

Jute rotting faces problem for want of adequate water

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Jute farmers of several northern districts are facing problem to rot and process the natural fibre as water bodies have dried up due to scanty rainfall during the last one month.

Jute farmers in Natore district, who got poor yield due to insufficient rainfall during the cultivation season, are now upset as huge amounts of the harvested crop are getting dried and turning reddish, reports our Natore correspondent Bulbul Ahmed.

Jamal Uddin of Bangbaria village under Tebaria union in Natore Sadar upazila cultivated jute on his 200 decimals of land this year and got a poor yield. Now he is facing problem to rot the plants due to lack of water.

"As there is scanty water in local water bodies, we have to manage water with shallow machine to rot jute plants. Insufficient rainfall and unplanned construction of several sluice gates in the area has led to the situation," said Nantu Mian, a jute grower of Chaugachhi village under Kafuria union in Sadar upazila.

Many other jute growers in the area are facing the same problem.

According to local Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), jute was cultivated on 18,500 hectares of land in six upazilas of the district this year while it was cultivated on 19,855 hectares last year.

Rahmatullah Sarker, deputy director (DD) of Natore DAE, said they have introduced 'ribbon retting' method to the jute growers for rotting the plants with



PHOTO: STAR

Tired of waiting for rainwater to rot harvested jute, a farmer peels out the fibre before required rotting as the water beside the field is too inadequate for the purpose. The photo was taken from Ghegar Bazar in Faridpur union under Sadullapur upazila of Gaibandha district a couple of days ago.

much less water.

But the farmers are hardly following the suggestion for rotting jute using ribbon retting method, said SM Mostafizur Rahman, crops production specialist of DAE office at Natore.

Jute growers, on the other hand, said it is not possible to rot jute plants in large scale with ribbon retting system.

Besides, the jute sticks cannot be used for purposes other than burning after rotting jute plants using ribbon retting method, they said.

Jute offices of different districts informed that a maund (40 kg) of good quality jute is selling from Tk

1200-1400, depending on the quality.

Many farmers said just before the beginning of current harvesting season, jute kept at traders' godowns was sold at Tk 1600 but the price drastically fell as soon as the harvesting began.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent KM Rezaul Haque reports: Growers in Gaibandha district could not process raw jute by rotting, as pools or marshy lands have dried up due to scanty rainfall during the last one month.

Piled up jute stalks on the field are drying up under the open sky.

District DAE introduced ribbon retting process for

rotting raw jute during last two years for ensuring better quality of jute. The DAE officials meanwhile supplied 1,500 ribbon retting machines among the farmers of Sadar, Gobindaganj, Palashbari, Sadullapur, Sunderganj, Saghata and Fulchhari upazilas in Gaibandha district and provided training to one lakh 50 thousand jute growers in the district for the purpose.

The farmers, however, are showing reluctance to use ribbon retting process.

Despite water crisis, they are still adopting traditional method of jute rotting, and so, they are not getting expected quality of jute and

deprived of its fair prices, DAE officials said.

"I have placed jute stalks for rotting in a canal seven days ago, but the water dried up before the rotting completed. If there is no rain within next few days I will have to bear additional cost for carrying the jute to a water body elsewhere," said Atowar Rahman a jute grower of Ghegar Bazar in Sadullapur upazila.

It will take some more time to motivate jute growers for using ribbon retting process that will undoubtedly enhance the quality of fibre and ensure its sale for higher prices, said Mir Md Abdur Razzak, deputy director of DAE in Gaibandha.

MADRASA BOY RIFAT MURDER Accused brother-in-law held from Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police arrested the main accused in the case for killing 11-year-old madrasa student Ashikur Rahman Talukdar Rifat from Kathipara under Nalchhity upazila of Jhalakathi early Wednesday.

The arrestee, Mohiuddin Hasanat, 26, son of Moslemuddin Khan of Sitalpara in Nalchhity upazila, is brother-in-law of the murder victim Rifat, son of Tofazzal Hossain, hailing from Malipur under the same upazila, said Masuduzzaman, officer in charge (OC) of Nalchhity police station.

Rifat was a student of Class V of Senpara Baitul Mamun Madrasa at Mirpur in Dhaka.

Tofazzal, owner of a flour mill and a stationary shop at Monipur in Mirpur, now resides at a rented house in the area, the OC said.

