

AMAN GROWERS COUNT LOSS FOR HARTALS, BLOCKADES

Share-croppers, marginal farmers bear the brunt

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Good yield of aman paddy fails to make the growers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts happy as the prices continue to fall amid the transportation problem caused by country-wide hartals and blockades sponsored by BNP-led 18-party alliance.

Especially the share-croppers, marginal and small farmers are counting loses as they have to sell their produces to manage expenses for cultivating robi-crop including wheat, potato in the ongoing peak cultivation season.

Besides, a section of unscrupulous traders have raised prices of agro-inputs like seeds and fertilisers, taking advantage of the frequent blockades.

During a visit to different local markets including Salondar, Bhulli and Farabari Bazar in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila and Boda, Moidandighi hats under Boda upazila in Panchagarh district, this correspondent saw the small

farmers sold aman paddy for prices lower than only a couple of days ago.

"Nine days ago, I sold 15 maunds of paddy at Tk 750 per maund. But now the price has reduced to Tk 675. But we have to sell paddy to manage expenses of potato cultivation," Salekul Islam, 45, of Kochubari village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, told this correspondent at Salondar Hat on Monday afternoon.

Abdul Matin, 47, a small farmer of Jomadarpara village in Boda upazila under Panchagarh, said at Boda Paddy Market on Wednesday, "Continuous blockade for a week has led to fall aman paddy price by Tk 100-150 per maund. Besides we have to buy fertiliser and seeds with high price as the traders hiked price on the pretext of supply shortage."

Taking the opportunity of small farmers' helpless situation and obstruction in carrying goods due to blockade, some local traders are hoarding huge paddy after buying it for low price, markets sources alleged.

Mohammad Asaduzzaman, a paddy trader of Boda, said the aman paddy price has continued decreasing as supply to other districts including Bogra, Natore and Dhaka remained virtually suspended due to blockades.

According to sources of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), farmers had cultivated aman paddy on 1 lakh 32 thousand 600 hectares of land against the target of 1 lakh 24 thousand 219 hectares with a production target of 3 lakh 35 thousand 496 tonnes.

The farmers have already harvested paddy on 1 lakh 30 thousand 20 hectares and got 3 lakh 74 thousand 458 tonnes of the crop.

In Panchagarh, 90,066 hectares of land had been brought under aman cultivation against the target of 86,123 hectares with a production target of 2 lakh 31 thousand 49 tonnes.

About 2 lakh 48 thousand 909 tonnes of aman rice has been got by harvesting crops of 87,943 hectares till Wednesday.

