

# Growers worried as jute prices continue to dip

## Poor rotting in scanty water adds to situation

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Jute farmers in several districts are worried due to low prices of the cash crop in the current season.

Good yield of jute fails to make the growers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh happy as the prices see a declining trend, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

Early this season jute sold for Tk 1100 to 1300 per maund but now it is selling for Tk 900 to 1050 in the local markets.

Visiting different jute markets in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh during the last couple of days, this correspondent found many farm-

ers selling their raw jute for low prices as they have to manage aman cultivation cost and meet up family expenses.

In Thakurgaon, 1 lakh 9 thousand and 215 bales of raw jute was produced on 10,115 hectares of land, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

In Panchagarh, farmers cultivated jute on 9,119 hectares and produced 1 lakh 5 thousand and 183 bales of raw jute.

"I brought ten maunds of jute for sale at Sakoya Haat last Thursday. But I sold those at Tk 930 a maund which is below my production cost. I had to sell jute

for low price as I badly needed money for aman cultivation and meet up family expenses," said Shamsujjoha, 50, a farmer of Sakoa village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh.

If the growers don't get fair price from jute this year, many of them will lose interest in farming jute in the next season, he said.

Market sources alleged that the jute growers are being badly affected as the local traders formed syndicate easily because of small number of buyers locally and arbitrarily reduced the jute prices.

They can get the chance of reducing market price as the government is yet to fix

procurement price of jute, sources said.

Our Jessore Correspondent adds: Farmers in the district are not getting expected prices for jute as the quality of the cash crop decreased due to rotting the fibre in insufficient water.

"Usually farmers can rot their jute anywhere near their houses as all the water bodies, low lands and ponds remain full of water in the rainy season. But this season saw insufficient rainfall and so, water bodies and low lands are mostly dry," said Afsar Ali of Patibila village under Sadar upazila.

Jessore Air Force Met Office recorded 212 millimetres of rainfall in June and 211 millimetres in July this year. Last year the rainfall was 253 millimetres in June and 304 millimetres in July.

"We are not getting good price for our jute fibre as it was rotted in insufficient water. Now low quality jute is selling at Tk 700/800 per maund which is less than the production cost," said Mukul Khandakar of Shibobas village under Sharsa upazila in Jessore.

Now good quality jute is selling for Tk 1000 to Tk 1050 in the local markets, he added.

In the current year jute was cultivated on 25 thousand 115 hectares of land in Jessore, which is 2 thousand 654 hectares less than the target, DAE sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Although jute prices continue to fall, the number of buyers is poor in the markets in several districts. Photo shows growers waiting with their cash crop for buyers at Salandar Chowdhury Haat under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

## AL LEADER MURDER IN SATKHIRA

# Prime accused arrested in capital's Kafrul area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The prime accused in Awami League leader Robiul Islam murder case was arrested in the capital's Kafrul area early yesterday.

The arrestee, Abdul Majid Biswas, is Chairman of Shibpur Union Parishad (UP) under Satkhira Sadar upazila, and also vice-president of the district unit of BNP.

Law enforcers with the help of Kafrul police arrested Abdul Majid Biswas at a house in the area at around 12:30am, said Shahjahan Khan, officer-in-charge (OC) of Satkhira Sadar Police Station.

Robiul, 42, general secretary of AL Shibpur union unit was murdered in front of Boropota High School at Harisipur in Sadar upazila on the night of August 26.

## Follow-up

An unidentified gang waylaid Robiul while he was returning home from Porandah Bazar, riding a motorcycle at around 9:45pm.

The gang hacked him (Robiul) with sharp weapons, resulting in his death on the spot. They later dumped the body beside a nearby pond and left the scene.

Two people of Harishpur village found the body at around 10:00pm and informed others. On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Sadar Hospital Morgue for autopsy.

After the incident, a joint team of Rab, police and BCB picked up 42 people from different villages of Shibpur

and Agordari unions for quizzing.

