

# Hoarders make high profit as jute prices jump

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Middlemen, who stocked jute after purchasing it for low prices from farmers during the last harvesting season, are earning huge money as the prices in the local markets have doubled recently.

Growers, on the other hand, could hardly make any profit as they had to sell the crop for low prices in absence of storage facilities.

Besides, most of them were in urgent need of cash to repay loans and maintain

family expenses.

Traders from capital Dhaka and other parts of the country are coming to Lalmonirhat town and taking 120 to 130 truckloads of jute daily from local stockists while the growers do not have any sellable jute in their stock.

Only five months ago, low quality jute sold for Tk 450 to Tk 550 per 40 kg, medium quality for Tk 800 to Tk 900 and fine quality for Tk 1050 to Tk 1200, said farmers and traders.

But the price has now jumped to Tk 1000 to Tk

1100, Tk 1700 to Tk 1800 and Tk 2000 to Tk 2200 for the three categories of jute.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension in Lalmonirhat, 3 lakh 83 thousand and 784 bales (each bale = 200 kg) of jute were produced from 6,982 hectares of land in the district.

"After harvesting, farmers had to sell jute for low prices to repay loan and run their families. Now the crop is selling for high prices but the profit goes to the pockets of stockist traders and middlemen. We the farmers are

always deprived of fair prices of our produces," said Afatbul Islam, 50, president of Ekota Farmer's Association in Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat.

"I cultivated jute on 55 decimals of land and got 605 kg yield from there. I spent Tk 11,000 for the purpose but had to sell all the jute for Tk 12,100 five months ago," said Taher Ali, 55, a farmer of Komlabari village in Aditmari upazila.

"The price of jute has jumped, when we do not have any stock of it. Middlemen purchased

jute from us for low prices and now they are getting benefit of the price hike," Kalam Shaikh of the same village said.

Sohrab Hossain, a jute stockist at Purna Bazar in the town said, "Five months ago, I purchased 500 bales of jute from the growers. The prices were Tk 2500 a bale for low quality, Tk 4000 for medium quality and Tk 4500 for fine quality jute. I stocked all the jute in my godown as the market was not favourable. Now the jute prices have doubled."

"Traders from Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna are coming to Lalmonirhat and purchasing a bale of low quality jute at Tk 5100, medium quality at Tk 9000 and high quality jute 10,000 from us," he said.

Saiful Islam, member of Lalmonirhat Chamber of Commerce and Industries, admitted that the middlemen are getting benefit from jute selling in this current year althou the growers were deprived.

Everyday 120 to 130 trucks loaded with jute leave Lalmonirhat town for Dhaka, Khulna and other parts of the country, he said.

If the farmers do not get fair price during the harvesting period, they will lose interest to cultivate the cash crop, said Mohammad Nuruzzaman, Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila agriculture officer.

Mohon Lal Sen, secretary of Ekota Farmer's Association, said the government should take proper policy to increase farmers' stocking capacity for ensuring fair prices of their produces.



PHOTO: STAR

Truckloads of jute being transported from Lalmonirhat town to different places including the capital as stockists, who purchased jute from hard pressed farmers at low prices a few months ago, are selling the cash crop for double amounts now.

## 1300 mill workers retired in 2008 agitate for dues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Over 1300 workers of Dinajpur Textile Mills Ltd who retired on golden handshake about four years ago and their family members formed a human chain yesterday demanding payment of arrears.

The hour-long human chain programme, joined by at least 2500 men and women, was held in front of the mill in Sadarpur area of Sadar upazila.

A committee formed to realise the arrears of the staffs organised the programme.

The participants said that 1350 mill workers of the mill retired in 2008 but they are yet to get the retirement allowance and other benefits.

Many retired workers have died without getting their arrears while members of hundreds of families are passing days in the hardships, said a speaker.

The retired workers visited different departments of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) to realise their money in the last four years but to no effect, said another victim.

Sources said the mill owes Tk 5 crore arrears to 1350 staffs who retired about four years ago.

Victims at the human chain programme also alleged that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while on her election campaign here on December 24 in 2008 had said at a public meeting that the textile mill will be reopened and the jobless mill workers would get back jobs. But the government is yet to take any visible initiatives to restart the mill, they said.

Sources said Dinajpur Textile Mill Ltd was set up on 36.54 acre land at Sadarpur village in Sadar upazila on March 1, 1975.

The mill started its test production on November 1 in 1978 with 25 machines, Tk 18 crore cash capital and 21 officers, 140 staffs and 1350 mill workers.

Later, 4,000 more textile machines were imported from China to speed up output and eventually the mill went on commercial production in 1980.

In 1994, the mill was privatised and in 2003 the production and other operations of the mill came to a halt.

In 2006, the mill restarted in the face of protest by mill workers. But again it was shut in 2008 compelling the 1350 mill workers to go into retirement.

However, the retirees are yet to get their dues including benefits.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Dinajpur Textile Mills, who retired on 'golden handshake' four years ago, form a human chain in front of the mill yesterday demanding payment of their arrear dues.

## Extortionists assault journalist couple

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A journalist couple were assaulted by alleged extortionists in the district town on Wednesday night for publishing a report in a newspaper.

A case was filed with Sadar police station accusing one Abdul Khaleque and his five accomplices in this connection.

The victims are SM Shafiqul Islam Kanul, correspondent of The Daily Ittefaq and BTV and the editor of Weekly Lalmonirhat Barta and his wife Saleha Khatun, managing editor of the weekly.

Khaleque alleged that a gang of extortionists led by Khaleque attacked him and his wife after a news 'toll collection from medicine shop' published in Weekly

Lalmonirhat Barta on February 29.

