



PHOTO: STAR

**Boro harvesting has begun. But growers in many areas across the country are facing serious problems for want of farm labourers. The photo was taken from Barind area in Rajshahi.**

# Crisis of farm labourers hampers boro harvest

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Crisis of farm labourers in many areas of Sunamganj and Kurigram districts is hampering boro harvesting.

Farmers in Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj are facing difficulty in harvesting the paddy for want of adequate number of labourers. The situation has put the farmers in the *haor* areas in a big trouble. They now worry about timely harvesting of their already ripe boro paddy in the fields.

Farmers said, generally at this time of the year, labourers from other districts come to cut their paddy during the boro harvesting period.

For this, the farm labourers take money from them in advance. Under the contract, they take their wage two-three months ahead of the harvest.

This year, the farmers are facing a tough time due to shortage of farm labourers.

Farmer Ali Hossain of Balbal village in Jagannathpur municipality area told UNB that he could not harvest paddy much this year due to lack of farm workers.

"I am desperately looking for workers to cut my paddy", he said.

Farmer Matiur Rahman of Ekorchhari village said, a group of

labourers from Pabna took advance wage in the Bangla month of Magh, but they have already informed that they cannot come this year for 'personal problems'.

"These workers helped me harvest my paddy for the last six years. But this season I am facing a severe problem because of their absence".

Jagannathpur upazila Haor Development Council president Shahidul Islam Bakul said, farmers of the upazila are afraid that natural disasters like flash flood might damage the crops any time.

And the shortage of labourers is adding to their worries.

Chilaura-Haldipur union chairman Arash Mia said that the crisis of labourer deepened mainly due to bumper production of boro in different districts this year.

Due to shortage of labourers, 60 per cent of boro paddy in the area could not be harvested yet, he added.

In Kurigram, farmers are desperately looking for labourers as harvesting of boro paddy started a week ago, reports our correspondent.

Many farmers said although they could engage a few labourers, they had to pay higher rates, compared last year's.

Meanwhile, the 40-day job scheme under Karmo Sreejon Prakaipo (KSP) could not attract sufficient labourers as the government fixed Tk 175 as daily wage for each of them.

The KSP that started 23 days ago involved 31,948 ultra-poor people but a huge number of others remained out of the project, sources said.

Despite this, This has created an acute crisis of farm labourers prevailed, although boro needs immediate harvesting in many areas of the district, they said.

Farmer Abdul Khaleq, 80, of Kaley village under Belgachha union in Sadar upazila, said, "I have started boro harvesting two days ago. I have engaged labourer at a cost of Tk 1,400 for each *bigha* (33 decimals) of land this year while it was Tk 1,000 to 1,200 last year".

Khalilur Rahman, 54, of Tagraihaat area in Kathalbari union, also said that he engaged agro-labourers for paddy harvesting at Tk 1,650 per *bigha*.

"We cannot keep the ripe paddy in the field any more as storm may damage it any time," he said.

The department of agriculture extension (DAE) this year had fixed the target of boro paddy cultivation on 1,06,085 hectares in Kurigram, officials said.

## Lightning in six dists kills 13

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Thirteen people have been killed in lightning strike in Narail, Pirojpur, Kishoreganj, Jessore, Madaripur and Chandpur districts, report our correspondents.

Two youths were killed as lightning struck them in Narail district town and Lohagara upazila on Sunday morning.

The deceased were identified as Akkas Jamaddar, 28, son of Gafur Jamaddar of Bhoakhali in the district town, and Abu Bakkar Sheikh, 20, son of Manwar Sheikh of Sarushuna village under Lohagara upazila.

Two people were killed by lightning in Mathbaria and Kawkhali upazilas in Pirojpur on Saturday and Sunday, a correspondent from Pirojpur adds.

The dead are Manoj Shikder, 25, son of Upen Shikder of Goalbunia village under Mathbaria upazila, and Shamim Mollah, 17, son of Wadud Mollah of Dumjhuri village under Kawkhali upazila.

In Kishoreganj, lightning killed three farmers at Maguri village under Damiha union in Tarail upazila yesterday noon.

Locals said that the two were struck by lightning while working at a paddy field during rain at noon. Three others injured in the incident were admitted to upazila health complex.

The deceased were identified as Akhter Hossain, 28, son of Abdul Karim of Damiha village, Shamim Mia, 18, son of Chan Mia of the same village, Rokon

Uddin, 50, son of Abdul Rahman of Kajla village.

The injured are Abdul Hai, 47, of Velongka village, Moti Mia, 27, son of Abdul Rahman of Burgaon village and Ferdous Ali, 20, son of Hossain Ali of same village.