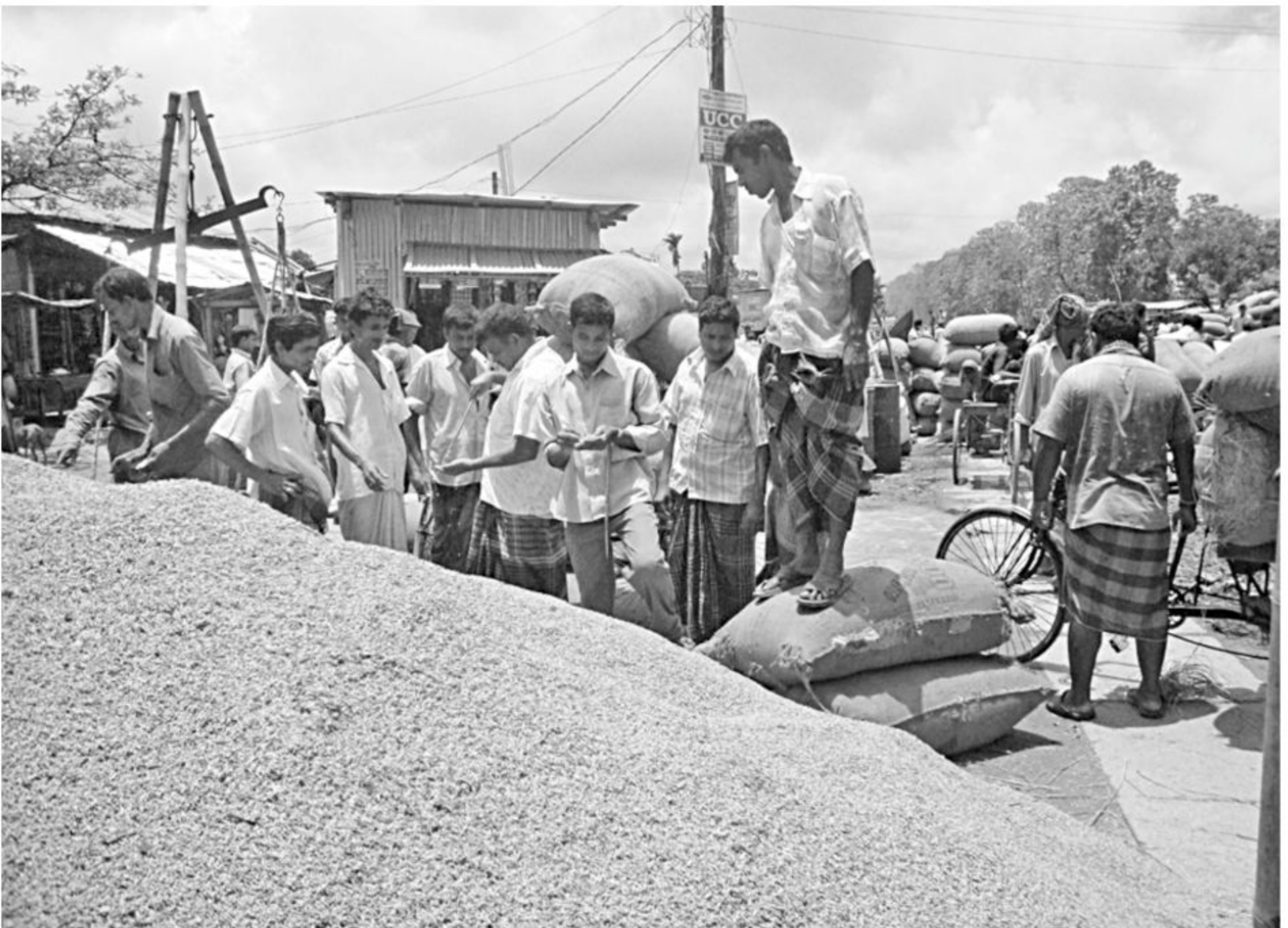


PHOTO: STAR

Recently harvested aman rice arrives abundantly in local markets of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts but the prices continue to fall due to transport problem amid weeklong countrywide blockade sponsored by BNP-led 18-party alliance. The photo was taken from Khochabari Hat in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

For what do they suffer?

Atiqa, Abeda, like all other victims of Gaibandha train mishap, do not know their faults

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

"What are our faults? Why did they kill my mother-in-law? Who will bear our treatment cost?" said Atiqa Begum, 20, groaning in pain at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Atiqa, wife of Saddam Hossain of Kurusha-Ferusha village in Fulbari upazila of Kurigram district, and her family members boarded Padmarag Express at Lalmonirhat on Tuesday evening to go to their relative's house in Gabtali upazila of Bogra.

But their happy occasion met a tragic end when the train derailed at Kochua in Saghata upazila of Gaibandha district early Wednesday as supporters of the countrywide blockade sponsored by BNP-led 18-party alliance had removed fishplates of



PHOTO: STAR

Injured Atiqa Begum and her in-law. Abeda Begum, both victims of Gaibandha train derailment on Tuesday, groan in pain at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

rail-lines there.

Atiqa's mother-in-law Kulsum Begum, 55, died on the spot while Atiqa, her mother Munni Begum, 40, and their another in-law Abeda Begum, 52, got serious injuries at the derailment of Padmarag Express, an intercity train from Lalmonirhat to Shantahar.

"I fell asleep after boarding the train at Lalmonirhat station. Suddenly I woke up, only to find some

people trying to rescue me out of the derailed train," said Atiqa, who received injuries on her head and both legs.

Munni Begum and Abeda Begum were also admitted to the same hospital.

Our Bogra Correspondent adds: Azibor Rahman Asif, 26, assistant ticket supervisor of train lessee SR Trading Company, is screaming in pain at the emergency

department of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra.

He got both his legs badly injured when The Padmarag Express derailed early Wednesday.

Beside the physical pain, traumatic memory haunts Azibor as he witnessed the tragic death of two women due to the accident.

Three passengers were killed and 35 others injured as four compartments

Hridoy's 'killers' scot-free, threaten family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The accused in the case for killing of of schoolboy Motasim Bin Hridoy have continued to threaten the mother of the deceased asking her to withdraw the case.

Taslima Islam, mother of Hridoy, who was murdered two years ago, filed a general diary in this connection on Wednesday.

According to the GD, accused Sabbir, Helal uddin alias Danny and Abdur Rahim alias Epeai, who secured bail in the case a few days ago, waylaid Taslima's rickshaw in PTI area of the town around 4:30pm and threatened

her of dire consequences if she did not withdraw the case.

The incident took place when she was returning home along with her 15-year-old daughter Sumaiya.

The trio also tried to take away Sumaiya at gunpoint but they were resisted by local people.

On May 23 in 2011, a gang, allegedly led by Danny, in a microbus abducted the Class Eight student, on his way to a shop. The kidnappers then demanded Tk 3 lakh as ransom from the family members over mobile phone.

Taslima filed a case with Kushtia

Model police station, accusing Sabbir, Danny and Rahim in connection with the abduction on May 31. After a few days, the law enforcers arrested the accused.

During a primary interrogation, Danny confessed to abducting and killing the boy. Later, police recovered his body from a grave at Bahirchar in Bheramara upazila.

"We are living in fear after receiving the threat", said Taslima, mother of the deceased.

