

Sunflower farming trebles in Patuakhali

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The area of sunflower cultivation in the district has tripled in last three years as local farmers are becoming more interested to cultivate it for getting edible oil at lower costs.

The oil seed was cultivated on about 45,000 acres of land this year while in last two years cultivated on about 35,000 and 15,000 acres in the district.

Abdul Bareq, 55, a farmer of Bodorpur village under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, said he started sunflower cultivation four years ago and the yield earns him some amount after meeting yearly family demand of edible oil.

"I cultivated sunflower on one acre of land this year and hope to get 15 to 20 maunds of seeds from there. I will get 240 to 300 litres oil from the seeds," he said.

Abdus Salam, chairman of Bodorpur UP, also cultivated sunflower on 1.50 acres of lands to meet his family requirement.

Abdul Awal, deputy assistant agriculture officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said local farmers are encouraged to cultivate sunflower as they can easily get edible oil at a low cost while price of other edible oil in local market is high.

Its cultivation process is very easy and comparatively cheaper. It has no need much of irrigation, have need a few quantity of fertiliser and insecticides that easy to farmer, he added.

"Around 500 grams of oil



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers tending sunflowers on a vast field in Amtali upazila under Barguna district that sees a rapid rise in the cultivation of the oilseed plant.

is produced from one kg of sunflower, which is more than other oil seeds," he added.

To encourage sunflower cultivation, IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) runs USAID-funded project Expansion of Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia in Bangladesh (CSISA-BD) in Patuakhali and Barguna districts while oil and food company 'Amrita' has shown interest to collect

sunflower seeds from local farmers instead of importing from India.

On Friday, they arranged a 'field day' at Gabua in Patuakhali to exchange views and experiences with farmers on sunflower oil processing and marketing.

CSISA-BD Chief of Party Tim Russell, IRRI-Barisal Hub Manager Deb Kumar, Professor Dr Iqbal of agronomy department of Patuakhali Science and Technology University,

Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Abu Jafar, IRRI Patuakhali Agricultural Research and Development Officer Muhammad Shahedul Alam, Barisal Mission Head of Speed Trust Shamsul Islam Dipu, representatives from a few local oil mills, and around 50 farmers from different areas of Barisal division, attended the programme.

The CSISA project, meant for sunflower farming immediately after rice

harvest from the same land, covers 40 hectares of land belonging to around 350 farmers of Barisal Division, said Dev Kumar.

Bangladesh produces 0.358 million tonnes of edible oil against the yearly demand of about 1.6 million tonnes, he added.

Cultivation of oil seeds is increasing in the region as local farmers are realising its importance, said AZM Momtazul Karim, deputy director of DAE in

Lightning kills 3 in Chandpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

At least three people, including a child, were killed and five others injured by lightning in Haimchar upazila of the district yesterday evening.

The deceased were identified as Matin, 60, Shahnaz, 6, daughter of Babul Hawlder and Liton Mian, 17, son of Siraj Mian of Madhachar area in the upazila.

The injured are Hridoy, 12, Saha Alam, 12, Afzal, 12, Mobarak, 11 and Rafique, 12, of the area.

They were admitted to the upazila health complex, said officer in-charge Md Maniruzzaman of Haimchar police station.

Lightning struck the victims during rain in the area at 6:00pm, leaving three dead on the spot and five others injured, said superintendent of police Ameer Jafar.

12 JCD, Jubo Dal men granted bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Joypurhat court yesterday granted bail to 12 Jubo Dal and JCD activists in a case for torching Awami League office in the town in December last year.

They were produced in the district and Sessions Judge's Court in the afternoon and sought bail.

After hearing, Judge Zulfikar Ali granted them bail. On March 19, they surrendered before the court, seeking bail. The court rejected their bail prayers and sent them to jail.

Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal leaders set fire to the AL party office on December 10. Md Zillur Rahman Khan, organisational secretary of Joypurhat AL, filed the case with Sadar police Station on the day, accusing 15 activists of BNP and its associate bodies.

