



PHOTO: STAR
Celebrating the Victory Day, Bogra Artists' Association arranges a photo exhibition on the country's Liberation War on the premises of the local Shaheed Minar in the town, middle, kids join a painting contest at Dinajpur Shishu Academy Complex, and, right, brisk sale of the national flag in Rangpur city yesterday.



WHEAT CULTIVATION IN THAKURGAON, PANCHAGARH Crisis of quality seeds persists

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

Crisis of quality seeds in the ongoing wheat cultivation season has become a cause of concern for farmers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts as Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) could not supply sufficient quantity in the face of growing demand.

Most of the farmers, who incurred losses due to low market prices of paddy in both aman and Irri-boro seasons in the last two years, have switched over to wheat farming this year as they see reasonable prices of wheat in the market, according to BADC officials.

BADC has supplied around 1,150 tonnes of wheat seeds for Thakurgaon wheat cultivation zone (Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and a part of Dinajpur districts) against the demand for 11,600 tonnes, the officials said.

Taking advantage of seed crisis, dealers of BADC have allegedly sold their maximum allotted seeds to local sellers at higher prices.

Facing crisis of quality

seeds, growers have to buy seeds from retailers and at black market at higher prices.

During a visit to a seed sale centre of BADC in Thakurgaon town on Wednesday, this correspondent saw many farmers gathered in front of the centre to collect wheat seeds. Only those who managed slips from local agriculture officers got seeds while the rest returned empty-handed.

"I have decided to cultivate wheat on four bighas of land this year. Failing to collect seeds from a local dealer of BADC at Ruha Bazar in Sadar upazila, I

came here to collect seeds', said Saddam Hossain, a farmer of Modhupur village of the upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Saddam said an assistant agriculture officer gave him a slip for only 20-kg of seed against the demand for 80-kg.

Joynul Adedin, a farmer of Bothina village under Sadar upazila said he bought a sack (20-kg) of certified wheat seeds from a dealer's shop at Farabari Haat in the upazila for Tk 850. The government rate of the same amount is Tk 720

Admitting to seed crisis Assistant Director of Marketing of BADC Md

Shamsuzzoha said they have sent a letter to the authorities concerned for further allotment of quality seeds and some 85 tonnes are under process.

Contacted, Deputy Director of Dinajpur BADC Mofazzal Hossain said the demand for wheat seeds has increased as the farmers of the areas switched over to wheat farming as they were deprived of fair prices of their paddy in the last two years.

Replying a query about sale of wheat seeds at black, he said "If any dealer is found involved in such illegal act, he will face stern action."

Being deprived of getting wheat seeds from a dealer's shop at Collegepara in Thakurgaon town, growers crowd the office of the assistant director of BADC (marketing) for seeds in the town. This photo was taken on Wednesday.



BSF hands over 6 Bangladeshis

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Six Bangladeshis returned home through Benapole check post on Friday after serving two and a half years in an Indian jail.

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed them over to Benapole immigration police at night.

The returnees were

identified as Ansar Ali, 24, Saidul, 25, Azizul, 27, Kabir Hossain, 30, Nur Ali, 38, and Shipon Ali, 22 -- all hailing from Rayenda, Chalita Bunia, Banaikhal and Koikhal villages under Morelganj upazila of Bagerhat district.

Qamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Benapole

check post emigration police, said the six were picked up by police in Hariana area of India's New Delhi for doing job there illegally.

Later police produced them before a court that sent them to Ambala jail giving them two and a half years' imprisonment for trespass

and illegal stay in India.

On completion of their jail terms, the Indian government gave them travel permit to return to Bangladesh.

BSF handed them over at about 8.00pm and immigration police handed them over to Benapole port police station.

Abduction of schoolgirl triggers protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

Abduction of a teenage schoolgirl at Shikarika village in Sadar upazila triggered protest yesterday.

Police said, when the girl of the village was going to Amlitala High School at around 9:30am to sit for final examination, a gang of four, led by Delwar Hossain, 22, a fish trader and son of Abdus Samad of Kristapur area in Mymensingh town, waylaid her.

They forcibly boarded her in a CNG-run auto rickshaw and left the scene.

Hearing the screaming of her classmate who was going with her, some local people rushed to the spot and chased the CNG-run auto rickshaw by a pick-up van.

After a long chase, they caught Atiqul Islam, 27, the driver of the auto-rickshaw with his vehicle in Ketwat-khali area in the town. But in the meantime, the criminals fled with the girl.

Atiqul was handed over to police after a good beating. The angry mob also set the vehicle on fire.

Later, agitated people put up a barricade on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway which continued for nearly three hours. Hundreds of school students also joined the programme.

The students also brought out a procession, demanding immediate rescue of the schoolgirl and arrest of the culprits.

Police in a drive picked Salma, 30, elder sister of Delwar and their neighbour Shakil, 25, for interrogation, said sub-inspector Rafiq, also duty officer at Kotwali police station.

HUMAN CHAIN, RALLY IN NATORE Speedy trial of killers of Palash demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Hundreds of people formed a human chain in the town yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the culprits and their speedy trial in the Jubo League leader Palash murder case.

Natore district unit Jubo League organised the human chain in front of Natore Press Club in the afternoon.

A protest rally was also held at the same place.

Shafiqul Islam Shimul, also the chairman of Natore Sadar upazila chairman, said at the rally that Dulu along with Swechchasebok Dal leader Dewan Shahin and Jubo Dal leader Aftab opened fire on Palash on 8 December night when his party men brought out a procession in the town, protesting the 18-party alliance's 9 December blockade programme.

Shariful Islam Ramzan, president of Natore district unit Jubo League, claimed that police were not doing enough to arrest the killers. Ramzan urged the government to take steps for immediate arrest of the killers and transfer of the case to the speedy trial tribunal.

Jubo League will announce a tough programme if police fail to arrest the killers immediately, Ramjan said, threaten-

ing that they will go for a hunger strike on December 22 if the case was not moved to speedy trial court.

Palash Karmaker, joint convener of town unit Jubo League, sustained bullet injuries during a gunfight between the activists of BNP and Jubo League near district BNP office at Alaipur in the town.

He was admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital and then shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries early Tuesday.

Immediately after the incident, Mortuza Ali Bablu, Sramik League Natore unit general secretary, filed a case with Natore Sadar police station, accusing Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu and 14 other BNP leaders and activists.

Police produced Dulu in the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court Thursday afternoon. The court granted one day's remand for Dulu, rejecting his bail prayer.

Dulu, also the president of BNP Natore district unit, was arrested from his residence in the town early Sunday for his alleged involvement in Saturday night's gunfight that left Palash dead.

District BNP enforced a daylong hartal in Natore district on Monday demanding release of Dulu.



PHOTO: STAR
Hundreds of people formed a human chain in Natore town yesterday, demanding speedy trial of the killers of Jubo League leader Palash Karmaker.

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