

# Tea may suffer setback for lack of timely rain

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Tea leaf plucking in the gardens of Sylhet region is getting delayed this year in absence of expected rainfall and irrigation facilities this season.

If the drought-like situation, prevailing in all the six valleys of Sylhet tea producing region having 138 of the country's 160 tea gardens, continues a few more days, this season's tea production will suffer a setback, said officials related with the country's major ago-based industry.

Usually the region gets a brief shower in the last week of February or first week of March, which is very important for the sensitive crop, they said.

Tea needs balanced rainfall and sunshine especially during the period from March to September-October while a minimum rainfall during October-December and February-April periods is also very important for its growth.

Usually plucking of leaves in the tea

gardens start at the beginning of March but this year it could not be done due to the unfavourable weather, they said.

Contacted, Dr Mainuddin Ahmed, director of Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI), told this correspondent on Sunday, "The tea gardens could not yet start leaf plucking due to the absence of rainfall. Besides, fertilisers cannot be used as the soil has remained too dry."

"Tea gardens need rainfall and irrigation this time but we could not start irrigation as the natural water sources have already dried up," said Mohammad Shahjahan, manager of Somonbhag Tea Estate.

"Fertilisation is being delayed due to the drought-like situation. If it continues for some more days young tea plants will be damaged and there may be attack of pests like red spider. Fluctuation in temperature is also causing much harm to the crop," he said.

However, the gardens in North Sylhet Circle are expected to somehow start plucking of leaves in the second week of this month as the area got some rainfall.

Contacted, the Circle Chairman of the Bangladesh Tea Association-Numan Haider Chowdhury, also general manager of Khadim Tea Estate, said on Sunday, "We hope to start leaf plucking from March 10-15 as there was a little rainfall last week and we have facility for irrigation, although in a limited scale."

The country produced 59.16 million kg of tea in 2011. The amount was 60 million kg and 59.24 million kg in 2010 and 2009.

Once the country exported one third of its tea production but due to the huge rise in local consumption, the export has come down to about 20 percent.

Still the item remains a good earning source for the country due to good prices in the international market, officials said.

# Jatka hunting unabated despite raids

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Illegal hunting of hilsa fry continued unabated as coastguard seized more 80 msunds of the fish on Dhaleswari River in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday morning.

Coastguard officer Shahidul Islam said, a team led by himself raided the Dhaka-bound MV Bandhan and seized a huge quantity of the fish, locally known as jatka at about 6:30am.

None was arrested in this connection.

Later, the jatka seized in 10 big baskets and three drums, was dumped under the earth in nearby Char

Muktarpur in presence of upazila acting fisheries officer Rasheduzzaman.

The government banned catching of jatka across the country from February 1 to May 31 to boost hilsa production.

On Tuesday, 16 mounds of jatka were seized by coastguard in the same river.

The fish fry recovered from MV Bhola was also dumped under the earth at the same char.

Law enforcers seized at least 405 mounds of jatka and two lakh 54 thousand metres current nets during raid from February 4 to March 6, sources said.



## House attacked as domestic help tortured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hundreds of people, mostly day labourers, vandalised the residence of a banker, protesting alleged torture of an eight-year-old domestic help in Paschim Baluadanga area in the district town on Tuesday.

Victim Rubina Begum is daughter of Razu Mia, a rickshaw puller of the area, said Aslam Iqbal, officer in-charge of Dinajpur police station.

Victim's mother Parvin said her daughter worked at the house of an officer of local branch of a private bank over the past one and a half years.

"Putul, wife of the banker, used to beat Rubina with wooden sticks. She also burned her with hot iron rod over lame excuses", Parvin added.

On Monday, we saw the injury marks on different parts of Rubina's body when we came to the banker's house to meet our daughter, said Parvin.

The same day we admitted her to Dinajpur General Hospital, she said.

The banker was not available at his workplace or over cell phone for comments till filing of this report yesterday.

A case was filed accusing the banker and his wife in this regard, said the OC.

PHOTO: STAR  
Volunteers take part in a drill to prepare for post-cyclone disaster management on the ground of Pakhimara Profulla Bhoumik High School cum cyclone shelter in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district yesterday. US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, among others, attended the programme organised by Save the Children and USAID.

## 103 ROKEYA COLLEGE STUDENTS AGITATE Principal confined to office room for registration cards

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The English department students of Begum Rokeya Govt. College under 2010-2011 session yesterday confined the principal to his office for several hours, demanding their registration under National University.

The agitating students locked the main gate of the college at about 9:00am. Police rushed to the scene and unlocked it to allow the BBA second year examinees.

