

Peanut farming brings smile to *char* farmers

KM REZAUL HAQUE,
Gaibandha

Large areas of sandy chars (landmass emerged from riverbed) in the Jamuna basin in Fulchhari upazila under the district are now covered with green peanut plants as a good number of poor and landless farmers are cultivating it to change their lot.

This season 570 hectares of land on around 20 chars in the area have been brought under peanut cultivation which has appeared as more profitable than that of traditional crops like paddy, maize, sugarcane or wheat, said sources of upazila agriculture office.

Harvest of early variety peanut has begun in some areas and it is selling for Tk 1800 to 2000 per maund.

Eight to ten maunds of peanut is produced per bigha and the process of cultivation, from sowing seeds to harvesting, requires a little effort.

Peanut farming is spreading especially in Fazlupur Arendabari, Fulchhari and Gajaria unions in Fulchhari upazila as many poor and landless farmers, many of them from other areas, are cultivating hybrid variety of the item as sharecroppers.

"It needs only Tk 1,500 to cultivate peanut on a bigha of land. Sandy chars in river basin areas are used for the purpose, as those lands are



PHOTO: STAR

A local market sees arrival of huge quantity of peanuts following their large-scale cultivation in char areas of Fulchharai upazila in Gaibandha district.

not fit for cultivation of other crops," said Sadek Ali, a landless farmer of Gajaria Char.

"I cultivated peanut on two bighas of land and expecting at least 18 maunds of yield. Last year the price of green peanut was Tk 700 to Tk 800 per maund, but this season the price has increased to Tk 1800-Tk 2000," said Abdul Majid of Char Khatiyamari village.

Huge quantities of peanut are being trans-

ported from Fulchhari market to different districts and dried peanut is selling for Tk 2200 to Tk 2400 per maund, said Mizanur Rahman, a peanut wholesaler at Fulchhari market.

While visiting Fulchhari market a couple of days ago, this correspondent saw huge quantities of peanut arriving from distant char lands by boats or rickshaw vans. Many small growers brought the produce in

gunnybags.

More and more farmers are getting interested in peanut cultivation in fallow char lands, said Shamser Ali, a grower of Char Kalasona.

"Now farmers are cultivating peanut in char areas along Jamuna River basin at their own initiative. It bears prospect of better cultivation and yield if the government extends help," said Yousuf Ranan Mandol, upazila agriculture officer of Fulchhari.

AL leader killed in factional clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

Awami League Pirgachha upazila unit General Secretary Mozifzul Islam was killed and 20 others were injured during a clash between two rival factions of the party's Parul union unit yesterday.

Witnesses and locals said the clash ensued when a meeting of Awami League of Parul union unit was going on at Parul Union Parishad office at noon.

Mofizul Islam and upazila AL President Abdul Hakim were present in the meeting. At one stage, the supporters of Tofazzal, former general secretary of Parul unit, swooped on the incumbent secretary Motiul Islam Dablu's men, prompting them to retaliate. At least 20 activists from both sides were injured.

As Mofizul came forward to pacify the clashing groups, Tofazzal's men hit him sharp weapon, leaving him critically injured. Mofizul was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at around 2:30pm.

During the clash, at least 10 shops at nearby Sayedpur Bazar were ransacked and looted. Police have been deployed in the area to avert any further untoward incident.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Rezaul Karim visited the spot. He said police will arrest those involved in the killing.

BAGHA MUNICIPALITY IN RAJSHAHI

Mayor held in extortion, woman abuse cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Rajshahi

Police yesterday arrested the mayor of Bagha municipality in Rajshahi in connection with two separate cases for extortion, making derogatory comment about a lawmaker, and abusing a woman.

Mayor Akkas Ali, also former general secretary of Bagha upazila unit of Awami League, was arrested at his Koligram residence in the upazila headquarters around 4:00am, said Ali Ahmed Hashmi, officer in charge (OC) of Bagha police station.

Police arrested the mayor after local lawmaker Shahriar Alam's personal aide Quamruzzaman Nipun filed a case against him on Wednesday night for verbally abusing the lawmaker and demanding Tk 1 lakh as 'toll' from him, the OC said.

While placing Akkas before the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Emdadul Haque on Thursday afternoon, police also showed him arrested in another case filed against him under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, said Court

Inspector Nazrul Islam.

A woman of Narayanpur village in Bagha filed the case with Bagha police station accusing Akkas for attempting to rape her on June 2, said Islam.

Akkas submitted prayers for bail in both the cases, and



PHOTO: STAR

Bagha municipality Mayor Akkas Ali after his arrest.

the court sent him to jail custody after fixing June 26 for hearing on the bail prayers, he added.

