

## EIGHT NORTHERN DISTRICTS

# Slow buy at 'free' rates by govt mills adds to dull jute price

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Jute markets in eight northern districts remains awfully dull as assigned jute mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) have continued purchasing jute at a very slow pace, reports our Nilphamari correspondent.

Amid falling trend of jute prices, farmers fear huge losses as nearly 90 percent of this season's harvest has already completed.

Eight mills under BJMC, namely, Bangladesh Jute Mills, Crescent Jute Mills, Amin Jute Mills, Latif Bawani Jute Mills, Star Jute Mills, Platinum Jute Mills, UMC Jute Mills, Gul Ahmed Jute Mills, Rajshahi Jute Mills, Hafiz Jute Mills, Karim Jute Mills and Eastern Jute Mills started purchasing jute in mid-July.

But unlike in case for food grains like rice, the authorities have not announced any minimum price for purchasing jute, and the mills are buying the item in an unusually very slow pace.

Visiting several big jute markets like Golna and Mirganj in Nilphamari district, Baura and Mohishkhocha in Lalmonirhat district and Sakoa in Panchagarh district, this correspondent found that the mills are buying jute at 'local market price' that often varies at different places and times.

Purchase centres of the 12 jute mills of BJMC mostly buy jute in eight northern districts for last couple of years, said sources at the regional office of the jute directorate in Rangpur.

Ten privately owned jute mills and a number of exporters and stockists also purchase jute regularly in the region.

The jute mills under BJMC have purchased only a little over 10% of raw jute by the last week of August this year compared to last year's purchase by this period, Saifur Rahman, additional director of the regional jute office in Rangpur.

In last year, average price of a maund (40 kg) of high quality jute was Tk 1850, that of medium quality was Tk 1500- 1550 and low quality was Tk 1300, said sources in the regional jute office.

But this year a maund of the three categories of jute are selling at Tk 1600, Tk 1350 and Tk 1100 respec-



PHOTO: STAR

**Farmers bring huge raw jute for sale at Pakerhat market in Nilphamari district as the northern districts see its good yield this season. However, lack of customers coupled with low prices of the cash crop frustrates the growers.**

## Jute drying up for poor rain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Thousands of farmers in Rangpur division are facing problem to rot their harvested jute this season due to lack of sufficient water in rivers, ponds and canals.

The situation has arisen as this monsoon saw inadequate rainfall.

Big farmers are using shallow machine to draw water from underground to

fill the dried up canals and ponds for rotting jute fibre while many others taking their produce to distant water bodies for the purpose. Both the ways add to the production cost.

Farmers fear degradation of the quality and colour of this season's jute fibre as a large quantity of the harvest has already dried up in the fields.

The DAE distributed a good number of ribbon

retting machines among the jute cultivators in the division to peel off fibre from the sticks.

Farmers, however, have termed the method too costly.

If the drought-like situation continues for a few more days, production of raw jute fibre in the region will decline by around 25 percent, agriculture experts said.



PHOTO: STAR

**Harvested jute gets dried at a field in Pirgachha upazila of Rangpur district as local water bodies contain only a little water due to scanty rainfall during this monsoon.**

tively, they said.

"I produced medium and low quality jute, like most farmers in the area. So I have to incur loss as my production cost per maund stood at about Tk 1500," said Ataur Rahman of Angarpara village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

Sources in different district jute offices in the region said nobody received any new license for jute purchase while only a limited number of people have applied for renewal of their old licenses for supplying jute to jute mills, traders, exporters or stockists till August 22.

"I have a huge stock of last year's jute as I did not sell it due to its low price," Mahmud Rahman, a jute trader in Jaldhaka upazila, said.

Farmers Entazul Islam of Gayabari village in Nilphamari and Aktarul of Pathanpara village of Panchagarh said they sold jute for low prices as they needed money to prepare land for transplanting aman paddy.

This year jute was cultivated in 90,608 hectares of land in Rangpur, Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Nilphamari districts and the production target is 7 lakh 70 thousand and 168 bales (1 bale = 187.5 kg), said sources at the divisional office of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Rangpur.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: Despite good yield this season, jute growers of Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts have continued incurring losses for the third consecutive year as the market of the 'golden fibre' remains down.

During visits to a jute market in Khansama upazila of the district and another in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat, this correspondent found that a maund (40kg) of jute was selling for Tk 600 to Tk 700, depending on quality.

