

Palm growers frustrated as fruits remain unsold

AKM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Palm growers in the district are frustrated as the ripe fruits have remained unsold in absence of any arrangement for producing edible oil from it.

In 2009, NGO Green Bangladesh motivated farmers for palm cultivation in different areas of seven upazilas under Gaibandha district, assuring them to purchase the fruits for producing palm oil, said farmers.

Another organisation Palli Unnayan Sangstha also collaborated with the programme.

The trees in many palm gardens are now adorned with fruits.

But many farmers are now uprooting their palm trees for using the land for other agricultural items as blocking of the lands for the last three years added with the cost of palm farming has already made them incur huge losses.

"Following assurance from officials of Green Bangladesh, I cultivated palm on one bigha of land with the hope of earning Tk 80,000 per year, which is several times higher than that from paddy. I spent Tk 10 thousand for planting 35 saplings there. But after three years none of them have come to purchase the ripe fruits," said Shahadat Mondol, a palm grower of Chaigari village in Sadullapur upazila.

"I worked hard to grow the palm saplings into trees, but now ripe palm fruits are drying up, as there is no buyer. We the palm farmers are worried as those who earlier encouraged us to cultivate it are not available, neither to purchase the fruit not to give suggestion," said



PHOTO: STAR
Ripe fruits adorn a palm tree at Ramchandrapur in Gaibandha Sadar upazila. Below, a palm garden in Dhaperhat union of Sadullapur upazila under Gaibandha district. Growers, however, are now at a loss with the ripe fruits as the NGO that motivated them to cultivate the fruit are not buying it in absence of any arrangement for oil production from the fruit.

Abdur Rashid, another grower of Gopinathpur village.

Many of the growers complained that they failed to get any response from Jahangir Alam, manager of Green Bangladesh, despite trying to contact him over cell phone.

Anisur Rahman Joarder, executive director of Palli Unnayan Sangstha, said,



"We are taking initiative to set up machines to extract oil from palm fruits next year when we will purchase the fruits from growers."

So far, over a hundred hectares of land has been brought under palm cultivation in the district but the people concerned hardly communicated with the agriculture department about the matter, said Mir

Abdur Razzaque, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, Gaibandha.

The matter was discussed in the recent meeting of the district development coordination committee and the DAE deputy director was assigned responsibility to investigate and take measure to help the palm growers to overcome the problem.

18-party calls hartal in Bogra Nov 5

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The Bogra unit of BNP-led 18-party alliance will enforce a daylong hartal in the district on November 5, protesting 'dropping' of the name of Tarique Rahman, senior vice-chairman of BNP, from voter list.

The alliance called the hartal from a rally held at Edward Park in the town at 4:00pm yesterday. Local leaders of the alliance addressed the rally.

The speakers said the 18-party alliance will launch a tougher agitation programme in the district if Tarique's name is not included in the voter list.

Later, the leaders and activists of the alliance took out a procession in the town.

Hartal to protest police attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Nazirpur upazila unit of BNP yesterday called a half-day hartal for Sunday, protesting attack on its activists allegedly by police.

The law enforcers swooped on the supporters of Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal when they tried to bring out a procession from the party office in the upazila town yesterday morning as part of countrywide agitation programme of the party.

At least 27 women were injured in the attack, said Md Abu Hasan Khan, secretary of Nazirpur upazila unit BNP.

Protesting the attack, the upazila BNP yesterday called the shutdown, he said.

Abdul Khalek, officer in-charge of Nazirpur police station, however, said that police did not carry out such attack.



PHOTO: STAR
People use this weak bamboo bridge to cross the Buritista River flowing between Teestapara and Chilahatipara villages in Tepriganj union of Debiganj upazila under Panchagarh district as locals' demand for a concrete bridge there has remained unheeded for long.

Bridge over a river can ease life of thousands

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

People of Tepriganj union in Panchagarh district have demanded construction of a bridge on the Buritista River at Chilahatipara village to ease their communication with the upazila headquarters, health complex and other important places to the east of the river.

In absence of a bridge, over 10,000 people of Chilahatipara, Mondalpara, Majhipara, Nagarpada, Hazaripara, Prodhana, Bosuniapara, Chowdhuripara, Sarkarpara, Dabirikonapara, Kamathpara, Ramganjbilasi and Dangapara villages in Debiganj upazila have to

cover additional 10 kilometres to go to the upazila headquarters.

Traders and farmers are often deprived of fair prices of their goods as they face difficulty to carry those to markets in and around the upazila headquarters.

