

# Luck smiles on cotton farmers in 9 districts

PONUEL S BOSE, back to Narail from Jessore

Nine districts under Jessore and Kushtia zones see bumper production of cotton this season, much to the happiness of farmers who cultivated the cash crop on more than double areas of land compared to last year's.

Favourable weather, use of compost and standard HYV seeds, availability of bank loans without any difficulty, relief from pest attack in this season and rainfall during October and

November helped better growth of cotton this season, said sources at Jessore Regional Office of Cotton Development Board (CDB).

Under the regional office, there are 36 offices in Jessore Zone (Jessore, Satkhira, Jhenidah, Magura, Faridpur districts) and 33 offices in Kushtia Zone (Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga and Rajbari districts).

In last season, cotton was cultivated on 6,050 hectares of land under the two zones.

This season, 13,617 hect-

ares of land have been brought under cotton cultivation in this region (Jessore Zone -- 6,326 hectares, Kushtia Zone --7291 hectares) and the target was to produce 30-32 thousand tonnes of cotton, the regional office sources said.

This year's production target has already exceeded much as farmers got 36 to 45 maunds (one maund = 37.5 kg) of cotton per acre (100 decimals) of land, CDB sources said.

Cotton cultivation is

gaining popularity in Jessore region due to its increasing demand, high prices, easy cultivation process and lower production cost, said farmers and CDB officials.

HYV of cotton seed C.B-12, invented last year in Jagodishpur Cotton Laboratory in Jessore, yields 12 to 15 maunds per bigha of land and it takes five to six months to harvest, said Kamrul Hasan, cotton agronomist of the laboratory.

Dr Md Abdus Samad, compost analyst of RK Agro, said they provided hands-on training to farmers to encourage use of compost fertilisers instead of chemical ones and got positive results.

Md Musa, a cotton farmer of Bagharpara upazila under Jessore district, attributed bumper cotton production in this season to favourable weather conditions, training from RK Agro on use of compost fertilisers and pesticides and availability of easy bankloan.

"After harvesting cotton in December or January, we can cultivate boro, potato, maize and other crops in the same field. It is easier and more profitable than other cultivation. Production cost of cotton per bigha of land is Tk 7,000 at the maximum and it can earn Tk 35,000 to Tk 40,000 per bigha," said Abul Kashem Sardar, a cotton farmer of Monirampur upazila in Jessore district.

During a recent field visit, agriculturist Dr Mustafiqur Rahman Raihan, business consultant of Catalyst, Jessore, told this correspondent that the organisation provides support for the development of farming sector, such as cotton.

Jafor Ali, deputy director of Jessore Regional Office of Cotton Development Board, said that they are helping farmers to get adequate supply of fertilisers, new variety of early yielding seed and easy term bank loan to bring a revolutionary change in cotton farming in the region.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer aided by a boy plucks cotton at Naobhangarchar in Pathalia village of Jamalpur Sadar upazila that sees successful cultivation of the cash crop under the initiative of Cotton Development Board. The photo was taken recently.

## Cotton growers of char land

A CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A good number of farmers in char (landmass emerged from riverbed) areas of Jamalpur Sadar upazila are now happy with profitable cotton cultivation, thanks to the initiative of Cotton Development Board (CDB).

To popularise cotton farming in the area, the local office of CDB provides the cotton growers with seeds, fertilisers and pesticides on loan basis and purchases the produce from the growers for 'reasonable' prices, said farmers and CDB officials.

With the help of local CDB, 149 farmers, mostly marginal ones, cultivated cotton on a total of 67 hectares of their char lands under 10 'blocks' in Sadar upazila, CDB office sources said.

Cultivation of CB-9, CB-12 and Rupali-1 varieties of cotton yielded around six, eight and ten maunds per bigha this season and the production cost for the three varieties stood at around Tk 5,000, Tk 6,000 and Tk

7,000 per bigha.

In conformity with international market price, CDB has already fixed the prices of CB-9, CB-12 and Rupali-1 cotton at Tk 2400, Tk 2600 and Tk 2500 per maund and so, the expected profit per bigha is around Tk 9400, Tk 14800 and Tk 18000 respectively.

During this correspondent's visit to Naobhangarchar in Pathalia village, Lokman Master, a retired primary school teacher, said he cultivated cotton on eight bighas of land at Naobhangarchar and got good harvest.

"Now we feel comfortable to cultivate this crop as local CDB office helps us by providing seeds, fertilisers and pesticides through loan. And we can easily sell the produce to the board at a fixed price without any hazard," he said.

Local farmers are getting interested in cotton cultivation as it brings them good profit, said Md Abdul Goni, cotton unit officer of CDB.



PHOTO: STAR

Construction of this embankment at Patakhali in Koira upazila under Khulna district was completed on Saturday, much to the relief of over 30 thousand people of 13 villages in Dakkhin Bedkashi union who had remained marooned since collapse of the embankment during the onslaught of super cyclone Aila on May 25 in 2009.

## Patakhali embankment complete

Sufferings of Aila victims ease at last

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Untold sufferings of over 30,000 people of 13 villages in Dakkhin Bedkashi union under Koira upazila eased a lot as the construction work of Patakhali embankment was completed on Saturday afternoon.

The embankment collapsed due to furious tidal surges during cyclone Aila on May 25 in 2009.

Sohrab Ali Sana, lawmaker of Khulna-6 (Koira-Paigacha), GM Mohsin Reza, chairman of Koira upazila, and UNO Abul Basher were present when

the 180-metre-long embankment was declared complete.

Army-run Bangladesh Diesel Plant Limited on January 13 this year decided to build the embankment at a cost of Tk 17 crore and 90 lakh with technical assistance from Western Engineering Private Limited.

