

# Price nosedive worries Pabna jute growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Jute price sees unexpected fall in the local markets, much to the worry of over 50 thousand growers in the district, despite good production of the cash crop this season.

This year 38 thousand and 720 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation in nine upazilas of the district and 2 lakh 45 thousand and 212 bales of jute have been produced, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension.

But the farmers are now counting huge losses as jute

is now selling in the district markets for Tk 1000 to Tk 1,200 per maund against Tk 1,500 to Tk 1,800 even two weeks ago, growers and market sources said.

In the beginning of the last season, the price of a maund of jute was Tk 1,500 to Tk 1,700 which rose to Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,400 at the end, farmers said.

The high price inspired them to cultivate jute on larger areas of land this season. But now they are frustrated due to unexpected fall in the price.

"We are disappointed at the drastic fall of jute price. We may not opt for jute cultivation next season,"

said Mohammad Ali, a jute cultivator at Matebari village under Pabna Sadar upazila.

Farmers alleged that the jute mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation are purchasing the cash crop at a very slow pace, which caused the fall in its price.

A number of poor jute growers said middlemen are compelling them to sell their produces to the wholesalers on credit without giving any time frame for payment.

Meanwhile, many jute growers who harvested the crop in late season with expectation to get the maximum price are now facing more losses.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Large-scale catching of snails is a common scene in Gournadi and Agoiljhara upazilas of Barisal district as their soft flesh, used as feed for shrimp and fishes at enclosures in the southern region, is of high demand. However, nobody seems to care about the harmful effect of this callous act on environment and ecology.

## 34 rescued from human traffickers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel rescued 34 people, including nine women and six children, from bordering Padmashakhra village in Sadar upazila of Satkhira district while they were being trafficked to India on Saturday.

Acting on secret information, a BGB team rescued the victims at around 6:30pm. They are residents of Chittagong, Dhaka, Pirojpur, Khulna and Satkhira, said BGB and police sources.

Sensing the presence of BGB men, the traffickers managed to escape, police said.

Nayek Subedar Abdul Khaleque of Padmashakhra Border Outpost in Sadar upazila said BGB men rescued and handed the victims over to Sadar police station.

While talking to this correspondent, the victims said the traffickers brought them from Dhaka promising them lucrative jobs in India.

MONIRA MURDER

## Main accused husband arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Alfadanga police on Saturday night arrested the prime accused and his accomplice in housewife Monira murder case.

Prime accused Shabuddin Khan, 28, and accomplice Jhumur Begum, 26, are residents of Dhalichar village in Alfadanga upazila.

Shabuddin was sent to court yesterday afternoon seeking 5 days remand.

Sub-inspector (SI) Shariful Islam, investigation officer (IO) of the case, told this correspondent that acting on a tip-off that Shabuddin and Jhumur were staying in Majhipara under Kashiani PS in Gopalganj district, a police team rushed to the area and arrested them from the hideout.

Madrassa student Monira Begum, 20, who was set ablaze allegedly by her husband Shabuddin Khan in Alfadanga upazila on June 27, died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on July 10.

Victim's father Kabir Molla later filed a murder case with Alfadanga police station accusing four people.

According to the case statement, Sahabuddin developed a relationship with Monira and married her on March 8 using fake documents. He sent Monira back to her parents' house after a month. Later he called Monira to his house on June 27 and locked in an altercation over their marriage. At one stage, Shabuddin doused Monira with kerosene and set her afire.

On 22 August, police arrested Shabuddin Khan's mother Achhia Begum, 50, and brother Sumon Khan, 21, from their village.

## Good weather boosts aman farming in Sylhet region

### Rain helps last minute planting in Gaibandha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Cultivation of transplanted aman saw a big boost in the greater Sylhet region this year due to a favourable weather condition.

The crop has been cultivated on around four lakh hectares of land against the targeted 3,56,500 hectares, officials said.

DAE officials said the high yielding varieties of aman were planted till 15 September while the time for local varieties ends in mid October.

A well-to-do farmer Abdul Mannan of Mollaganj village in Golapganj upazila said the weather pattern is still much better this year. There had been no calamity like flood this year besides a balanced rainfall, he said.