In Chandpur, two people were killed by lightning in Haziganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abul Hossain, 50, son of late Abdul Rashid of Bolakhal village and Billal Hossain, 40, son of Abdul Khaleq of Gourishwar village. Sources said, Abul was killed by lightning while working at his paddy field and Billal was struck while going to a shop near his house.

In Jessore, a farmer was killed by lightning strike at Ramnagar village in Abhaynagar upazila on Sunday evening.

The deceased was identified as Akram Hossain Molla, 45, son of late Lokman Hossain of the village.

Family sources said, Akram was struck by a lightning when he was returning home during rain in the area around 7:00pm. He died on the spot.

In Madaripur, three people, including a man and his son, were killed by lightning yesterday.

Locals and hospital sources said, Yunus Ali, 45, and his 12-year-old son Hridoy were struck by lightning at Kashimpur village in Rajoir upazila while fishing at an water body. They later died at Rajoir Hospital.

Another unidentified man died in another incident at Shibchar village.

## Nur-un-Nabi new VC of Rokeya University

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Dr. AKM Nur-un-Nabi, professor of Population Science Department at Dhaka University has been appointed as the new vice-chancellor (VC) of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR).

A press release issued by BRUR authorities yesterday said that the education ministry through a gazette notification had asked the VC of BRUR Dr. Abdul Jalil Miah to hand over charges to Dr. AKM Nur-un-Nabi by May 07.

"Durniti Birodhi Mancha", a platform of a section of students, teachers, officials and employees of the university had been agitating against the alleged corruption by Dr. Abdul Jalil Miah and demanding his resignation, since January 5 this year.

In the wake of their movement, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently conducted an investigation into the allegations and submitted a report to the education ministry.

University sources said, chancellor of the university president Md. Abdul Hamid withdrew Professor Dr. Abdul Jalil Miah and appointed Dr. AKM Nur-un-Nabi to the post following detection of corruption and irregularities in appointing teachers, officials



and employees.

Contacted, Dr. AKM Nur-un-Nabi said, he got the appointment letter and was preparing to join his duties today.

When asked, the outgoing vice chancellor told this correspondent that his terms at Begum Rokeya University ended yesterday and he would return to Rajshahi University today, handing over charges to the new VC.

Meanwhile, on hearing the news of appointment of a new VC, the students, teachers, and employees of the university yesterday cheered and welcome the decision.

Dr. Jalil, however, refuted all the allegations of corruption and irregularities brought against him.

"I have been in Begum Rokeya University on deputation from Rajshahi University for three years. I'll leave the chair as my term expires on Monday. There is nothing to be happy or unhappy in it", he added.

### SNIPPETS

#### Fire kills 1, damages 20 shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A shop owner was killed and at least 20 shops were gutted in a devastating fire in Matlab upazila early yesterday. Several others were injured in the blaze at Dakhin Bazaar that left Kazi Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, 58, of Kaladi village dead. The affected shop owners said the fire broke out at a shop at around 2:30am and spread to adjacent 19 others. Fire service sources said, the fire might have originated from an electric short circuit.

#### 'Robber' beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

An alleged robber was killed in mob beating in Rajoir upazila of the district on Sunday night. The dead was identified as Maula Akon, son of late Elajuddin Akon of Dakkhinpara village in the upazila. Maula was caught red-handed by the villagers while a gang led by himself was committing a robbery at the house of one Rabindranath Malo at Malopara, police and witnesses said. Maula was beaten up mercilessly by the villagers, leaving him dead on the spot. Three people, including a member of the armed forces, were stabbed as they tried to round up the robbers.

#### 3 kids hurt in bomb blast

UNB, Faridpur

Three students were injured as a bomb exploded in in classroom of a primary school on the outskirts of the district town on Sunday. The injured were identified as Nazmul Sardar, a student of class V, Rana, of class I, and Ashiq, of class II at West Gongabordhi Government Primary School. Zakia Sultana, headmistress of the school, said the bomb exploded at the classroom when Nazmul was playing with a packet of cigarettes wrapped in red scotch tape. Of the injured, Nazmul was rushed to Faridpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

#### Trader shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A trader was shot dead in Sadar upazila of the district early yesterday. A gang of six swooped on the house of Binoy Krishna Das, 60, at Ranjitpur village at around 3:00am, said Sushanta Das, a relative of the victim. As Binoy tried to resist the gang, they shot him from close range, leaving him dead on the spot. His wife Sudha Rani Das was also injured in the incident. Officer in-charge (OC) of Bagerhat Model police station Abu Jihad Fakhurul Alam Khan said, the criminals might have killed Binoy over previous enmity. "We have started an investigation into the matter," he said.