In his case, Nipun, also general secretary of Arani municipality unit of Jubo League, alleged that Akkas went to Shahriar's house at Arani on Wednesday afternoon in his absence and

asked Nipun to convince the lawmaker for giving him Tk 1 lakh as 'toll'.

As Nipun declined to do so, Akkas uttered abusive words about Shahriar and threatened to vandalise the MP's house if his demand was not met, the plaintiff said, adding that Akkas had said that he needed the money for getting bail from the High Court in several cases filed against him.

Akkas is accused in 20 cases filed for violence, misappropriating wheat, obstructing government activities, land grabbing, extortion, and abusing and violating women, Bagha police station OC said.

Earlier on September 26 last year, Akkas was arrested for beating up six employees of the District Judge's Court including the court's najir, he added.

"Akkas, who was earlier expelled from the party for his drinking habit, regained primary membership of the party through an application last year. Local leaders of the ruling party are embarrassed due to his recent activities," said Amanul Hasan, acting president of Bagha Awami

Stop killings at border by BSF

Urges NHRC chief, concerned at poor service in DjMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Dr Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has reiterated his concern over the killing and atrocities on the unarmed innocent people by the Border Security Force (BSF) of India.

"The unexpected killing and torture by BSF along the India-Bangladesh border have to be stopped immediately. Things have improved in recent times, but the pace is much slower than expectation," he said in reply to questions during his visit to bordering district Dinajpur yesterday.

The NHRC chairman wrote letters to the chairman of National Human Rights Commission of India requesting him to bring the issue to the notice of the central government of India to stop such atrocities and killings along the border.

"I personally met twice with Justice Balakrishna, chairman of Indian Human Rights Commission, regarding the border issue between the two countries," said Dr

Mizanur Rahman.

Following the talks, Justice Balakrishna personally visited Paschim Banga and strongly voiced against the killing and torture of unarmed Bangladeshi Nationals by BSF, he added.

The NHRC chairman also demanded stopping harassment of border people by members of Border Guard Bangladesh.

Dr Mizanur Rahman, who also visited Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital (DjMCH) yesterday morning, expressed utter dissatisfaction over the condition at there.

"Is it a place for treatment? No excuse is enough to defend the utterly dirty condition and mismanagement here. People, especially the poorer ones, come to the state-run hospital for treatment. But they are practically cheated in the name of treatment," he said.

However, after visiting Dinajpur Jail, the chairman expressed his satisfaction over the condition there and thanked Jail Superintendent MS Alam Khan.

The Daily Star - রবি ENGLISH FAIR



PHOTO: STAR

Two girls of of Nasir Uddin Government Girls' High School take part in a role play at the English language fair held at the school auditorium in Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat district yesterday.

Kids from 9 more schools learn amid fun & games

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Students of nine schools in Magura, Noakhali, Lalmonirhat and Munshiganj districts yesterday took part in English language fairs held under English in Schools (EIS) programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi.

Adcomm Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fairs.

Our Magura correspondent reported that over 300 students from Magura Government Boys' High School, Magura Government Girls' High School, Magura Dud Mallick Girls' High School and Rawtara Hridoyanath Secondary School joined the English language fair held at Magura Government Boys' High School auditorium.

Dipok Kumar Roy, headmaster of Magura Government Boys' High School, inaugurated the fair at 10:30am.

The programme began with screening of the globally renowned movie, The Lion King, followed by students' participation in spot quiz, vocabulary test and situation based question answer-all based on movie.

Prizes were distributed among the winners of different competitions at the end of the programme.

Robi representative Kazi Russel and Kazi Faysal coordinated the programme.

In Lalmonirhat, students of Tushbhandar Nasar Uddin Government Girls' High School and Barajan SC High School in Kaliganj upazila of the district participated in joyful events at the English language fair held at

different competitions at the end of the programme.

The English language fair at Noakhali Zila School saw lively participation of over 150 students of the school, reports our correspondent.

Headmaster Jamal Uddin Bhuiyan opened the fair at



the school auditorium at around 11:00am. Senior teachers Nurul Amin, Umme Kulsum and Md Yousuf and guardians of the students were present.

Following screening of the Lion king, a globally renowned movie, over 300 students of the schools participated in spot quiz, vocabulary test and situation based question answer-all based on movie.

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PHOTO: STAR

Students from two schools watch the movie, The Lion King, at the English language fair held at Shologhar AKSK High School in Srinagar upazila of Munshiganj district yesterday.

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