Members of Bangladesh Army, under guidance of Brigadier General Mostafa Aminul Islam, monitored and supervised the construction work.

Collapse of the embankment added to the untold sufferings of the people in

Aila-hit areas as hundreds of acres of arable land went under saline water for long.

The marooned villagers, who volunteered at the site with army men round-the-clock, finally have heaved a sigh of relief, said the lawmaker while briefing local journalists at Khulna Press Club VIP lounge yesterday.

Speaking to the newsmen, the chairman of the union accused a syndicate of contractors and a section of corrupt officials of Water Development Board (WDB) for making dilly-dally in finishing the job.

They did it as there was no scope for illegal monetary

gain because of vigilance of the villagers, he said.

Farmer Abdul Bari Gazi said they wanted army to take up the job as the enlisted contractor of WDB had refused to work last year.

Bashir Ahmed, managing director of Western Engineering Private Limited, said they had worked relentlessly to complete the construction work of the embankment with utmost sincerity.

Meanwhile, an engineer of WDB said most modern technology had been used for the first time to complete the construction work within such a short time.



PHOTO: STAR

## Coastguard seizes over 100 maunds of jatka

Coastguard seizes 100 maunds of jatka (hilsa fry) from two trawlers in the Meghna River near Chandpur town, below, police seizes 20 maunds of jatka from a Dhaka-bound launch in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district yesterday. Ignoring a government ban and occasional drives by the law enforcers, a section of unscrupulous fishermen have continued catching jatka, much to the harm of the stock of popular fish hilsa.



## 7 injured as smugglers, BGB clash in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A member of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and six alleged smugglers were injured as they clashed at Sonabaria border in Kalaroa upazila yesterday.

BGB failed to arrest the smugglers but recovered two sackful of spices worth Tk 1,70,000 from the spot.

The injured are BGB havildar Shah Alam and smugglers Zahangir Hossain, 27, Shafi Ahmed, 30, Moazem Hossain, 40, Ashraf, 35, Mazed, 27, and Mannan, 40, -- all residents of Kalaroa upazila.

BGB sources said, a team of the border guard led by Havildar Shah Alam of Jhhowdanga camp, chased a gang of smugglers coming from India with smuggled goods at Sonabaria point yesterday.

The smugglers attacked the BGB personnel after they intercepted them near Sonabaria.

The BGB men charged batons on the smugglers as they started pelting brickbats at them.

The smugglers later fled the area and went to a private clinic at Baganchra in Sharsha upazila under Jessore district to evade arrest, locals said.

BGB filed a case with Kalaroa PS accusing ten smugglers.

## Three poachers held with slaughtered deer, skins

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Law enforcers in separate drives arrested three poachers and recovered slaughtered deer, deer skins and venison from their possession yesterday and on Friday.

Forest department officials in a drive arrested a poacher along with a slaughtered deer in Chila area of Mongla upazila yesterday morning.

Mihir Kumar Do, divisional forest officer of the Sundarbans, east zone, said Manoranjan Biswas, 45, son of Sharat Chandra Biswas of the upazila entered the Sundarbans a few days back for fishing with permission from forest department.

He caught a spotted deer on Saturday night by setting trap and slaughtered it in the forest.

Mihir Kumar said, a forest department mobile team intercepted a boat in the Pashur river and arrested Monoranjan along with a slaughtered deer, its skin, 15 kgs venison, several traps for catching deer and sharp weapons.

A case was filed against him with local police station.

Earlier on Friday, Mongla police arrested two poachers with two deer skins and two kilograms of venison from the same area of the canal.

The arrestees were identified as Md. Shahidullah Chawkidar, 30, and Md. Kasem Ali, 70, of Amratola village under Mongla upazila. Officer in charge (OC) of Mongla police station Nikhil Chandra Mondal said the duo entered into the Sundarbans taking permission for catching crabs a few days ago.

Instead of catching crabs, they hunted two deer and sold the venison in their locality, the OC added.

On a tip-off, police arrested them on Friday and a court sent them to the jail on Saturday, he said.

At least 40 poachers have so far been arrested along with slaughtered deer, venison, skin, deer head and sharp weapons from the Sundarbans under Mongla and Sharankhola upazilas in the last three months, sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Police arrested two poachers with two deer skins and two kilograms of venison in Chila area of Mongla upazila in Bagerhat on Friday.

## Six kids rescued, three arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three people were held with six children while they were trying to cross into India through a border in Pachbibi upazila of Joypurhat on Saturday.

The three arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were identified as Saidul Islam of Golapur village in Ghoraghat upazila of Dinajpur and Anowara Begum and Jugari Rani of Dhanapara village in Paschim Dinajpur under Paschim Bangla of India.

The rescued children, all boys and aged between 13 and 17 years, are

Mehdi Hasan, 15, son of Hafizul Islam of Gopalpur Chowdhurypara in Ghoraghat upazila of Dinajpur, Liton Mia, 15, son of Abdul Mumeen, Md. Ashikur Rahman, 13, son of Rezaul Islam, Moynul Islam, 15, son of Md. Afzal Hossain, Nabirul Islam, 17, son of Mahfuzur Rahman and Monirul Islam, 15, son of Md. Mozaffar Ali of Golapanj Chowdhurypara in same of the district.

Sources said, the aforesaid three gathered the children near 283 main pillar under Chechra point in the afternoon in a bid to cross the border.

On suspicion, the Rab members of Joypurhat raided the area and arrested the three alleged human traffickers and rescued the children.

Rab members, quoting the rescued children said that the traffickers brought the boys to the border to take them to India. They promised to their parents to give lucrative jobs across the border.

A case was filed with Pachbibi police station. The arrestees were sent to Joypurhat jail in the evening while rescued children sent to the safe custody of Pachbibi police.