Over 100 students have been continuing agitation for the last two weeks demanding registration cards.

Sources said, about 150 students took admission at the department under

National University under the 2010-2011 academic session. The university authorities approved registration of 47 students but turned down registration of 103 students on the plea of faulty admission process.

The students claimed that they had fulfilled all the conditions of the university. They threatened to continue their movement until realisation of the demand.

Contacted over cell phone, principal of the college Dr Abdul Latif said there was a 'misunderstanding' between the authorities of the college and the university.

"It will be solved shortly. So, the students need not worry about it", the principal added.



PHOTO: STAR  
Law enforcers bury 80 maunds of jatka (young hilsa), seized by coastguard from a launch in Dhaleswari River at Char Muktarpur in Munshiganj Sadar upazila, yesterday. Defying an official ban to protect the stock of the popular fish, a section of unscrupulous fishermen have continued random netting of jatka, despite frequent drives by law enforcers during the last few days.

## Over 100 hurt as villagers clash

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Over 115 people were injured as rival groups of villagers in Habiganj and Munshiganj districts locked in fierce clashes yesterday.

Police fired around 50 rounds of rubber bullets to bring the situation under control as rival villagers at remote Paschimbag under Ajmiriganj upazila in Habiganj locked in a gunfight yesterday, reports our staff correspondent in Sylhet.

Over a hundred people injured during the 3-hour fierce clash.

Sources said, there was a longstanding rivalry between the people of former UP Chairman Ali Amjad and his opponent Noliur Rahman.

In the morning Abul Miah and Dulu Miah of the groups had an exchange of heated words over irrigating boro paddy on a land. At a stage, the villagers from both sides with sticks and lethal weapons engaged in a fierce clash.

Police from the Ajmiriganj PS and Shhibpasha police camp rushed to scene and brought the situation under control. At least 80 people including three women were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

In Munshiganj, at least 15 people including officer in-charge (OC) of Sirajdikhan police station were injured during a clash at Doshrapara village yesterday morning.

OC Mehedi Hassan, 40, (investigation) was admitted to Ichhapura health

complex in Sirajdikhan. Of the other injured, Jamal Hossain, 33, Islam Munshi, 50, Mohsin, 25, and Lipi, 22, were admitted to different local hospitals.

Locals and police said an altercation took place between some people of Munshipara and Dosorpara villages over naming of an under construction road in the area.

As a sequel to the previous day's conflict, around 10:00am yesterday, supporters of Jamal Hossain and Kamal Hossain of Dosorpara and followers of Ibrahim Munshi, Munir Munshi and Ismail Munshi of Mushipara attacked each other with sharp weapons, leaving at least 14 people from the both sides injured.

## Mother of four tortured for failing to mother a boy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A mother of four daughters was allegedly tortured by her husband at Gotamari village in Gotamari union of Hatibandha upazila on Sunday night for failing to mother a male child.

Victim Shamsunnahar Begum, 38, was married to Abdul Jalil, chairman of Gotamari union parishad 20 years ago. She is now an assistant teacher at Sonar Deghee Registered Primary School in the upazila.

Shamsunnahar said Jalil often tortured her as she gave birth to 4 female children. "He even threatened to kill me if I fail to mother a boy next time".

On the fateful night, the UP chairman beat up his wife mercilessly in their bedroom locking it from inside over the issue, leaving her unconscious.

Later, the daughters of the victim admitted her to the local upazila health complex with serious injuries. Jalil was drunk at the time of the incident, said family members.

Several injury marks were found on different parts of Shamsunnahar's body, said Dr Ramzan Ali of the health complex.

Terming her father a crazy man, Zinnat Ara Khatun, 17, elder daughter of the victim, confirmed the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

Tortured Shamsunnahar groans in pain at upazila health complex on Tuesday.

Another daughter, Zinia Akter, 13, said "My father used to torture my mother over the matter, but she advised us not to share it with outsiders".

On Tuesday, Monirul Islam, elder brother of the victim, submitted a written complaint to Bodiuzzaman Bhelu, chairman of Hatibandha upazila.

Contacted, Bhelu said he would take proper steps in this connection within a week.

Refuting the allegations, Jalil however, termed the incident as a simple family feud. "I am happy with my four daughters. I love them all", he said.

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Our congratulations are further extended to Rahman Shafi who achieved a final ranking of 98.6% placing him in the top 7% of all WACE graduates

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 Senior Campus: House: 34, Road:100, Gulshan-2, Dhaka 1212. Phone: 88 8881344, +88 0176 2001083

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