Belayat Hossain, officer in-charge of the PS, said they were investigating the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers load cauliflowers in a truck at Mogholhat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday, before starting for Karwan Bazar in the capital as today's respite from countrywide blockade enforced by BNP-led 18-party alliance during the last six days, gives them the much awaited opportunity.

Pabna Jubo League leader murdered

Jamaat-Shibir men injure AL activist in C'nawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Jubo League leader was stabbed to death allegedly by BNP men over previous enmity in the district on Wednesday night.

The deceased is Md Mehedi Hassan Moon, 30, a member of the municipality unit Jubo League committee and son of Jalal Uddin of Kutipara village in Sadar upazila.

Party sources said a gang swooped on Moon at the local Awami League office in the upazila and stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured while he was cleaning the office.

Hearing the hue and cry, locals chased the attackers, who opened fire and exploded several crude bombs and fled the scene, said Fahimul Kabir, publicity affairs secretary of the district unit Jubo League.

Moon was rushed to Pabna Medical College and Hospital where the on duty doctors declared him dead.

Moon might have been killed as a sequel to feud between him and the local BNP cadres, said Fahimul Kabir.

A case was filed accusing 11 identified and four unidentified men in this connection, said officer in-charge of Pabna Sadar police station Kazi Haniful Islam.

A way in Chapainawabganj, a supporter of Awami League activist was seriously injured in an attack allegedly by BNP-Jamaat men at Kansat in Shibganj upazila yesterday.

The victim is Mohammad Manik, 40, son of Bahar Ali of Johorpur village in the upazila, reports our correspondent.

Police and locals said, a gang of masked criminals attacked Manik with sharp weapons when he was sitting at a tea stall around 10:45am.

He was rushed to the upazila health complex and then shifted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Shahadat Hossain Khurram, general secretary of the upazila unit AL, blamed BNP-Jamaat men for the attack.

BNP leader hacked to death in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A local BNP leader was hacked to death by criminals in Domar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Jalaluddin Ahmed, 40, organising secretary of Bamunia union unit BNP.

Locals and party sources said a gang of 10/12 waylaid Jalaluddin on Domar-Chilahati road around 12:30am when he was returning home from a relative's house at Chapra

Natibari village along with his two associates.

At one stage, the criminals attacked him with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot. However, his associates managed to flee the scene.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy, said Domar upazila BNP general secretary Firoz Prodhan.

The law enforcers arrested two people in connection with the incident.

SNIPPETS

Body found in septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Body of an unidentified woman was recovered from a septic tank at a place near Itakhola Primary School in Daudkandi upazila town yesterday morning. Gouripur police camp in-charge Md Asaduzzaman said, locals complained of bad odour near the septic tank. Being unformed, police rushed to the spot, opened the cover of septic tank and found the body of an unidentified woman. Police suspect that criminals might have killed her after rape and dumped the body inside the tank.

Widening of road demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

People of Parbatipur formed a human chain yesterday, demanding widening and renovation of a road in the town. The hour-long human chain was held at Dhakamare. The participants urged the authorities to renovate and widen the 32km Dinajpur-Parbatipur road as it is too narrow for crossing two vehicles at a time. A mass signature campaign was also organised. The human chain programme was organised following the death of final year Masters' student of the upazila Md Ashraf Hossain at Bhaberbazaar on November 29.

Youth's body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Police recovered the decomposed body of a youth from a char of Kholpatua River in Trimohini area of Shymnagar upazila in the district yesterday. Relatives identified the body of Abdus Sadek, 40, son of Sheikh Elahi Bux of Mouta village in Kaliganj upazila. Councillor Kazi Monirul Islam of Mouta union parishad said, Sadek, a fish trader by profession and a BNP activist, did not return home after going to workplace on Monday morning.

BSF chases smugglers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened two rounds of fire and threw a grenade on smugglers at Haribhasha border under Panchagarh Sadar upazila early yesterday. Acting Commanding Officer of 25, BGB Panchagarh Battalion Maj AKM Shamim Reza told this correspondent over cell phone that BSF members at Shingpara camp chased a gang of smugglers inside India when they were sending smuggling goods including cattle to Bangladesh through the border. No casualty however was reported.

Trader drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A youth drowned in river when two trawlers collided in Kawkhali upazila yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Md Mamun Hossain, 28, a vegetable trader and also son of Shamsul Alam of Uttar Kamarkathi village in Nesarabad upazila of the district. The incident took place when Mamun was returning from Hularhat in the district with a vegetable-laden trawler. When he reached Amrajhuri ferry terminal in the River Sandha, their trawler hit a sand laden trawler there because of dense fog. Mamun fell in the water and his body was later recovered from the river.



PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers, with the help of workers, removing a tree from a point of the Chandpur-Comilla regional highway. Blockaders felled at least 20 roadside trees on the last day of the 6-day country-wide programme of the 18-party alliance yesterday.