Sub Inspector Joynul Abedin of Siddhirganj PS, also investigation officer (IO) of Rifat murder case, said in last October jobless Mohiuddin married Tofazzal's daughter Liza after abducting her. Unwillingly, Liza's family later accepted the marriage considering 'family honour'.

But shortly afterwards, Mohiuddin started torturing his wife Liza demanding dowry and ownership of her father's business.

Aggrieved at Tofazzal's refusal to meet his demands, Mohiuddin in collaboration



PHOTO: STAR

Arrested murder accused Mohiuddin Hasanat, also brother-in-law of the victim Rifat (inset).

with his nephew Shamim abducted Rifat from in front of Tofazzal's house at around 3:00pm on August 10 and killed the boy inside a garden at Kadamtali Navana City area near Siddhirganj police station at about 10:00pm, the IO said.

Informed by locals, police recovered the boy's body at about 11:00pm and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Police lodged a murder case on August 12 and arranged preserving the body at the morgue.

Rifat's father also lodged a general diary with Mirpur

police station on August 11 while Mohiuddin went into hiding that day.

Learning from TV news about recovery of the body of an unidentified minor boy, Rifat's parents rushed to Siddhirganj police station on August 13 and later they identified the body kept at the morgue as Rifat's, the IO said, adding that they also named Mohiuddin and Shamim as suspected killers.

With the help of mobile tracking, police arrested Mohiuddin from Kathipara area early Wednesday and sent him to Dhaka in the afternoon, said the OC Nalchhity.

Fierce intra-party clash leaves Jubo League leader killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

A Jubo League leader was killed and at least 20 others were injured in a fierce clash between two rival groups of Awami League

over establishing supremacy at Patkhelgata village in Bablahasla union of Kalia upazila yesterday morning.

At least 25 houses were also damaged during the four-hour-long clash.

Victim Mosharrif Hossain Musa, 40, son of late Abdus Salam of the village, was president of union Jubo League.

Locals said the clash is a longstanding conflict

between one Mijan member-Ilyas Molla alliance and another Belayet Hossain-Shahjahan Sheikh alliance of Patkelbari village in the upazila.

Motiar Hossain, officer in-charge at Kalia police station, said the clash ensued at around 8:00am when a member of Belayet-Shahjahan group led by Mosharrif laid siege to Elias's house who shortly retaliated with his group.

Fatally injured in the clash, Mosharrif died on his way to local health complex, he added.

Visiting the spot, police superintendent Rafiqul Islam said "The situation is now under control".

The longstanding dispute is centred on the rivalry between AL lawmaker Kabirul Haque Mukti who won the election (pitcher symbol) and dissident AL candidate Bimal Biswas (boat symbol), said local AL sources and witnesses.

After the election, followers of pitcher symbol attacked the supporters of boat that led to the clash.

Two other critically injured - Mosharrif's younger brother Ashikur and one Rezaul, both belonging to the same alliance - were rushed to Khulna Medical College and Hospital while the rest to the upazila health complex.

CLASHES IN SIRAJGANJ, FENI BCL activist killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League was killed and at least 20 others were injured in a clash at Potazia village in Shahzadpur upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Sabbir Ahmed, 20, son of Osman Ali of the village.

Jasim Uddin Sarkar, OC of Shahzadpur PS, said Sabbir had a relation with daughter of one Waiz Pramanik of the village. Angered, Pramanik assaulted Sabbir with the help of his men on April 14 this year, leaving him injured.

Abbas Ali, local UP member and uncle of Sabbir, made a vain attempt to mitigate the matter.

The followers of Abbas Ali

beat brother-in-law of Pramanik a few days ago. As a sequel to the incident, the men of Pramanik attacked the UP member that led to the clash in the morning.

In Feni, at least 10 people were injured on Tuesday as two rival groups of BCL locked in a factional clash at noon, reports our correspondent.

The clash between pro-mayor faction and supporters of Afsar of Satbari ensued at Zero Point of Daganbhuiyan upazila headquarters after Latu and Reaz of the two factions had a motorbike collision, witnesses said.

Following an altercation, both the groups, equipped with sticks, bombs and other weapons attacked each other, leaving at least 10 people, including pedestrians injured.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals form a human chain in front of Manikganj Press Club yesterday demanding early steps to rescue two and a half years old Sujanta Pal, who was abducted from in front of his house at Khalilabad village in Baliati union under Satoria upazila of Manikganj district on July 17.

