

# High seedling price hampering Irri-boro farming in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Lalmonirhat

Irri-Boro cultivation in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat district is being hampered due to acute shortage of seedlings and their high prices.

Local farmers said many seedbeds and seedlings were damaged due to severe cold and dense fog, creating acute crisis of seedlings.

Taking advantage of the situation, unscrupulous traders are doing brisk business by selling seedlings at high prices in local markets, they alleged.

Poor and marginal farmers are facing problems in purchasing seedlings from local markets to cultivate Irri-Boro.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Lalmonirhat, a scheme has been taken up this year to bring 55,282 hectares of land under Irri-boro farming in five upazilas of the district, 97 hectares more than last year's.

"The target of paddy production in the district may not be achieved this year due to shortage of seedlings," said Abdul Ghoni, sub-assistant agriculture officer in Lalmonirhat DAE.

While visiting different areas of Sadar and Aditmari upazilas recently, this correspondent found local farmers in trouble due to non-availability of adequate

seedlings for cultivation.

Farmer Soher Ali, 48, of Mohendra Nagar village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said, "I prepared Boro seedbeds on 10 decimal of land to cultivate eight bighas of land. But 50 per-cent seedlings were damaged due to severe cold and dense fog. So I have to purchase seedlings from

local market at high price."

At least 500 to 520 bundles of seedlings are needed to cultivate one bigha of land (30 decimal), he said, adding that a bundle of 80 to 90 seedlings is now priced at Tk 4 but it was sold at Tk 2 last year.

Another farmer Taher Ali, 45, of Bongram village in the same upazila said they pur-

chase seedlings from local market at high prices as their seedbeds were damaged due to cold and dense fog.

Farmer Akmol Hossain of Vadai village in Aditmari upazila said, "I cultivated Irri-Boro on 14 bighas of land last year, but this year I have cultivated the same only on eight bighas of land due to shortage of seedlings

and their high prices.

Seedlings for farming Irri-Boro on one bigha of land cost Tk 24,00 which was Tk 1200 last year, he added.

Azizul Islam, 42, a trader of Noyarhat under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, "We purchase one bundle of seedlings for Tk 3 and sell it for Tk 4. We make profit of Tk one per bundle."



Seedlings of Irri-Boro are being sold at higher prices at Noyarhat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila as severe cold and dense fog damaged seedbeds in five upazilas of the district recently

PHOTO: STAR

## Robbers loot Nitol Motors workshop

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Benapole, Jessore

A gang of armed robbers looted Tk 12 lakh from a workshop of Nitol Motors Ltd at Ramnagar in Sadar upazila of the district early yesterday.

Mahmudunnabi, manager of the workshop said, a gang numbering 10-12 entered the workshop in the early morning and took its guards and staff members hostage at gunpoint.

Later, the robbers looted Tk 50,000 in cash from the workshop while Tk 11.5 lakh from five customers who were staying in a room of the workshop.

In Jamalpur, Detective Branch police in a raid in Narundi area of sadar upazila arrested a man in connection with a robbery case yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The accused was identified as Shafiqul Islam, son of Aroz Ali of village Damdamar Bokultola in Nurundi union under the upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of DB police raided Shafiqul's house at 6am and arrested him.

Police said, Shafiqul was involved with robbery at the house of Tapon Kumar Band of village Kismat Jalla in Islampur upazila of the district on August 24 last year.

During the robbery, the gang injured China Rani Band, wife of the house owner and decamped with 16 tolas of gold ornament and cash Tk. 23 thousand.

In another incident on Monday, robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuable items worth Tk 20 lakh from a businessman's house at Kushighatin Sylhet city.

Police said, a gang of armed robbers entered "Moinamia House", owned by businessman Abul Hasan Montu, at about 4 pm by breaking open iron grill and looted 35 tolas of gold ornaments, cash Tk 22,000, mobile phone sets and other valuables worth Tk 20 lakh.

The gang safely decamped with booties before day break. On information, a police team rushed to the spot from Moglabazar PS.

