fined from Sunday night to Monday afternoon for violation of electoral rules.

Upazila nirbahi officer Md Abu Jafar told our

Thakurgaon correspondent over cell phone that the candidates were fined varying amounts from Tk500-10,000 each.

The offences include pasting posters on the walls of government office buildings, NGOs and private houses and illegal announcements in favour of the candidates.

A mobile court led by UNO Abu Zafar conducted drives at different places of four unions of the upazila and realised Tk83,000.

In Noakhali, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of two UP chairman candidates at Charparboti union under Companyganj upazila of Noakhali on Sunday night, reports our correspondent.

Police quoting witnesses said, at around 10:00pm two rival groups of Hazipara area locked in a clash after altercations over a trifle issue.

The supporters of chairman candidates Abdul Halim and Kazi Hanif attacked each other for grabbing videos of election campaign on mobile phone, leaving at least 10 people injured from both sides, they said.



Leaders, workers and supporters of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) bring out mourning processions at Gaibandha, left, and Faridpur towns yesterday marking the 30th death anniversary of the founder of the party and former president Ziaur Rahman. Similar programmes were held in other districts.

# 20 new power tillers seized on way to 'black market'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Local farmers seized a truck loaded with 20 new power tillers and caught three people from Amkhola Bazar in Galachipa upazila under the district as the machines, meant for free distribution among farmers, were allegedly being sent to the black market on Sunday evening.

The truck, tillers and three people -- Fayezur Rahman, 40, driver of the truck, its helper Babul, 30, and Zaman, 28, a mechanic of ACI Motors, were handed over to Galachipa police the same night.

The three arrestees hail from Chittagong and ACI Motors is a Chittagong-based handling organisation.

The 20 new power tillers, loaded in the truck from Chittagong port, were sent to Galachipa upazila agriculture office for free distribution among local farmers under a project run by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, police said.

The loaded truck reached Galachipa on Saturday evening but it left Galachipa without unloading the tillers, they said.

Local farmers somehow came to know of the matter and seized the truck and caught three people when the vehicle reached Amkhola Bazar on Sunday evening.

Later they informed Galachipa police who brought the loaded truck and three people to the police station in Galachipa town at mid-

night.

Police seized from truck driver Fayezur Rahman a chalan (receipt) issued by Active Transport Silver Syndicate of 149, DT East Madarbari in Chittagong. The receipt was issued to Galachipa upazila agriculture office but there was no signature of any authority on it.

Fayezur Rahman told police that a person who identified himself as an official of upazila agriculture office and Zaman, mechanic for ACI Motors, suggested him to left Galachipa without unloading the tillers.

Zaman, on the other hand, said he did not know anything about the matter.

"We seized the truck and arrested three people. We suspect that these tillers were sent to the black market for sale. Investigation will reveal the fact," said Shah Alam, assistant sub inspector of Galachipa police station.

Ziaul Haque, OC of Galachipa police station, said proper step will be taken after investigation.

In presence of police several hundred local farmers brought out a procession at Amkhola Bazar demanding punishment to the culprits involved in the matter.

Galachipa Upazila Agriculture Officer Fazlur Rahman said they sent the truck to the store room of Patuakhali district office to keep the tillers there.

Abdur Rashid Dhalee, a farmer of Amkhola village, however, said there are enough places in the upazila town to keep the tillers.

# 3 schoolgirls drown in Shreepur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Three schoolgirls met a tragic death at Bhitpara village under Shreepur upazila of the district yesterday.

Juena, 14, daughter of Janu Mia, Sheuly, 10, daughter of Abul Hashem and Shoma, 10, daughter of Shahabuddin of different villages of the upazila drowned in a pond.

Locals said, when they were returning from school in the afternoon, one of them fell in water while washing their hands and feet in the pond.

Two others also fell in water as they tried to save their friends. At this, Konika, another girl of the same school cried out for help.

Hearing the screams of Konika, locals rushed to the spot. But in the meantime all the girls met their death.

The three kids were students of Bhatipara Vocational School.

# Manikganj bus workers on indefinite strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Workers of Shuvajatra Paribahan here went on an indefinite strike yesterday protesting illegal toll collection and assault on fellows.

The strike will continue until end of those crimes, the workers said.

President of Shuvajatra Paribahan Workers' Association Abdus Salam Nabu said 80 buses of the transport body are plying Dhaka-Manikganj route. Of those, owners of 75 are inhabitants of Manikganj. But sadly, two owners hailing from Dhaka, control the service.

These two people are taking Tk.600-700 from each of the buses illegally. If the workers refuse to pay the toll, they are tortured by their goons, the workers alleged.

They said, the two also force them to ply buses even on hartal days amid risk of life.

President of Shuvajatra Owners' Association Abdul Matin Molla echoing the workers' charges, said that the two owners realise illegal toll from their buses forcibly. It is a huge amount, he said.

# 3 more remanded in Rasu murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Three more Jubo League men have been remanded in the case for May 23 murder of party activist Abu Bakkar Siddik Rasu.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court here on Sunday granted a three-day remand for Nipun, Uzzal and Sazed, said Abdullah Al Mamun, office-in-charge of Natore police station.

Sub-Inspector Hipzul Alam Munshi, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced the accused in the court seeking seven days' remand on Sunday noon.

Munshi told the court that police arrested Nipun, Uzzal and Sazed for interrogation on Thursday night, on specific charges.

The arrestees confessed to their role in the murder, headed.

Nasirul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Natore said that the three confessed that they shot Rasu with pistol on Narad river in Kanaikhalia area.

On May 25, the same court granted a four-day



Abu Bakkar Siddik Rasu

remand for Ripon Ali, Goutam, Sohrab and Subhash and a two-day remand for Sabbir.

The abduction case lodged against 12 people has now turned into a murder case, said the IO.

Ahad Ali Sarkar, state minister for youth and sports on the day ordered the local law enforcers to arrest the rest of the 12 accused in Rasu abduction and killing case.

Abu Bakkar Siddik Rasu, 28, son of Abdur Rouf Noni, was shot dead at Kanaikhalia allegedly by intra-party rivals on May 23 night and police arrested the five Jubo League activists within hours of the murder.

# Experts start working at five Kala-Azar affected unions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A two-member expert team has started working in five Kala-Azar affected unions in Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh district.

The experts are Dr. Abdur Rahim, assistant registrar of Suhrawardy Medical College and Dr. Shupriya Sarkar, assistant registrar of National Heart Institute.

On Thursday, the team accompanied by other local medical officers and technicians visited about 70 patients at Darbarhat village in Debiduba union. Of them, 15 were primarily suspected to have Kala-Azar infection.

At least 40 patients are now having treatment at Debiganj Hospital while 37 others are being treated at their houses in the five affected unions of Debiganj upazila, upazila health officer (UHO) of Debiganj health complex Md Masud said.

A man died of Kala-Azar at Debiganj upazila health

complex on May 23.

The victim was identified as Jamini Kumer Roy, 50, of Darbarhat village in Debiduba union under the upazila.

Kala-Azar broke out in Debiduba and Tepriaganj unions a few weeks ago. The fever has also been detected in two other unions -- Shaldanga and Shundardighi.

About a month ago, blood samples of 100 people, suspected of being infected with the disease were collected from different villages. On examination, 43 were found infected with Kala-Azar.

The most affected villages are Darbarhat under Debiduba union, Paikpara, Dighalgram, Dashpara, Jhantapara, Shimulbari and Dhangram under Shaldanga upazila.

The UHO said, just a year ago they detected only one or two patients infected with Kala-Azar, but in the last two months the number increased alarmingly.