"I spent Tk 25,000 for producing jute in an acre of land and got 40 maunds of yield. I barely recovered the production cost by selling the whole amount. Why should I put so much effort for jute cultivation on my land?" Nur Islam, a jute grower of Khansama upazila of Dinajpur, said.



PHOTO: STAR

**Teachers and students of different educational institutions in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila yesterday block Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid Road at Lalapara point demanding immediate arrest of the killers of schoolteacher Lutfar Rahman who was stabbed to death in front of his house at Chawk Bahorom village in the upazila over a land dispute on Saturday morning.**

## Killing of schoolteacher in C'nawabganj sparks protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Teachers and students of different educational institutions under Sadar upazila blocked Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid highway in Lalapara area for half an hour from 10:00am yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers of schoolteacher Lutfar Rahman.

Lutfar Rahman, 65, a retired primary schoolteacher, was stabbed to death by his nephews over a land dispute at Chawk Bahorom village in the upazila on Saturday.

His son Motiur Rahman, 26, who received stab injuries during the attack, is now undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The agitating teachers and students of of Krishnagobindapur Degree College, Krishnagobindapur Boys' High School, Krishnagobindapur Girls' High School, Chunakhali Government Primary School, Ramchandrapurhat Government Primary School, Chunakhali Enayetullah Madrasa and Budijan Dakhil Madrasa also held a rally in Lalapara area where several hundred people of Chawk Bahorom village also joined.

Later, the protesters set fire to the house of Lutfar's brother Golam Mostafa at the village. Being informed, fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

Police and locals said there had been a long-standing dispute between Lutfar Rahman and his

brother Golam Mohammad over the ownership of a land at the village.

As a sequel to the dispute, Lutfar's nephews Bogdad, Momin and their hired men stabbed him in front of his house at around 9:00am on Saturday. He died instantly. The attackers also stabbed his son Motiur as he came forward to save his father. Bogdad and Momin fled the area immediately after the incident.

Following a case filed by Lutfar's wife Morium Begum with Sadar Police Station the same day, police arrested Bogdad's father Golam Mohammad, 80, mother Hamida Begum, 70, and wife Merina Begum, 23.

They however, could not arrest the main accused as of yesterday

## 6 kids drown in 4 districts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Six children drowned in ditch, pond and river in Narsingdi, Sirajganj, Brahmanbaria and Rangpur districts yesterday and the day before.

In Narsingdi, three kids drowned in a ditch at Kandail village in Sadar upazila yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

The victims were identified as Tania, 6, daughter of Sadekur Rahman, Sabbir, 5, son of Al-Amin of the village and Tanisa, 5, daughter of Jahangir Alam of Belabo village in Rupganj upazila of Narayanganj.

Local UP chairman Nazim Uddin Bhuiyan said the trio while playing near the ditch fell in it and drowned at around 10:00am.

According to our Sirajganj correspondent, a child drowned in a pond at Nalka village in Kamarkhand upazila yesterday.

Deceased Sajjad Hossain, 5, was son of Sujon Sheikh of Dhanbandhi BL School road in the municipality area.

Family sources said Sajjad fell in the pond while playing near it. His body was found floating in the pond at around 4:00pm.

The boy went to the village to visit his

grandfather three days ago.

Away in Brahmanbaria, a minor girl drowned in Titas River at Karim Sha Mazar area in Nabinagar upazila on Tuesday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Ria Akter, 10, daughter of Ripon Mia of the area and a class three student at Karim Shah Primary School, reports our correspondent.

Family members said Ria while taking a dip in the river, she went missing at around 2:00pm. Later, her body was found floating there.

In Rangpur, a baby boy drowned in a pond at Nilamkharida Sadara village in Kaunia upazila on Tuesday, reports our correspondent.

The victim was identified as Mominul Islam, 6, son of Momina Begum of the village.

Locals said, the incident took place in absence of his parents.

Later, family members found him floating in the pond, said Selim Hossain, officer in-charge at Kaunia police station.

The boy was rushed to the upazila health complex in critical condition where the doctors declared him dead, said the OC.

## Indefinite transport strike in Satkhira, Pabna

### Ban on illegal human haulers and removal of roadside markets demanded

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Transport workers in Satkhira and Pabna districts went on an indefinite strike yesterday.

In Satkhira, they enforced the strike on eight routes of the district, demanding a ban on plying of unauthorised human haulers on the highways.

Saiful Karim Sabu, president of the district Bus-Minibus Owners' Association, told UNB that they called the nonstop strike as the local administration failed to stop plying of human haulers like Nasimon, Karimon and battery-driven easy bike on the busy roads and highways.

