



PHOTO: STAR
This wooden bridge on the lake at Kuakata Eco-park in Patuakhali gives a 'toothless smile' to the tourists as locals took away most of its woodblocks to use those as fuel. Yet the authorities seem indifferent to the matter.

Bumper yield of turmeric brings sorrow for growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Huge supply of turmeric due to its bumper yield in different areas of the district has caused a drastic price fall of the spice in local market, much to the frustration of farmers.

This season, farmers are selling one kg of raw turmeric for only Tk 8 to 9 while it was sold for Tk 25 to 30 last year. The growers, who had earlier eyed a good profit, are now anxious to get back their production cost.

Encouraged by bumper production and unexpected profit last year, Lalmonirhat farmers cultivated turmeric on 2,500 hectares of land this year against last year's 2,120

hectares of land, said district officials of Agriculture Extension Department (AED).

They cultivated turmeric on the abandoned land surrounding their homesteads and paddy field this year in the hope of making a good profit, but sharp fall in price has dashed their expectations.

Farmer Mozammel Haque, 50, of Durarkuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said, "As I earned a good profit last year, I cultivated turmeric on more land this year. I got bumper production, but the current market price of turmeric has frustrated me."

Sahidar Rahman, 45, of Phulgachh village in the

same upazila said, "We have to count a huge loss due to abnormal fall in turmeric price in the market. We are not getting even production cost by selling turmeric in the local markets."

While visiting different markets in the district on Thursday and Friday, this correspondent saw farmers with their turmeric waiting long hours as sale has nosedived due to thin presence of buyers. They have to sell turmeric at low rate as they need money for boro farming.

Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila agriculture officer Mohammad Nuruzzaman said if farmers do not get fair price of turmeric they will lose interest to cultivate it.



PHOTO: STAR
Bumper yield of turmeric in Lalmonirhat district this year has made its growers unhappy as huge supply caused the price of the spice to make a nosedive. Photo shows farmers harvest turmeric from a field at Mogholhat village in Sadar upazila.

Wife killed allegedly for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry at Zhawram village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Fancy Begum, 22, daughter of Faridul Alam of Mahiramkul village in Melandah upazila.

Family sources said Fancy married Abdur Razzak, 28, son of Md Akbar Ali of Zhawram two years ago. After marriage, Razzak and

his family members often tortured Fancy for Tk 50,000.

Early yesterday, Razzak beat up Fancy mercilessly, leaving her dead on the spot following an altercation over the issue and fled the scene.

Fancy's mother Shefali Begum filed a murder case accusing Razzak and his family members.

In another incident, a woman allegedly committed suicide by taking poison following a severe abdominal pain at village Kharm-

Diogolkandi under Dewanganj upazila on Saturday evening.

The deceased was identified as Mursheda Begum, 40, wife of Abdus Salam of the village.

Locals said, Mursheda had been suffering from severe abdominal pain for long. Failing to bear it anymore, she took poison at 6.00pm. She was rushed to Dewanganj upazila health complex where on duty doctors declared her dead.

EIGHT NORTHERN DISTRICTS

Boro farmers face setback for acute seedling crisis

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Boro farmers in eight northern districts under Rangpur division are facing problem in the peak cultivation season due to shortage of seedlings and its high prices following damage of seedbeds during persistent cold wave coupled with dense fog in winter.

Consequently, the target of boro cultivation in the division may not be achieved this year, said farmers and agriculture officials.

Boro cultivation in different areas of the division is getting delayed as the farmers now have to prepare fresh seedbeds and 35-40 days is required for maturity of seedlings, reports our Rangpur correspondent.

"I prepared boro seedbeds on my 10 decimal land, spending Tk 1,600 per decimal but it got damaged due to the cold injuries," said Nasir Uddin Liton, a farmer of Deuty village under Pargachha upazila in the district.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) this season has fixed a target of producing 30,51,851 tonnes of boro rice from 7,60,366 hectares of land in eight districts under Rangpur division -- 5,36,719 tonnes from 1,30,589 hectares in Rangpur, 4,84,090 tonnes from 1,21,154 hectares in Gaibandha, 4,29,591 tonnes from 1,06,117 hectares in Kurigram, 2,29,972 tonnes from 54,805 hectares in Lalmonirhat, 3,20,895 tonnes from 77,899 hectares in Nilphamari, 6,80,693 tonnes from 1,74,678 hectares in Dinajpur, 1,34,463 tonnes from 34,322 hectares in Panchagarh and 2,35,427 tonnes from 60,802 hectares in Thakurgaon district.

About 15 to 30 percent seedbeds in Rangpur district have been affected due to severe cold wave and dense fog this year, DAE sources said.

"Last year I cultivated boro on 20 bighas of land but



PHOTO: STAR
Few farmers are seen at Bhelabari Haat, a weekly market, in Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat as boro seedlings sell at high prices there in the peak cultivation season of the paddy. The photo was taken a few days ago.

this year I cultivated it on only five bighas and much of my seedbeds got damaged and I failed to procure high yielding variety of saplings," said Shajahan Mian, 54, a farmer of Machari village of Kaunia upazila in Rangpur district.

He urged the government for taking initiative to distribute boro sapling among marginal farmers across the country.