# Implement enclave exchange deal or face agitation

## Warn people in Bangladesh enclaves

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Thakurgaon

People living in Bangladesh enclaves inside India submitted a memorandum to the chief minister of Paschim Banga yesterday demanding Indian citizenship and immediate implementation of Indo-Bangla enclave exchange accord.

They went to Coochbehar district magistrate's office in a procession in the afternoon and submitted the memo to the chief minister through the district magistrate.

Prior to marching towards the district magistrate's office, around 10,000 people gathered in Coochbehar Railway Station area and held a rally there.

Organised by India-Bangladesh Enclave Exchange Coordination Committee, the rally was addressed, among others, by Somen Sen and Diptiman Sen Gupta, general secretary and assistant general secretary of the committee, Mofidar Rahman, chairman of Garati Enclave in

Panchagarh, and Joy Prakash, chairman of Nazirganj Enclave in Panchagarh.

The speakers demanded immediate implementation of the enclave exchange deal, signed in Dhaka in September last year, by February 21. Otherwise, they threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme.

They also sought an

appointment with Chief Minister Mamata Benerjee during her visit to Siliguri on February 10.

Enclave people live in awful conditions amid lack of adequate employment opportunity, infrastructure, educational institutions, electricity and medical facilities, the speaker said.

They demanded a definite timeframe to implement the enclave exchange deal.

One hundred and eleven Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh are situated in Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Nilphamari districts while all 51 Bangladesh enclaves are in Indian Coochbehar district.



People living in Bangladesh enclaves inside India bring out a procession in Coochbehar town yesterday demanding immediate implementation of enclave exchange deal.

PHOTO: STAR

## Jute workers' four-day agitation programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Khulna

Jute Mill Workers' and Employees' Action Committee announced a four-day agitation programme on Tuesday to press home their demand for implementation of the recommendations under National Wages and Productivity Commission, with effect from July 1, 2009.

The programmes include workers rally at Khalishpur tomorrow (Feb 10), procession and rally by jute mill unit of Sramik League in front of National Press Club in Dhaka city on Sunday (Feb 12), processions in Khulna-Jessore industrial

belt in support of dawn-to-dusk strike in jute mills on Tuesday (Feb 14) and strike in all mills and industries from 6 am to 6 pm on Wednesday (Feb 15).

We want the government to implement the recommendations of National Wages Commission on our wages and salaries with effect from July 1 of 2009 instead of July 1 of 2010, said acting president of Bangladesh Patkal Sramik League Sardar Motahar Uddin and Joint Convenor of Jute Mill Workers' Action Committee Md Shah Alam.

Otherwise, a month-long programme would be announced to realise our demand, they warned.

## Thakurgaon Sugar Mills shut for want of sugarcane

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Thakurgaon

Thakurgaon Sugar Mills suspended its operation on Tuesday, after operating 67 days in the current season, for want of sugarcane.

The mill started operation on December 2 last year to produce 6,300 tonnes of sugar by crushing 90,000 tonnes of sugarcane during its 75-day operation period, Managing Director (MD) of the mill Sibendranath Sarcar told this correspondent yesterday.

However, the mill produced about 4,800 tonnes of sugar by crushing

79,486 tonnes sugarcane in the last 67 days with a recovery rate of 6.04, the MD said.

During the operation, the mill was forced to stop operation for about 40 hours due to mechanical faults, officials said.

As the molasses is sold at Tk. 70 per kg while the sugarcane at Tk 55 in the local markets, farmers became interested to produce molasses for instant profit. And this has put the mill into sugarcane crisis, they said.

The mill authorities purchased sugarcane at Tk. 100 per maund while the

# Nurul Islam held again in another murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Narsingdi

Police arrested Narsingdi Thana BNP unit General Secretary Mohammad Nurul Islam at the gate of Narsingdi Central Jail immediately after his release on bail in Narsingdi mayor Lokman murder case on Tuesday.

