

Jute plants become dwarf for unfavourable weather



PHOTO: STAR

Jute plants at a field of Tularampur village in Narail Sadar upazila remain undersized as the recent heavy downpour hindered growth of the cash crop in the area.

Farmers worried in Narail

PONUEL S BOSE, Narail

Jute production in the district is likely to suffer a setback due to unfavourable weather this season.

"The jute farmers did not get sufficient rain when it was needed early this season while the recent heavy downpour hindered the growth of the cash crop. Usually jute plant grows eight to nine feet high but now it is only three to four feet and much thinner than usual," said Ashok Kumar Halder, district training officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Narail.

The farmers are now worried about recovery of their production cost, let alone profit.

In the beginning of the season the jute plants grew well, making the farmers optimistic about its good yield but the heavy downpour frustrated their hope.

"Nature seems to be against us. We had to count losses by cultivating jute during the last few years.

Earlier this season, we eyed good yield but nature has again turned adverse," said farmer Asis Das of Mulia village under Narail Sadar upazila.

Somir Biswas, a farmer of Bahirdanga village under the same upazila, said they see no hope of recouping the losses of the previous years as heavy rain affected the growth of jute plants.

Besides, there is shortage of labourers and their high wage adds to the growers cost, he said.

The farmers of the district cultivated jute on 22,610 hectares of land against the target of 22,266 hectares in this current season while the production target set by the DAE is 2 lakh 42 thousand and 525 bolls (1 boll = 5 maunds), DAE sources said.

The farmers of the district have demanded that the government arrange crop insurance to help the farmers survive through adverse situations.



PHOTO: STAR

Despite the ongoing Ramadan vacation, a large number of schoolchildren line up on Mridharhat-Mirganj road in Muladi upazila under Barisal district yesterday as some over-enthusiast officials made the arrangement for giving reception to Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan (inset) on the occasion of his visit to the area prior to the planned opening of a ferry service at Char Alekhan on the Joyonti River in the upazila. The minister, however, strongly disapproved the arrangement and warned not to involve children in such programmes in future.



ATTACK ON LAW ENFORCERS

282 Jamaat-Shibir men sued in Noakhali

STAR COUNTRY DESK

As many as 282 Jamaat-Shibir men have been sued on charges of attack on law enforcers and obstructing them from performing their duties at the district headquarters on Thursday.

Sub-Inspector Chiranjib Kumar Das of Sudharam Model Police Station filed two separate cases with the police station on Friday.

Of the accused, 32 were identified while the remaining 250 remained unnamed, reports UNB.

On Thursday, at least five people, including two policemen, were injured in a clash between the activists of Jamaat-Shibir and the law

enforcers in the town.

The injured policemen are Assistant Sub-Inspector Zahir Uddin and Constable Shafiq of Sadar Police Station, according to our correspondent.

The Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised several vehicles and business establishments during the incident, said Assistant Police Commissioner Nishkriti Chakma.

Police fired 40 bullets to bring the situation under control and arrested three Jamaat-Shibir men on the spot.

The trouble began at around 3:00pm when Jamaat-Shibir men brought out a procession in the

town, protesting the decision of the Election Commission (EC) to exclude the names of Jamaat leaders, who were convicted by war crimes tribunals, from voter list.

As police intercepted the procession at Town Hall intersection, Jamaat-Shibir men swooped on the law enforcers, prompting them to fire rubber bullets and used truncheons. Jamaat-Shibir activists also vandalised several business establishments and vehicles during the clash.

Immediately after the incident, shop owners brought out a procession in the town, protesting attack on their shops.

BSF picks up Bangladeshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up a Bangladeshi national from Ramkrishnapur border point in Gangni upazila of Meherpur on Friday.

The man was identified as Shafiqul Islam, 40, son of Namazuddin of Dholavillage.

Subedar Rezaul Karim of BGB Kathuli camp, said BSF members from Taipur camp picked up Shafiqul from the border area around 11:30am while he was cutting grass for his cattle.

BGB sent a letter to the BSF protesting the incident which was followed by a flag meeting at 9:30am yesterday.

At the meeting, BSF Dighalkandi camp commander Sanjib Roy said they had already handed over Shafiqul to Morutia PS of Nadia district.

4 AL men shot in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Four Awami League (AL) men, including a local leader, were shot by an unidentified gang at Arpara village in Gangni upazila of Meherpur district on Friday night.

According to police, a gang of seven to eight criminals stormed into the house of Ainal Haq, 50, president of Arpara ward unit of AL, while he was talking with some party men in a room at around 9:30pm.

The gang shot him point blank, exploded a bomb and left the scene immediately. Ainal received bullets in the left hand.

As party men chased the criminals, they opened fire, leaving three of them injured. They are Mohidul Islam, 22, Hasem Ali, 36

and Alif Hossain, 23.

Locals caught one of the gang members name Rashidul Islam with a gun and later handed him over to the police.

In Daulatpur upazila, criminals set fire to the house of a local Awami League leader at Kamalpur village in the upazila early Friday.

Family members of Sipon Ali, joint secretary of Rifayatpur union Awami League, said a gang of 15 stormed into their house at around 4:30am and was looking for Sipon.

Failing to find him at the house, the gang blasted three bombs on the spot, set fire to the house and left the scene. Locals, however, extinguished the blaze. No one was arrested in connection with the incident as of 5:00pm yesterday.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Indian national held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel yesterday arrested an Indian citizen on charge of his link to human trafficking. The arrestee is Babul Mandal, 36, son of Rajab Ali of village Chhoto Chupri under Haskhali police station in Nadia. Chuadanga-6 company commander of BGB Lieutenant Colonel Asaduzzaman said, a team of Baghdadanga BGB camp in the frontier came to know that an Indian national was residing in the house of Mafizur Rahman, son of Ali Kadar Biswas at Khosalpur village under Moheshpur upazila. The BGB men raided the house and nabbed him at about 8.00 in the morning. BGB sources said, the arrestee was involvement in human trafficking for a long period.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Trawlers meant for fishing in the Bay of Bengal lie anchored for safety in Shibbaria River at Mohipur ferry terminal in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district yesterday as the sea turned turbulent.

