

# Gracelessness grips Lauchapra resort in the Garo hills

ABM AMINUL ISLAM, Jamalpur

Lauchapra Obosar Binodan Kendra, a resort set up amid immense natural beauty in the Garo hills in Bakshiganj upazila under the district,

fails to attract sufficient number of tourists due to communication problem and lack of adequate facilities including electricity and drinking water.

In 1994, Jamalpur Zila Parishad opened for public

the 10.67-acre resort in the bordering area, 55-km from the district town and 15-km from the upazila headquarters.

But visitors have to pass about 25-km alternative way via Sribardi upazila of

Sherpur from Bakshiganj upazila, as around five-km-long Kamalpur-Lauchapra road under the Roads and Highways Department of Sherpur district has remained in an awful condition for long.

Especially a dilapidated wooden bridge on the road at Polashtola village makes vehicular movement impossible, said visitors and Zila Parishad sources.

During a recent visit to the spot through Jamalpur-Bakshiganj-Lauchapra route, this correspondent saw the sorry state of the Kamalpur-Lauchapra road.

Visitors including a good number of students, who come to the resort area for enjoying natural beauty, often face problem due to lack of electricity and drinking water.

"The Zila Parishad set up two sight-seeing towers atop hills, a picnic spot including a parking area, two bridges over a lake, three rest houses including a VIP one and a jag-jag stairway on the slope of a hill to reach a 60-foot high tower and several recreational instruments for children there," said Mrinal Kanti Deb, chief executive officer of the Zila Parishad.

"But not many visitors and nature-loving people come here while tourists from distant places cannot stay at the rest houses here at night for want of electricity and water supply. We urged the authorities concerned several times to arrange smooth supply of electricity and water and make the five-km road usable, but to no effect," he said.

Lauchapra Obosar Binodan Kendra can be a very attractive tourist spot if the problems are solved and facilities improved, he added.



PHOTO: STAR



Tourists recreate amid natural beauty at Lauchapra resort in the Garo hills in Jamalpur, inset, a dilapidated wooden bridge on the way to the spot.



PHOTO: STAR

Boro saplings have turned yellowish in different areas of Dashmina upazila in Patuakhali district due to pest attack, much to the worry of farmers of the upazila.

## DASHMINA UPAZILA OF PATUAKHALI Pest attack on transplanted boro worries farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Pest attack on the newly transplanted boro seedlings worries farmers in Dashmina upazila of the district.

Boro seedlings have so far been transplanted on 200 hectares of land against the target of around 1,000 hectares in the upazila this year, local agriculture office sources told this correspondent during his visit to the upazila on Saturday.

But farmers fear that the target may not be achieved this season as pest has

already attacked planted seedlings over 50 hectares of land.

Abdul Mannan, 45, a farmer of Char Bashbaria village, said pest has attacked transplanted seedlings on his five hectares of land. "Most of newly planted seedlings have turned yellowish and black spots are also seen on the plants," Mannan said.

Abdur Razzak, 50, of the same village said planted boro seedlings on his six out of 15 hectares of land have already come under pest attack.

"I have never seen pest attack on the transplanted

seedling at the beginning of boro season. Such attack has become a major cause of concern for the farmers," Razzak said.

Sanjib Mridha, Dashmina upazila agriculture officer, said blight and blast diseases have attacked the newly transplanted seedlings. Plants on the marshy land may be attacked by the diseases as sulphur and zinc level on such land is very high, he added.

"We have advised the local farmers to use compost to protect their planted seedlings from pest attack," Mridha further said.

## Pabna mob beat 'robber' dead

Gunfight with gang in Hatiya

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A suspected robber was killed and another injured by angry villagers at Shahpur Natun Hat in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Rummon, 25, son of Hamidur Rahman of Diar Baghoil village in the upazila.

Police said a gang stopped some vehicles by putting barricade on Natun Hat point of Pabna-Kushtia Highway and looted valuables from passengers in the early morning.

Hearing scream for help, nearby villagers rushed to the spot. They chased the robbers and caught two of them and gave a good beating, leaving Rummon dead on the spot and injuring Mohon Ghorami.

Other accomplices managed to flee the scene.

In Noakhali, a man was injured by bullet during a gunfight between police and robbers on the Meghna in Hatiya upazila on

Monday.

Mokhter Hossain, officer in-charge of Hatiya police station, said they received a secret information that a gang was preparing to commit robbery in Damarchar area, reports UNB.

A team of police rushed to the spot at noon and challenged them. At this, they tried to flee by an engine-driven boat and the law enforcers chased them.

At a stage, the criminals fired at the police team, which forced the law enforcers to fire back, triggering a two-hour long gun battle.

Sukumar Das, a local resident, was injured in the gunfight.

When the robbers tried to flee the scene, leaving behind their boat, police aided by locals arrested 14 criminals.

A gun and a bullet were recovered from the arrestees.

Eleven of the arrestees, injured in a mob beating during the drive, were admitted to the upazila health complex.

## Rice prices soar despite good stock in Jessore

Traders blame hoarding by mill owners and wholesalers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Despite sufficient stock, prices of both coarse and fine varieties of rice have shot up on both wholesale and retail markets in the district over the last one month.

Coarse rice prices have increased to Tk 34-36 from Tk 23-27 per kilogram while prices of fine rice now stand at Tk 44-46 per kg from Tk 29-31 recorded a month ago.

While visiting the rice market in the town on Saturday, rice traders attributed the soaring rice prices to manipulation by rice mill owners and wholesalers. They said the millers have built up a good stock of rice varieties to sell them at higher rates in March and April.

Khalilur Rahman, manager of a wholesale rice shop at Jessore Boro Bazar, said coarse rice BR-28 is being sold at their shop at Tk 34-36 per kilogram, BR-10 at Tk 29-

31 and sarna at Tk 26-27. Fine rice miniket is being sold at 44-46 and Kajallata at Tk 42-44 per kilogram, he added.

One kilogram of BR-28 was sold at Tk 27-28, sarna at Tk 22-23, BR-10 at Tk 25-26, miniket at Tk 31-32 and Kajallata at Tk 30-31 a month ago, he further said.

Babul Akhter of Shalkona village under Sharsa upazila said they harvested miniket, Kajallata and BR-28 in the last boro season in April 2012 and sold them at Tk 600 to Tk 700 per maund.

Sarna and BR-10, harvested in December last year, was priced between Tk 450 and Tk 500 per maund, Babul said, adding that millers purchased rice varieties from farmers at cheaper rates and are now selling them at higher rates.

Mostafa of Sattmile area under Jessore Sadar upazila said stocks of miniket, Kajallata and BR-28 has been exhausted and sarna and BR-10 are inadequate at

farmers' level. Taking advantage of it, millers are earning good profit by selling rice at higher prices, he added.

Farmer Nazrul Islam said price manipulation by millers and wholesale rice traders have caused price spiral of rice in the market. Farmers are always deprived of fair price of their produce, he said.

According to the Jessore office of the Department of Agriculture extension (DAE), last year's production of boro in the district was 6,58,107 tonnes while aman was 3,75,006 tonnes.



PHOTO: STAR

Despite sufficient stock, prices of both coarse and fine rice have shot up in Jessore. Photo shows the godown of Sonali Store, a wholesale rice shop at Boro Bazar in the district town.

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