Gouro Chandra Mojumdar, Inspector of CID police arrested him in a case filed against him on charge murdering Billal Hossain Rony, general secretary of Narsingdi Government College Students Union.

Rony was killed on March 15, last year, by a gang of criminals in broad day light, at the auditorium of Narsingdi College.

Abul Fazal, elder brother of the deceased, filed a case accusing 14 people in this connection.

Gouro Chandra, investigation officer of the case



Mohammad Nurul Islam

told this correspondent that Nurul Islam was arrested on the basis of the confessional statement of another accused, who was arrested earlier.

Earlier, Nurul Islam, one of the charge sheeted main accused in Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain murder case was released on bail on Tuesday.

District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Shajahan granted the bail after 10 to 12 lawyers, led by

advocate Abdul Based Bhuiyan, placed a prayer for Nurul Islam.

In the morning on Tuesday, the Chief Judicial Magistrate Nitai Chandra Saha ordered to send Nurul Islam to jail after Investigation Officer of the case Inspector Mamunur Rashid Mondal placed him before the court on completion of his two-day remand in third phase.

Nurul Islam, the one of the 14 accused in the case, was arrested by the immigration police from Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on January 29, on his return from Malaysia.

Narsingdi municipality mayor Lokman Hossain succumbed to his injuries at DMCH hours after masked assailants shot him at the town Awami League office on Sadar Road on November 1 last year.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

Locals captured a fishing cat from a cowshed of snake charmer Gouranga Mondol at Ghona Ramkrishnapur village in Dumuria upazila of Khulna on Tuesday morning. The fishing cat was handed over to the upazila forest officer who later released it into Karamjol reserved forest.

## Garments worker murdered

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A young garment worker, who was stabbed on Tuesday, succumbed to his injuries early yesterday at Mirash Para area under Tongi police station. With the death of Akther Hossain, 28, an employee of Dishari Washing Plant at Tongi BSCIC area, two people met unnatural deaths in the last two days in the area. Quoting eyewitness, Tongi police station sub-inspector (operation) Md Ismail Hossain said a gang of muggers stabbed Akther while he was returning home after office hour at about 9:30pm on Tuesday. Hailing from Hogolgari village of Madaripur sadar, Akther was taken to Tongi Government Hospital where he died at about 12:30am.

## Aluminium shop gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

A fierce fire at an aluminium store in Baganchra bazaar in Sharsha upazila of the district gutted valuables worth Tk 7 lakh early yesterday. Police quoting locals said the fire originated from electric short circuit at the store of Shahidul Islam at about 2am and soon engulfed the entire store. Being informed, fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze with the help of local people.

## Principal put behind bars

UNB, Goalanda, Rajbari

A court here on Tuesday sentenced a principal of a local technical college to three years rigorous imprisonment for stabbing a housewife. The court also fined convict Rikta Banu, 34, principal of Goalanda FK Technical and Business Management College, Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer three months more in jail. According to the prosecution, Rikta Banu lived in a house of former school teacher Abdul Hakim at Juran Mollar Para under Goalanda municipality. On October 18 in 2006, Rikta locked in an altercation with Hakim's wife Jahanara Begum over a trifling matter. At one stage, Rikta stabbed Jahanara indiscriminately, leaving her critically injured.

## Notebook sellers fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

A mobile court on Tuesday afternoon fined two bookshops in Noapara upazila town Tk 4000 for selling banned notebooks. The court instantly realised the fine from the bookshops. The mobile court led by upazila nirbahi officer Biswas Russell Hossain conducted a drive in Noapara bazaar and fined the bookshops. The team also seized 278 banned notebooks and guides from the shops.

## Garlic seized in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 113 sacks of garlic worth Tk 6.5 lakh from Khutamar in Jointapur upazila on Monday night while being smuggled out to India. On secret information, Sripur border outpost members conducted a drive in the area at about 9pm and seized the garlic from two trucks. They also arrested the drivers of the two trucks. Sensing the presence of the border guards, the smugglers fled away. The seized garlic was handed over to Jointapur customs.