Anwarul Islam, brother of the slain AL leader, filed a murder case with Sadar police Station the following day, accusing Shibpur UP Chairman Abdul Majid Biswas and 22 others.

Protesting the killing, leaders and activists of AL Satkhira district unit, carrying the coffin of Robiul, brought out a procession in the town on the day.

They also blocked traffic on Satkhira- Jessore Road in the district headquarters for an hour from 12:00noon and held a rally there.

At the rally, the AL district unit leaders issued a 72-hour ultimatum to arrest the killers. They also threatened

to launch a tougher agitation programme in the district if the killers were not arrested within the time.

## AL man dies after falling off rooftop in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

A local Jubo League leader died after falling off the rooftop of a market building in the district town on Tuesday night.

The deceased is Anwar Uddin Khan, 45, vice-president of the district unit Jubo League, youth body of the ruling Awami League and a resident of Mirzapur village in Sadar upazila.

Witnesses said, Anwar slipped and fell down from the rooftop of the three-storey building of Mohsin Market, owned by him, at about 8:30pm while trying to switch on the power generator.

Locals rushed him to Habiganj Sadar Hospital, but he died while being shifted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital.



## Erosion hits Harina ferry terminal

PHOTO: STAR

Workers repair the eroded portion of Harina Ferry Terminal in Chandpur Sadar upazila yesterday morning. Sudden soil erosion near the pontoon at the terminal (inset) led to suspension of ferry service on Chandpur-Shariatpur route for about 12 hours from midnight on Tuesday. Two ferries with three passenger buses and 11 cattle and goods-laden trucks on board remained stranded in the river Meghna near the terminal during the period. Ferry operation on the route, however, resumed at around 11:45am yesterday.



## Culprit scot-free after rape of physically challenged girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Police are yet to arrest a man who allegedly raped a physically challenged girl at Uzzalpur village in Moheshpur upazila on August 28.

The accused was identified as Shafikul Islam, 40, son of Moynuddin Mia of the village.

Locals said when the girl was passing through a cropland in the area on the day Shafikul dragged her to a nearby hut of shallow

machine and raped her.

As the news spread, Shafikul was beaten up with shoes 100 times at a village arbitration, said Montu Mia, a member of Natima union parishad.

Disgruntled, the father of the girl on Saturday filed a rape case and Shafikul went into hiding, said Akram Hossain, officer-in-charge of Moheshpur police station.

We will go for legal action when the medical test report confirms it as rape case, the OC said.

## One killed in clash over land dispute

UNB, Laxmipur

A man was killed and three others were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over land dispute at Poragachha cluster village in Ramgati upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nur Nabi, son of late Abdur Rashid of the village.

Moktar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ramgati Police Station, said there was a long-standing conflict between Nur Nabi and Sahab Uddin of the village over the ownership of a land at the local bazar.

Witnesses said the supporters of Sahab Uddin went to the Bazar at around 3:00pm to capture a shop built on the land by Nur Nabi. Hearing the news Nur Nabi and his relatives rushed to the spot and swooped on their rivals, prompting them to retaliate.

The clashing groups equipped with sharp weapons attacked each other, leaving Nur Nabi dead on the spot and three others injured from both sides.

The injured were admitted to Ramgati Upazila Health Complex.

## SNIPPETS

### Lightning kills three

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Three farmers were killed by lightning and at least six others injured in four villages of the district yesterday. All of them were working at aman paddy fields during rain. The dead were identified as Sahidar Rahman, 44, son of late Mazibur Rahman of Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar and Rahmat Ali, 52, and Moksed Ali, 48 of Masaner Dighee village in Aditmari upazila. Six other farmers were injured at Bhadai village in Aditmari upazila and Shoalmari village in Kaliganj upazila.