Additional director of DAE, Sylhet division, AKM Rafiqul Islam told this correspondent that the farmers in the region while farming aman suffer much due to repeated flood and foul weather condition almost every year. Things were totally different this time with sufficient rainfall and sunshine, he added.

It helped bring new areas under transplant aman cultivation in the region where huge croplands used to

remain uncultivated, he said.

Besides, the farmers are now more conscious about using fertiliser and other cares for a better yield, the official said.

The official said, of the total targeted areas, 142,600 hectares are in Sylhet, 92,460 hectares in Moulvibazar, 64,215 hectares in Habiganj and 64,850 hectares in Sunamganj.

In those areas, HYV aman was cultivated on 275,650 hectares while the local varieties were cultivated on 88,545 hectares in the division till first week of this month.

The rice production target has been set at 863,500 metric tonnes, the official added.

Meanwhile, the farmers in Gaibandha were busy planting aman seedlings after a rain for three days last week, reports our correspondent.

The farmers were worried due to little rainfall over the fortnight. Solvent growers were compelled to go for irrigation while many low-lying areas remained fallow for want of water.

According to district agriculture extension department, over 5,000 irrigation pumps were deployed in the district to supply water to aman crop

fields due to scanty rainfall.

Moreover, aman plants on large areas have been attacked by pest and stem rot diseases due to the drought. Sadullapur, Gobindaganj and Sundarganj upazilas bore the brunt, officials said.

However, all these menaces will naturally come down after rain, said Nazrul Islam, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Shaghata upazila.

Upazila agriculture officer of Gobindaganj Khorshed Alam said, this season the target of aman cultivation was fixed at 29,300 hectares. But seedlings transplanted on 5,290 hectares have been damaged by recent floodwater, he added.

Deputy director of DAE A H Bazlur Rashid said although the department fixed aman target at 1,18,585 hectares this year, at least 1,25,855 hectares have already been brought under the cultivation.

Although the schedule time for aman cultivation expired last month, yet the farmers of flood prone areas, specially in Teesta and Jamuna river basin, are still planting late variety aman seedlings, the officials said.



PHOTO: STAR

Truckload of jute fibre is being readied in Ataikula upazila of Pabna district for taking to a jute mill. Good harvest of the cash crop, however, fails to make the farmers in the district happy as the price sees a sharp fall this season.

## 2004 GRENADE ATTACK ON BRITISH HC Sylhet special tribunal orders further probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A special tribunal here yesterday afternoon ordered further investigation into the sensational case filed for explosive substances in connection with the 2004 grenade attack on Anwar Chowdhury, the then British High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

Additional District & Sessions Judge-V Nazir Ahmed, also the special tribunal judge, passed the order on hearing a petition filed by Sylhet public prosecutor Misbah Uddin Siraj.

During the hearing, the PP yesterday said that a number of the arrested JMB and Huji men in their statements had clearly confessed to hatching a plot to kill the AL chief and other dignitaries like Anwar Chowdhury, but the then investigators did not carry out the investigation properly. Rather, being influenced by the 4-party alliance's home minister and others, they diverted those. So, now it is the time for holding further investigation to unveil the truth, he added.

The accused, outlawed JMB's present chief Moulana Saidur Rahman, activists Delwar Hossain Ripon and Shahedul Alam

Bipul, Huji's Mufti Abdul Hannan's brother Muhibullah alias Muhibur Rahman and Mufti Mainuddin alias Masum Billah were present.

Deposition of 22 prosecution witnesses out of 57 had so far been recorded in the case, the court sources said.

Two cases -- one for murder and the other for explosive substances -- were filed in connection with the grenade attack on the then British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Chowdhury after Juma prayers on 21 May of 2004 at the gate of the shrine of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) in Sylhet.

Three people were killed while over 50 others including the then District Bar Association president Abdul Hai Khan sustained injuries in the incident.

In the other case filed (for murder) in connection with the same incident, the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal of Sylhet on 23 December of 2008 awarded death to Huji's Mufti Abdul Hannan, Sharif Shahedul Alam Bipul and Delwar Hossain Ripon while Mufti Muhibur Rahman (Mufti Hannan's brother) and Mufti Mainuddin were awarded life and fined Tk 10,000 each.

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