A large number of students attending Debiganj Degree College, Debiganj NN Government High School, Debiganj Alodini Government Girls' High School, Tanviruzzaman High School and River View High School on the other side of the river also suffer.

The locals made a 70-metre-long bamboo bridge over the river but it is too inadequate and risky for thousands of users.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has constructed a road on the eastern side of the river but it is of little use for them without a bridge, locals said.

"Building a bridge over Buritista River is very essential to mitigate sufferings of over ten thousand people of 13 villages. On several occasions, I submitted application to the LGED and the lawmaker for building a bridge there but to no effect," said Md Golam Rahman Sarkar, chairman of Tepriganj union parishad.

Md Mizanur Rahman, assistant engineer of LGED, said they have sent a proposal to the higher authorities for constructing a bridge there.

SNIPPETS

AL leader's house bombed

UNB, Sirajganj

Criminals hurled a crude bomb at the house of a local Awami League activist at Ranipura village in Belkuchi upazila early Wednesday. Victim Abdur Rashid said a gang blasted a bomb targeting his house and they made an attempt to torch it by pouring petrol. Hearing the hue and cry, villagers rushed in and doused the flame while the attackers managed to flee the scene, said Rashid.

BNP, Jamaat-Shibir men held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Fourteen BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men were arrested on Wednesday night on charge of resorting to violence in Lalmonirhat Sadar and Patgram upazilas during 60 hour countrywide hartal enforced by BNP-led 18-party alliance. Of them, 11 were arrested in Patgram upazila and the rest in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. Police filed 11 cases with five police stations in the district, accusing over 400 BNP and Jamaat-Shibir of their alleged involvement in violent activities during the non-stop 60-hour hartal that ended at 6:00pm on Tuesday.

JCD procession in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pubna

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) brought out a procession in Sirajganj district town yesterday, demanding immediate release of their leader, who was arrested by police on Wednesday. Arrestee Anwar Hossain Rajesh, 35, convener of Sirajganj district unit JCD, was produced before a court which sent him to jail yesterday. On Wednesday night, Rajesh was arrested on charge of attacking police during a clash with the law enforcers in the town on October 20. The clash took place over attack on Dr Habib Millat Munna, personal physician to the prime minister, said officer in-charge of Sirajganj police station Md Habibul Islam. The JCD men yesterday threatened to go for tougher programmes if their demand was not met immediately, said party sources.

Man held for organ trading

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested an alleged member of Joypurhat organ trading racket in Kalai upazila yesterday. The arrestee is Md Saiful Islam, 30, son of Mokhesur Rahman of Paikpara village. On secret information, a police team, led by inspector Rafiqul Islam, raided Saiful's house and arrested him. Saiful was involved in the malpractice over two years, said officer in-charge of Kalai police station Ramjan Ali.

New BRUR weekly holiday

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur authorities have announced a two-day weekly holiday on Friday and Saturday. The syndicate in a recent meeting took the decision to introduce the two-day weekly holiday and it will not hamper the academic activities, said vice chancellor AKM Nur-un-Nabi. He said the new two-day weekend will come into effect from November 1, adding that its offices and departments will remain open from 9:00am to 5:00pm every day instead of 8:30am to 3:00pm.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH
Farmers carry harvested aman paddy at Islamnagar village in Talebpur union of Singair upazila under Manikganj district as harvesting at places starts quite a few days before Nabanna, the traditional festival of reaping the crop in rural Bangladesh in early Agrahayan. The area sees bumper production of aman this season.

8-month ban on jatka catching starts today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

An eight-month country-wide ban on catching, trading and marketing jatka (hilsa fry less than 10 inch or 26 centimeters in length) will start today.

This year, the restriction period increased for one more month and size of jatka changed from 9 to 10 inches to enhance hilsa resources.

Under the revised act of 1985, jatka netting was restricted for 6 months from November 1 to April 30, said Aminul Islam, deputy director and divisional fishery officer.

The same year, the act was amended and the restriction period was extended for one

month more and the size of jatka was fixed to 9 inches in length. The act was again revised this year, he said.

Yearly over 1.5 crore mother hilsa safely and naturally lay 46,800 kg of eggs and if its half percent can become embryo, 29.93 crore of hilsa 'renu' will be produced and if 10 percent of the renu survives, 2.93 crore jatka could be produced, said Bimal Chandra Das, fishery officer (hilsa) at Barisal district fishery office.

If only 10 to 20 percent of jatka can get the chance to reach maturity, around 2 lakh tonnes of hilsa, worth Tk 100 crore could be netted extra every year, said Wahiduzzaman, another fishery officer.

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