### Man hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Criminals stabbed a pro-BNP man to death in Begumganj upazila of the district on Monday night. Kamal Hossain, 30, son of Nur Nabi of Sujayetpur village was hacked indiscriminately before being shot in front of a primary school in Chandraganj Bazar area at around 9:00pm. He was rushed to Noakhali Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to the injuries two hours later. Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nasim Uddin of Begumganj police station said Kamal was involved in criminal activities in the area. His brother Kabir, ring leader of a gang, is also accused in several cases. Kabir's rivals might have been involved in the incident, the OC said.

### Youth jailed for stalking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A youth was sentenced to one year imprisonment yesterday by a mobile court for stalking a schoolgirl in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat. The convict was Kawsar Ahmed Roni, 19, son of Md. Abdul Karim of Pirob village under Shibganj upazila of Bogra. Kalai police said locals caught the youth while he was stalking the schoolgirl on her way to school at around 10:30am and handed him over to police. Later police produced him before a mobile court.

### 2 get life for murder

UNB, Sunamganj

A court here yesterday sentenced two people to life term imprisonment for killing a man seven years ago. The convicts were identified as Selim Miah, 30, son of Iskan Ali and Ashik Miah, 32, son of Idris Ali, both residents of Ghagtia village in Derai upazila of the district. The court also fined them Tk 30,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more imprisonment. According to the prosecution, Selim and Ashik stabbed Shahjahan Miah to death when he was returning to his home from Derai Bazar on June 18, 2006. Hearing the scream of Shahjahan, locals took him to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries the next day. Elder brother of the deceased Ershad Miah filed a case against six people.

### Smoking free restaurants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

All restaurants of the district have been declared smoking free. The announcement came at a workshop organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Kshoreganj restaurant owners at Ujan Bhati seminar hall yesterday. Addressing the programme, Md Anisuzzaman, an officer of the Mission, urged all to refrain from smoking in restaurants as they are public places. A documentary video clip was also shown over demerits of smoking. Dr Mukhleshur Rahman, deputy civil surgeon, was present as chief guest at the workshop.

### Youth commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A youth allegedly committed suicide by jumping under the wheels of a running train at Mominpur Railway Station in Jibonnagar upazila of Chuadanga district on Tuesday night. The dead was identified as Sukur Ali, 22, son of Monir Uddin of Minhazur village. Police and family sources said Sukur went out of home following a quarrel with his elder brother Akur Ali in the afternoon and since then he went missing. Sukur took his life by jumping under the wheels of a Coalondo-bound express train from Khulna, said Abdul Hamid, sub-inspector of Sadar police station.

## People of 3 villages suffer as Dharla devours road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Erosion by the River Dharla devoured about 650 meters of Lalmonirhat-Phulbari road at three villages in Sadar upazila in the last one week, causing immense sufferings to the thousands of villagers.

People of Shiberkuti, Shimulbari and Char Kulaghat villages in Sadar upazila used the road to go to the district town.

The villagers now go to the town by using boats. They have to pay Tk 5 to 10 as fare for each trip which many, who earlier crossed the road by bicycles, can not afford to.

To minimise the cost, they use raft for communication between the villages and the town, said Mahasin Ali, a rickshaw-van puller of Shimulbari village.

Another villager, Abbas Ali, said school and college students

became the worst sufferers.

Sohag Islam, a student of class eight at Kulaghat High School, said he could not go to school for the last six days as the road went into the river.

The river eroded a number of homesteads, roads and a vast tract of cropland and orchard during the period, said Idris Ali, chairman of Kulaghat UP.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities are yet to take any steps to thwart the erosion, he said.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat Roads and Highway Department (RHD) executive engineer Suruz Miah said his office had no role to protect the nine-kilometre road from the erosion.

WDB executive engineer Abu Taher said we have already written for fund to thwart the erosion but to no effect yet.



PHOTO: STAR

The River Dharla has devoured around a 650 metre area of Lalmonirhat-Phulbari Road in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila in a week, causing sufferings to thousands of people of three villages.