The incident occurred at around 9:30pm when they were returning home at Mission Crossing in the town from their workplace, headed.

Jamir Uddin, officer in-charge of the PS, said they were trying to arrest the attackers.

Meanwhile, journalist leaders at an emergency meeting at the office of Weekly Lalmonirhat Barta yesterday, threatened to go for a tougher programmes if the extortionists are not arrested by 24 hours.

ETV and Daily Sangbad correspondent Gokul Roy, Prothom Alo correspondent Abdur Rob Suzon and Samokal correspondent Ahmedur Rahman Mukul, spoke.

## All for a mobile phone

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A man murdered his mother and younger brother at Dashkathi of Subabad under Nalcity upazila of Jhalakathi district early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Sahera Khatun, 60, an employee at Magor union family planning centre and wife of late Dhalu Khan and their third son Yusuf Khan, 40, of Khan Bari in the village.

Belal Khan, 35, youngest of the four sons of Sahera, lodged a murder case in connection with the double-murder with Nalcity police station while accused Siddik Khan, 44, eldest son of Sahera remained at large till filing of this report yesterday evening.

Quoting the complaint, OC Masuduzzaman of Nalcity PS said Siddik, who worked as a rickshaw-puller

, took away the mobile phone of his mother Sahera on Wednesday noon.

When Sahera with her third son Yusuf went to the neighbouring house of eldest son Siddik to bring back the mobile phone, Siddik stabbed them at 12:30 am.

Neighbours and family members sent both the victims to Barisal SBMCH in critical condition where the attending physician declared them dead, said the police official.

Family members of the victims said Siddik was a mental patient.

### Correction

In the headline of our story on Katka tragedy published on page 9 on Wednesday we wrote Kuet in place of KU. We regret the inadvertent mistake.

## THE DAILY STAR-ROBI ENGLISH FAIR



PHOTO: STAR

Winners of different competitions at yesterday's English language fair on the premises of Natore Government Girls' High School pose for photograph.

## Kids from three Natore schools learn thru' joyful interactions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The premises of Natore Government Girls' High School in Natore town assumed a festive look during yesterday English language fair organised under English in Schools programme, an initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi.

Over 300 students from Natore Government Girls' High School, Nababidhan Girls' High School and Banalata Girls' High School, their teachers and family members participated in the fair titled 'Safollo Ashbei' (success is a must).

Amzad Hossain, headmaster of Natore Government Girls' High School, inaugurated the fair.

A movie was screened, followed by quizzes on vocabulary, extempore speeches, etiquette test and role play.

A good number of students from the three high schools took part in the joyful interactions and entertained the audience by reciting poems, telling jokes and singing songs.

Later, prizes were distributed among the winners of different competitions.

An English language club was formed to help the young learners continue the



process of learning the most influential foreign language with ease.

Aiming to promote English language learning among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

Under the initiative, each of one thousand schools selected from 64 districts of the country receives three complimentary copies of The Daily Star five days a week.

The ongoing English language fairs at different schools are being held as part of the three-year-long programme.

Adcom Ltd is the creative and event partner of the English language fairs.



## উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড-এ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা একাউন্ট খুলুন

প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশীদের কষ্টার্জিত অর্থের নিরাপদ ও কার্যকরী বিনিয়োগের জন্য উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিঃ একটি নির্ভরযোগ্য প্রতিষ্ঠান। দেশব্যাপী আমাদের ৩৮টি অনুমোদিত ডিলার শাখায় আপনি পাচ্ছেন নিম্নলিখিত একাউন্টসমূহ খোলা ও পরিচালনা করার সুযোগঃ

- **সঞ্চয়ী হিসাব প্রকৃতির প্রাইভেট ফরেন কারেন্সী (FC) একাউন্টঃ**  
এই একাউন্ট প্রবাসী ও বিদেশগামী বাংলাদেশী নাগরিক, বাংলাদেশে কর্মরত বৈদেশিক মুদ্রায় বৈতনভোগী বাংলাদেশী নাগরিক এবং বাংলাদেশে বা বিদেশে বসবাসরত অন্যান্য জাতীয়তার নাগরিকের নামে খোলা যায়। বিদেশে নিবন্ধিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামেও এই একাউন্ট খোলা যায়।
- **মেয়াদী প্রকৃতির নন-রেসিডেন্ট ফরেন কারেন্সী ডিপোজিট (NFC) একাউন্টঃ**  
এই একাউন্ট প্রবাসী কর্মরত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নামে খোলা যায়। বিভিন্ন মেয়াদে এই একাউন্ট খোলা যায় যা পুনঃ-নবায়নযোগ্য।
- **নিবাসী বাংলাদেশীদের জন্য রেসিডেন্ট ফরেন কারেন্সী ডিপোজিট (RFC) একাউন্টঃ**  
নিবাসী বাংলাদেশীগণ বিদেশ হতে ফেরত আসার সময় সাথে আনা বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা দ্বারা এই একাউন্ট খোলা যায়।

উল্লেখ্য যে উপরোক্ত তিন ধরনের একাউন্টেই আন্তর্জাতিক বাজারের প্রযোজ্য হারে সুদ প্রদান করা হয়। বিস্তারিত জানতে ভিজিট করুনঃ [www.uttarabank-bd.com](http://www.uttarabank-bd.com) অথবা ফোনঃ +৮৮-০২-৭১৬৬৪৩৭, +৮৮-০১৭১৩-০৮২৮০৬, E-mailঃ [ublid@dhaka.net](mailto:ublid@dhaka.net) -এ যোগাযোগ করুন।

**উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
আবহমান বাংলার ঐতিহ্যে লালিত