

Mangoes may be dearer because of poor yield

RABIUL HASAN,
Chapainawabganj

Tasty varieties of mango could become dearer this season as Chapainawabganj, the country's highest mango producing district, is likely to see 40 percent less yield than the target due to adverse weather, said growers and traders.

The district, well-known for tasty varieties of mangoes, produced 1,85,000 tonnes of the delicious summer fruit last year.

Earlier this season the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) fixed a target of two lakh tonnes of mango production in the district as this an 'on year'.

But according to the latest predictions, the fruit

yield in the country's 'mango capital' will be 65,000 tonnes less than last year's due to unfavourable weather, said DAE officials, mango experts and growers.

According to the DAE, there are over 18 lakh mango trees on 23,280 hectares of land in the district.

Three times hailstorms in last two months damaged at least 1,852 tonnes of mangoes on 645 hectares of land in Shibganj, Nachole and Gomostapur upazilas of the district, DAE sources said.

Mango orchard owner Israil Hossain of Chapainawabganj municipal area said the production of mango will be 40 percent less than the

expectation due to prevailing drought-like situation in the district.

Abul Kashem of Nayalavanga village, who leased a mango orchard in his village, said he earned a good profit by selling mangoes grown in 120 trees last year. But this year the prospect seems bleak.

The varieties grown in the district have high demand in capital Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and other areas of the country. The traders have set up markets at Puraton Bazar in Chapainawabganj town, Kansat Bazar in Shibganj upazila and Rohonpur Bazar in Gomostapur upazila to procure and sell the popular fruit.

But the production fall may push up the price and

the high quality varieties may remain out of reach of common people this season, farmers and traders said.

Chief Scientific Officer of Regional Horticulture Research Centre, Chapainawabganj (earlier name Mango Research Centre), Dr Shafiqul Islam said mango production this season will be less than usual as yield is suffering due to want of rainfall.

Chapainawabganj DAE office recorded only 113.8 mm rainfall in this season.

The district has a long tradition of producing at least 150 varieties of high quality tasty mangoes including *fazli*, *langra*, *gopalbhog*, *khirshapat*, *khirshabhog*, *lakhna*, *bombai*, *mohananda*, *mohanbhog* and *ashwina*.

But fertilisation process this season was badly affected as temperature dropped before flowering and went high suddenly after flowering, said Dr Azizur Rahman, upazila agriculture officer of Sadar upazila DAE office.

Dry weather condition and zero moisture in soil due to less rainfall led to production fall in this session, he said.

The district produces mango worth Tk 2,500 to 3,000 crore every year, said Abdul Wahed, president of Chapainawabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Farmers are being encouraged to cultivate different varieties of mango on more areas of lands in the district following repeated bumper production but this year the prospect is bleak, DAE officials said.

Ripe mangoes will be available in the district in mid June, said farmers and agriculture officials.



PHOTO: STAR

Orchards in Chapainawabganj see smaller sizes and number of the fruit as the persistent draught-like situation has badly affected its yield in the district famous for high quality tasty varieties of the popular summer fruit.

Woman killed, 35 hurt in clashes over lands

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A woman was killed and 35 people were injured in the incidents of clashes over control of disputed land in Rangpur, Kishoreganj and Satkhira districts on Monday and Saturday.

A woman was killed in Rangpur following an altercation over a piece of disputed land on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Ahena Begum, 45, of Radhakrishnapur village under Imadpur union in Mithapukur upazila, reports a correspondent.

Police and locals said there was a longstanding land dispute between Ahena Brgum and Anichur Rahman of the area.

Both locked in an altercation over the matter on Monday morning. At one stage, Anichur Rahman stabbed Ahena Begum with

a sharp weapon, leaving her critically injured.

Locals and family members rushed her to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries at noon.

At least 25 people, including women, were injured in a fierce clash between two groups over a piece of disputed land at Saipur village in Itna upazila of Kishoreganj on Saturday morning, reports UNB.

Locals said there was a longstanding conflict between Altu Mia of Purbagram Islampur village and Anwar Bepari of nearby Saipur village over the ownership of a plot of land.

They said an altercation ensued between them over the issue at about 7:30am. Later, both the groups equipped with sharp weapons attacked each other, leaving 25 from both sides injured.

Of the injured, Anwar Bepari, 45, and Jummat Ali, 55, were rushed to Kishoreganj General Hospital in critical condition while others to the upazila health complex.