Md Sekendar Ali, additional director of DAE in Rangpur division, said, "Boro seedlings in many areas got damaged due to severe cold and dense fog but we are yet to estimate the total amount of damage in the division."

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Around 40 percent seedbeds in Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts got damaged due to persistent cold and fog in the winter, said farmers and DAE officials.

To bring 1.74 lakh hect-

ares of land under Irri-boro farming in 13 upazilas of Dinajpur with target to produce 6,80,693 tonnes of rice, nearly 13,000 hectares of land were prepared to produce seedlings since early December, said DAE sources.

In Joypurhat, at least 69,199 hectares of land was targeted for Irri-boro cultivation to produce 2.70 lakh tonnes of rice and 4,280 hectares of land was prepared to produce seedlings for the purpose, they said.

But a large portion of these seedbeds were affected badly due to cold and fog and lack of sunlight.

Md Hannan Shah of Ambari village under Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur said that he prepared seedbed of 5 bigha land but 1/3 land gone damaged due to prolong cold along with fog.

Many farmers in the two districts prepared new lands to produce seedlings but it

takes around 40 days for the saplings to mature for transplantation.

Farmers said mid-January to February is the best period for planting the Irri-boro seedlings.

"Rice production will fall if we fail to cultivate our land within the time," said Akramul Alam of Gopalganj village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent adds: Irri-boro farmers in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat district are worried due to the seedling crisis.

"I prepared boro seedbeds on 12 decimals of land to cultivate seven bighas land in this season. But 50 percent seedlings were damaged due to severe cold and heavy fog. So I have to purchase seedlings from the local market for high prices," said farmer Yasin Miah, 48, at Harati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

"A bundle of 140 to 150 seedlings is selling at Tk 5

against Tk 3 last year in the local market. Some 450 to 500 bundles of seedlings are needed to cultivate one bigha (30 decimal) of land," he added.

A section of unscrupulous businessmen are selling seedlings for unusually high prices, said farmer Manoranjon Das, 44, at Bongram village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

"I cultivated boro on 10 bighas of land against 25 bighas last year because of sapling crisis and its high price. Seedlings for farming in one bigha of land cost Tk 28,00 to 3,200 this year against Tk 1500 to 1800 last season," said Chitto Chandro Barmon, 48, of Bhadai village in Aditmari upazila.

The target of IRRI-boro cultivation in Lalmonirhat district may not be achieved this year due to the shortage of seedlings, said Abdul Mozid, deputy director of Lalmonirhat DAE.

SNIPPETS

'Missing' man found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police recovered the body of a 'missing' man from a crop land in Dharmadihi area of Borolekha upazila yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Sushil Biswas, 42, son of Kanai Lal Biswas of the area under Dasher Bazar union. Police said, locals found the body and informed them. Sushil went missing on March 2.

8 hurt as smugglers clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least eight people were injured in a clash between two groups of smugglers over sharing 'profit money' at Jawrani border village in Hatibandha upazila around 5.30pm yesterday. The injured were admitted to Hatibandha upazila health complex and Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital. They were identified as Sohel Rana, 35, Manik Barmon, 42, Hasem Ali, 45, Taher Uddin, 36, Quddus Ali, 30, Yasin Ali, 28, Hobibur Rahman, 40, and Nizam Uddin, 42, of Jawrani village. Local sources said that the clash took place between Moti Mia group and Lal Miah group.

Smuggled goods seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members seized a truck loaded with smuggled Indian saris, three-pieces and cloths worth Tk 7 crore in Kagojpukur area under Benapole port PS yesterday. 26 BGB Commanding Officer Lt Col Abul Kalam Azad said, on secret information, a team of BGB raided Kagojpukur area and seized the truck of at 3.00am.

Man held with forged DVDs

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a businessman along with 3,000 pieces of forged DVDs (digital video discs) from the district town on Saturday night. The arrestee was identified as Prince Singh Roy, owner of HM Electronics at Mikepotti in the town. Rab-6 said, on secret information, a team of the elite force conducted a drive in the area at night and recovered the forged DVDs from the shop. A case was filed in this connection under the Copy Right Act.



A novel way of protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Over a hundred youths and boys of Kaheta village in Gopalpur upazila under Tangail shaved their heads simultaneously on Saturday, demanding capital punishment to the war criminals and ban on politics of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The shaven headed youths, most of them students of different schools and colleges, demonstrated on the premises of Kaheta High School in the upazila, expressing hatred towards the criminals who committed crimes against humanity

as collaborators of the Pakistan occupation army during the 1971 Liberation War.

Later, they brought out a procession in the area, chanted slogans against the war criminals and held a rally on the Shaheed Minar premises.

Gopalpur upazila parishad Chairman Yunus Islam Talukder joined the young protesters there, also shaving his head.

"I express solidarity with the youths as people from all walks of life should rise against the war criminals to ensure their capital punishment and ban of Jamaat-Shibir politics," he said.

Mizanur Rahman Mizan, one of the protesters and an intermediate student of Hemnagar College, said, "We did not see the Liberation War, but feel it at heart. The young generation of the nation has now risen demanding capital punishment to the war criminals and the youths of Kaheta village have joined the movement."

"The rural youths across the country should join the movement of the youths at Shahbagh in the capital to continue fight against the war criminals," said another protester Sohel Ahmed, an honours first year student of Government Sadaat College.