Smuggled clothes seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized smuggled Indian goods worth Tk 1.5 crore from two trucks along Sadipur border yesterday morning. Jessore 26 BGB commander Lt Col Matiuur Rahman said, acting on a secret information, a BGB team stopped two Jessore bound trucks and seized Indian saris, three-piece sets, biscuit and chocolates after searching the trucks.

Fugitive convict arrested

UNB, Sylhet

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a drive arrested a fugitive murder convict from Gandharbapur village in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar on Friday afternoon. The arrested was identified as Dulal Kumar, 35, son of Kanto Kumar of Mokamtala of Bahubal upazila of Habiganj district. RAB sources said on secret information a team of it raided the village in the afternoon and arrested Dulal. He was sentenced to life term imprisonment in Krishna Charan murder case.

Pangash fry seized

UNB, Satkhira

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh seized fish fry worth Tk 5.12 lakh at Bhomra land port in Sadar upazila on Friday. Acting on secret information, a team of BGB raided the area at noon and seized 54 drums containing pangash fry from in front of Razzak Enterprise. BGB could not arrest anyone as the smugglers managed to flee the scene.

Press club executives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

AKM Fazlul Haque, editor of local daily Dainik Paribesh and Wadud Ali of The Daily Ittefaq were elected president and general secretary respectively of Rangpur Press Club in the annual election held on Friday at the press club building in the city. The other office-bearers are: vice-president- Saiful Islam Jahangir and Abdur Rahman Mintu, joint secretary- Mostafa Sorwar Onu, treasurer- Aftab Hossain, Cultural Secretary- Nazrul Mridha, sports secretary- Sajjad Hossain Bappi and office secretary- Siddiqur Rahman. Elected executive members are: Manik Sarkar Manik, Merina Lovely, Zakir Hossain and Abdur Rauf.

3 kids drown, another missing in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least three children drowned and another remained missing in the district in the last two days.

The deceased were identified as Soma Khatun, 7, daughter of Rafikul Islam of Dulampur village in Atghoria upazila, Sohanur Rahman Sohan, 4, son of Alam Hossain of Nurnagar village in Bhangura upazila and Aiyub Ali, 8, son of Azmat Ali of Shree Gobindapur village in Faridpur upazila.

Locals and family sources said Soma and her sister Ruma Akter, 6, fell into River Chiknai near their home

while collecting straws on its bank yesterday morning.

Soma's body was recovered while Ruma remained missing till filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday.

Sohan and Aiyub while playing near ponds near their residences fell into water and drowned on Friday.

Local people recovered the bodies after frantic search.

In Dinajpur, a teenage boy drowned in Punarbhaba River in Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon, reports our correspondent.

Identified as Mintu Rahman, 17, he was son of Md Rahman Ali of Lalbagh village and a driver of easy bike.

Bad weather disrupts ferry service

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Ferry service on Mawa-Kawrakandi route was disrupted yesterday due to high winds coupled with rain.

Sirajul Islam, manager of Mawa BIWTC office, said disruption in ferry service on the route caused a tailback on both sides of the river.

Thousands of passengers faced untold sufferings as the vehicles carrying them had to wait hours together to get a chance to board the ferry.

BIWTC Marine Officer AKM Shahjahan said water level in the Padma marked a rise of 6 centimetres in the last 24 hours. Stormy weather and

strong current in the river disrupted ferry service on the river route, he added.

On the other hand, launch strike on Mawa-Kawrakandi route from yesterday morning added to passengers' sufferings.

Launch Owners' Association enforced the strike as a launch named Shah Paran was carrying passengers on the route without route permit.

Iqbal Hossain, senior vice-president of Launch Owners' Association, said they will continue the strike until the illegal service of Shah Paran on the route is banned.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Huge quantity of guava, rotting due to transportation problem amid the recent weeklong hartal enforced by Jamaat-Islami across the country, being fed to cattle in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna district that saw good yield of the popular fruit this season. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

Dwellers of 70 slums in Comilla exposed to TB

UNB, Comilla

Sordid environment in the 70 slums of Comilla City Corporation (CCC) area has kept their 1.5 lakh dwellers at risk of being attacked with tuberculosis (TB).

CCC sources said, these slum dwellers live in damp and dirty places, which causes exposure to TB and other respiratory diseases.

Doctors say, risk of being attacked with TB is high among those living in such

squalid environment.

According to sources in the Urban Partnership Poverty Reduction Project, among these slum dwellers, most are rickshawpullers, pushcart drivers, vendors, cobblers and hawkers, maids and beggars.

They live in congested shanties amid acute shortage of toilets, crisis of pure drinking water and water stagnancy caused by rains.

Sources at the local health department and Brac

offices said the number of TB affected patients in the district is now 3,507.

Presence of TB germs in them could be confirmed through examination of cough of 47,929 people.

Salma Akhtar, 25, who was attacked with TB, told this correspondent at Chartha Brac Centre in Comilla that she was now almost cured after taking medicine for the last six months.

District civil surgeon Dr Abul Kalam Siddique said,

tuberculosis is no longer a critical disease.

If cough continues for more than three weeks, it needs to be examined.

People attacked with TB need to take medicine for six months, he added.

Brac staff are working to motivate the TB affected people to take medicine regularly, locals said.

The district health department is also distributing medicine free of cost among the TB patients, they added.