He also said the transport workers were compelled to go on strike from the morning as the authorities concerned, after repeated assurance, failed to meet their demand.

The transport strike caused untold sufferings to the Dhaka, Jessore and Khulna bound passengers as all buses and mini-buses remained off the road.

In Pabna, the transport workers went on an indefinite strike yesterday morning, demanding removal of all makeshift markets from the highway.

The strike followed assault of drivers and workers of some Dhaka bound coaches at roadside Ataikula market at about 9am yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Officer in-charge at Ataikula police station Robiul Hassan Sarkar said, a Dhaka bound coach remained stranded at Ataikula market yesterday as the road was jam-packed with jute traders. Following an altercation with bus workers, the traders and buyers barricaded the Dhaka bound coaches on the road and also beat up some drivers of the vehicles.

Police rescued the drivers from the agitated people.

Protesting the attacks on transport workers, Pabna district unit of transport workers association called the indefinite transport strike on all routes of Pabna from morning.

Firoz Khan, president of the association, said they would continue the strike till the roadside markets are removed by the authorities.

Meanwhile, the transport owners and workers associations jointly gave an ultimatum to the district administration yesterday to ban all unauthorised vehicles on the highway and to punish the attackers of the transport workers by next Wednesday.

Drivers suffer while passing by the roadside markets. Traders and buyers occupy and crowd the road hampering traffic movement, said the transport leaders.

On the other hand the human haulers like Nasimon, Karimon are unauthorised, they said.

## Rescue JCD leader Firoz by 48 hours

### Deadline to law enforcers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal district and city units of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at a press conference here yesterday gave a 48-hour ultimatum to the law enforcement agencies to rescue ward JCD leader Firoz Khan Kalu, abducted allegedly by plainclothes men, from Chittagong city on August 24.

The JCD leaders threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme in the city if their demand was not met by the deadline.

District JCD President Masud Hasan Mamun, City JCD Convener

Khandokar Abul Hasan Limon, city BNP General Secretary advocate Kamrul Ahsan Shahin, and City JCD Joint Convener Afroza Khanam Nasrin addressed the press conference held at JCD district unit office in the morning. Kalu's mother

Firoza Begum and wife Amena Akhtar Dipti were also present.

Kalu's wife had earlier alleged that plainclothes men, identifying themselves as members of the law enforcement agencies, picked him up from Chittagong Eidgah area on the night of August 24. But law enforcers denied the allegation.

Kalu, president of JCD ward No-20 unit, is also an accused in Rafsan Ahmed Jitu murder case. Jitu, president of JCD Barisal Government College unit, was hacked to death by his rivals in front of the college on March 24 this year.

Jitu's elder Rafikul Islam Tipu, organising secretary of ward-19 JCD unit, filed a murder case with Barisal Sadar Police Station the following day, accusing Kalu and 16 other JCD men. Since then, Kalu has been absconding.

## Man killed in clash over land dispute

UNB, Gaibandha

A man was killed and 10 others were injured in a clash over land dispute at Kochua village in Saghata upazila on Tuesday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Jaidul Mia, 45, a farmer of the village.

OC Ahsan Habib of Saghata PS said there had been a longstanding dispute between Jaidul Mia and Mokbul Hossain of the village over a piece of land.

An altercation ensued when Jaidul Mia along with men went to transplant Aman paddy on the disputed around 4pm. Later, both the groups equipped with lethal weapons and sticks attacked each other for about half an hour that left 11 people including Jaidul Mia injured.

Later, Jaidul Mia succumbed to his injuries on the way to Gaibandha General Hospital.

## Move to shift exam centre protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Students and teachers in Patgram upazila yesterday formed a human chain and held a rally, protesting a decision to shift an examination centre four kilometer away from its earlier place.

They also submitted a memorandum in this regard to the education minister through upazila nirbahi officer Abu Hayat Mohammad Rahmat Ullah.

The SSC examinations were held at Patgram TN High School centre from 1972 to 2000. Later, the centre was shifted to Huzur Uddin Girl's High School in 2001.

The TN school became a

sub-centre and JSC examinations were held at it since 2010, said the speakers at the rally.

During the protest, they said the decision to shift the centre to Mirzar Court area in the upazila would cause untold sufferings to female students as they have to go to a long distance.

Hossain Mohammad, headmaster at TN School, said Dinajpur Education Board recently took the decision.

Terming it a conspiracy by some ruling party leaders, the protesters also threatened to go for a tougher programme if the decision was not cancelled immediately.