#### 5 bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police recovered five bombs at Bamundi village in Gangni upazila of Meherpur district early Sunday. Sub-Inspector (SI) Abdul Hannan, in-charge of Bamundi camp, said that a patrol team led by himself asked a gang of 4/6 to stop at Bamundi field, near the local bazaar at about 4:30am. But the gang fled the scene, leaving a bag on the road. Police later searched the bag and found five bombs in it. The bombs were taken to Gangni police station.

#### Youth stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A youth was killed and three others were injured when a gang attacked them in Delduar upazila on Sunday night. The deceased was identified as Aminur Rahman, 23, son of Abdul Jalil of Mushuria Dakkhinpara village. Police said, a gang of criminals stabbed Aminur and three others at Uttarpara village when they were returning home from a local market at around 10:30pm, leaving them seriously injured. Local people took the injured to Tangail General Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared Aminur dead. The other three injured -- Faruque Miah, 23, Ismail Hossain, 22, and Sohel Rana, 23, of the same village -- were referred to Dhaka as their conditions deteriorated. Police suspected that the incident was a sequel to previous enmity.

#### Youth 'commits suicide'

A CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A youth allegedly committed suicide by taking poison following a family feud at Kolabari village in Damurhuda upazila of the district on Sunday evening. The deceased was identified as Swapon, 25, son of Niyamot Ali of Chitla village in the upazila. Quoting the youth's family members, police said Swapon went to his father-in-law's house at Kolabari village in the afternoon and locked in an altercation with his wife Ajmina in the evening over a trifling matter. At one stage, Swapon took insecticide in his room at 7:30pm. Family members took him to Damurhuda health complex and later shifted to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital but he died on the way to hospital.

### STRIKING DISCOVERY IN DINAJPUR

# 1000-year-old water reservoir

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Archaeological excavators on Thursday detected a thousand-year-old brick-built water reservoir at Gopalpur village in Ghoraghat upazila under the district.

The unique archaeological site is at a place surrounded by moats in a two kilometre radius area, said Swadhin Sen, associate professor of the Department of Archaeology of Jahagirnagar University, and head of the 40-member excavation team.

"The structure of the water reservoir was built between 10th to 11th century. Such a reservoir of that period has been found first time in Bangladesh. The area was part of Bharendra region and under the rule of Pala dynasty," he said.

The water-reservoir measures 33 X 28 metres and the remains of the ghat (landing stage) measures 6.5 x 6.8 metre.

Malai Kumar Sain, a pottery expert and researcher of Calcutta University, also a member of the excavation team, said after analyzing the brick structure said the structure was built between 10th to 11th century.

"Such water architec-



PHOTO: STAR

**Remains of the around a thousand-year-old brick-built water reservoir discovered by archaeologists at Gopalganj village in Ghoraghat upazila of Dinajpur district on Thursday. The structure dating back to the Pala era is the first of its kind to be found in Bangladesh.**

tures are not uncommon in India. Julia Hegewold, a Professor of University of Bonn, has carried out survey on different water architectures of South Asia and found different kinds of water reservoirs like ponds, kundis and stepped wells. Other forms of water architectures were also detected in Karnataka, Mathura, Chandraketugarh, Maharastra and undivided Bengal," the chief of the team said.

The brick walls of the ancient reservoir were badly

damaged as locals took away bricks from there at different times.

According to the locals, a few sculptures found at the site were earlier handed over to Mahasthan Museum.

"It is a rare discovery. The structure is a unique one in Bangladesh," said Afroza Khan Mita, assistant director of the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, during her visit to the site.

On March 27 this year,

the 40-member-team led by Prof Swadhin Sen started excavation at Belwa and Gopalpur village of Ghoraghat upazila. It is scheduled to end on May 10.

Earlier in 2011, a team led by Prof Dr Syed Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan of archaeology department of Jahagirnagar University conducted a survey in Ghoraghat upazila and found 52 archaeological sites there, said Syfur Rahman Polin, a researcher of the team.



Community Legal Services

### CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

The Community Legal Services (CLS) Programme is announcing the call for concept notes of Round 2 as open to the public. Eligible Bangladeshi NGOs are invited to send their concept notes to the CLS Programme Office. The details of the concept note process, as well as concept note templates, are found in the Grants link of the project website:

[www.communitylegalservice.org](http://www.communitylegalservice.org)

The deadline for the submission of the concept notes is **26th May 2013**. Shortlisted concept notes shall be requested to submit a full proposal at a later stage.