In Satkhira, at least 10 people, including women, were injured in a clash between two rival groups over taking control of a piece of land at Nalta village in Tala upazila on Saturday.

Locals said Sukjan Begum and Zahid of the village were at loggerheads over the matter.

An altercation took place in the morning when Zahid along with his supporters went to cultivate the land.

Later, both the groups equipped with the lethal weapons attacked each other, leaving 10 people from both sides injured.

Of the injured, seven were admitted to a local hospital.

Cop closed on charge of rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barisal

An assistant sub-inspector of special branch of police was suspended and closed to the police lines for his alleged bid to rape a woman in Hizla upazila town yesterday.

The victim, Kohinur Begum, 26, wife of Md Zulhas of Baherchar village, is a passport applicant.

Kohinur said ASI Shajalal of district special branch went to her home to verify information in the morning and asked her to visit his dak bungalow with the documents.

Along with another woman I went there at noon. But the ASI tactfully drove away my partner from the spot and tried to violate me, she alleged.

Hearing the hue and cry, locals besieged the dak bungalow, rescued the woman and caught Shajalal.

On information, police rushed to the spot and detained the ASI, said Shawkat Anwar, officer in-charge of Hizla police station.

Following the allegation, I suspended the official and ordered to close him to the police lines, said police superintendent Devdas Bhattachariya.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers thresh paddy to separate it from stalks during the ongoing harvest season. The photo was taken from Rangpur Sadar upazila on Monday.

EIGHT DISTRICTS OF RANGPUR DIVISION

Paddy harvest faces problem for want of labourers

MEHEDY HASAN, Rangpur

The farmers of eight districts under Rangpur division got bumper yield of IRRI-Boro paddy in the current season, but they are facing problem to harvest the crop due to shortage of agriculture labourers.

A large number of farm labourers, especially from the poverty-stricken areas of the northern districts have gone to Bogra, Comilla, Feni, Sylhet and other areas of the country for working in the paddy fields during the ongoing harvest season.

Recent increase in the wages of daylabourers in the district has failed to meet the crisis as local agriculture labourers have continued going to other districts for higher wages in the same work, said local farmers, who are now worried about higher production cost due to the increase in farm labourers' wages.

During visits to different areas in the district, this correspondent found the farmers busy with reaping and threshing of IRRI-Boro paddy.

Several farmers, carrying their paddy with carts, rickshaw-vans and power tillers, said they faced problem in harvesting the paddy due to shortage of labourers.

Farmer Hossain Ali Mondal, 50, Nazrul, 45, and Shajaha, 45, of Machhary village under Kaunia upazila, said this year they have to pay higher wages to the day labourers who are charging Tk 240-Tk 300 per head daily.

Besides, they are interested to harvest on contract basis and the rate for harvesting and threshing of paddy per bigha of land stands at Tk

2000 to 3000, depending on category of land.

Farmer Shomser Ali, 37, and Md Monnaf, 65, of Taluk Kandi village of Kandi union in Pirgachha upazila echoed the same.

Many farmers said they had to delay their harvesting due to shortage of day labourers.

But some paddy fields of low lying areas got waterlogged due to recent rainfall, and so, the farmers had to employ day labourers for high wages to harvest the paddy quickly to save the crop from damage.

Parimal Mohanta of

Payraband union in Mithapukur upazila, who returned from Sylhet after working there for a couple of weeks as a day labourer, said, "We get Tk 300 to 350 plus meal daily for harvesting IRRI-Boro paddy in Sylhet. But in Rangpur division the farmers give us only Tk 200 to 250 per day and they do not give us any meal. Why should we not prefer going there for work?"

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has fixed a target of producing 30 lakh 88 thousand and 559 tonnes of IRRI-Boro paddy from 7

lakh 75 thousand and 284 hectares of land in eight districts under Rangpur Agriculture Zone this season, said Khondker Md Mesbahul Islam, an agriculturist of DAE in Rangpur divisional office.

The breakdown is 1,30,184 hectares in Rangpur, 1,20,154 hectares in Gaibandha, 1,1,06,753 hectares in Kurigram, 55,282 hectares in Lalmonirhat, 78,112 hectares in Nilphamari, 1,72,449 hectares in Dinajpur, 67,554 hectares in Thakurgaon and 44,796 hectares in Panchagarh district.



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