Abduction of toddler sparks protest by villagers

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Abduction of a two and a half years' old child sparked protest in Manikganj while police rescued a schoolgirl and arrested two human traffickers in Jessore yesterday.

People of Khalilabad village in Satoria upazila of Manikganj yesterday brought out a procession and formed a human chain in the town, demanding immediate rescue of Sujanta Pal, son of Madhab Chandra pal of the village, who was kidnapped on July 17.

They also held a rally to realise the demand, reports our correspondent.

At the rally, the protesters also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the kidnappers. Police were not taking any step to arrest the abductors, they alleged.

Later, they submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner and police superintendent.

Among others, upazila AL secretary Ruhul Amin, upazila parishad vice president Shafiqul Alam Jewel and Sandhya Rani Pal, mother of the victim, spoke.

Sub-inspector Aminul Islam of Satoria police station said they were raiding different areas to arrest the abductors.

On July 26, Madhab filed a case against one Hanufa Begum, daughter of Saheb Ali of the village, and her brother Helal Uddin in connection with the incident.

In Jessore, police yesterday morning rescued a schoolgirl from the clutches of human traffickers at Benapole and arrested two people in this connection, reports our Benapole correspondent.

The arrestees are Raju Ahmed, 34, son of Abdur Rahim of kendu village in Satkhira and Israfil Hossain, 33, son of Abdur Rashid of Sonadanga area in Khulna.

Hasan Hafizur Rahman, officer in-charge at Benapole police station, said on secret information, they raided Sadipur border area and rescued the 14-year-old girl of Satpara village in Gopalgang district while she was being trafficked to India.

The arrestees were sending the girl to India, alluring her to give a good job there, said the OC.

2 'robbers' killed in mob beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two suspected robbers were killed and another was injured in a mob beating at Bakaashtala village in Jibonnagar upazila of Chuadanga district early Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Nayanur Rahman 27, of Magura and Anwarul Islam alias Bulu, 35, of Jessore.

Injured Afaz Uddin, 27, of Hastala village in Jibonnagar upazila, was admitted to the upazila health complex.

Khan Shahjahan Ali, officer in-charge at Jibonnagar police station, said a gang of 10 entered the house of one Hafizul Islam of the

village at around 3:00am.

Three entered a room where the family members were watching Eid programmes on television keeping the door of the room opened.

They held a son and a daughter of Hafizul hostage at gun point.

Hearing screams, locals rushed in and caught the trio while the others managed to flee.

The angry mob gave them a good beating, leaving them critically injured, said the OC.

They were rushed to the health complex where the duty doctors declared the duo dead.



PHOTO: STAR

Memorial of 14-year-old Yasmin Akhter, killed after rape by police at Dashmile intersection on Dinajpur-Dhaka highway in Dinajpur Sadar upazila on August 24 in 1995, saw inauguration at the spot on August 8 this year.

In memory of a victim of police notoriety

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A memorial to Yasmin Akhter, who was raped and killed by cops in Dinajpur on August 24, 1995, was built in July this year at Dashmile intersection on Dinajpur-Dhaka highway.

Lawmaker Iqbalur Rahim of Dinajpur-3 constituency inaugurated the memorial on August 8.

Yasmin, a 14-year-old girl of Golapbagh area in Dinajpur town, had been working as a domestic help in the capital. On her way back home in the town, she got down at Dashmile intersection from a Panchagarh-bound bus in the early hours of August 24, 1995.

As Yasmin was waiting for a Dinajpur-bound bus, a police team on-patrol duty picked her up in their van on false pretext of giving her a lift to her mother's house. They later raped and killed her and dumped the body by the roadside.

The incident sparked widespread condemnation and protest. Dinajpur

townspeople staged demonstration demanding arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits.

In the face of agitation by locals, the district administration imposed a curfew in the town on August 27, 1995. As thousands of people came to the streets violating the curfew, police opened fire on the protesters. Seven people were killed in police firing.

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal of Rangpur awarded death penalty to three policemen who were executed in 2004.

Women's rights activists said public protests ignited by Yasmin's rape and murder made her a symbol of violence against women. Women's movement in reaction to Yasmin's murder also became a means of social resistance to such violence, they added.

Sharifa Begum, mother of Yasmin, has urged the government to take steps to stop such violence against women and children across the country.