The accused, who were granted bail yesterday, are Momin Khandakar Dalim, joint convener of Joypurhat Government College unit of Chhatra Dal, Sariful Islam, organisational secretary of district Jubo Dal, Masud Rana, president of Chhatra Dal district unit, Farikul Islam, president of Joypurhat town unit of Jubo Dal, JCD activists Moktadir Haque Adnan, Md Razib, Foysal, Md Wahab Ali, Papan and Golzar Hossain, and Md Azim, and Golam Mortuza Shiplu, president of the town unit of Sramik Dal.

SNIPPETS

Injured robber dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An alleged robber, who sustained bullet wounds in police firing in Nasipur area on Dinajpur-Dhaka highway on Tuesday, died at a hospital in the capital early yesterday. The deceased is Md Abdul Khaleque, 28, said Md Altaf Hossain, officer in-charge of Dinajpur police station. Early Tuesday, a gang of highway robbers opened fire on a patrol police team in the area, prompting them to fire bullets in self-defense. Khaleque sustained injuries in his right leg during the firing, said police. He was rushed to Orthopedic Hospital in Dhaka where he died at 3:00am.

Youth 'commits suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A youth allegedly committed suicide at Nidarabad village in Bijoy nagar upazila yesterday morning. The dead is Md Junaid Mia, 22, son of Shahjahan Mia of the village. Police said Junaid took his life by hanging himself from a jackfruit tree nearby the house following an altercation over the family matter. The body was sent to Brahmanbaria Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Arson attack on house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Extortionists made arson attack on the house of a Hindu at Begumganj upazila of the district early yesterday. Sub-Inspector Md Zillur Rahman of Begumganj police station said the gang had been demanding toll from one Goranga Doctor by cellphone in last few days. As he refused to meet the demand, they set fire to his at around 3:00am. As family members cried for help, locals rushed to the spot and doused the blaze. Following information, police visited the spot. A case was filed in connection with the incident.

Girl rescued, trafficker held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) rescued a teenage girl while she was being trafficked to India through Kaiba border here yesterday morning. They also arrested one one Billal Hossain, 37, son of Abdul Jabbar of Sarisabari upazila in Jamalpur district in this connection. BGB-23 company commander Rafiqul Islam said, on secret information, they raided the border area and rescued the girl and arrested the trafficker. The victim hailed from Jamalpur, he said.

Man electrocuted

UNB, Sirajganj

A man was electrocuted near Jhawal bridge on the west side of the connecting road of Bangabandhu bridge in Kamarkhand upazila on Tuesday evening. The deceased was identified as Abdul Malek, 35, son of late Atahar Ali of Chawk Shahbazpur village of the upazila. Locals said Abdul Malek came in contact with a live electric wire while working with a shallow water pump machine in the area around 8:30pm and died on the spot.

Arms seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police seized a pipe gun from Hili border area in Hakimpur upazila yesterday morning. However, none was arrested in connection with incident. SM Ahsan Habib, officer in-charge of Hakimpur police station, said on secret information, a police team raided the area and seized the arms in an abandoned condition.

Contraband medicines seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A huge contraband medicines and crackers worth Tk.1.75 crore were seized from Hili border under Hakimpur upazila yesterday. However, none was arrested in this connection, said an official of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). On Secret

Implement CHT peace accord fully

Santu Larma iterates demand at Bijhu rally in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC) Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma yesterday reiterated the demand for full execution of the CHT peace accord for establishing political, social and economical rights of jumma people.

Self-determination of the jumma people has not established as the major clauses of the deal are yet to be implemented over 16 years after its signing, he said, addressing as chief guest at a 'Bijhu rally' held at the hill town.

The committee for celebrating Bijhu, Sangrain, Bishu and Bihu organised the function ahead of the biggest social celebra-

tions of the indigenous peoples in CHT region.

The festivals will be celebrated on April 12, 13 and 14.

Overall situation in CHT is yet to be normal as the army in the name of 'Operation Uttaran' is ruling the hills while indigenous people there are still living amid insecurity due to frequent communal attacks on them, said Bodhipriya, who is popularly known as Santu Larma.

There is no alternative to proper execution of the deal to free the jumma people from all sorts of suppression, torture and harassment and uphold and preserve their culture, customs and tradition, he said.

The former guerrilla

leader urged all to resist anti-peace treaty organisation United People's Democratic Front.

Among others, Dipen Dewan, president of district unit of BNP, Dr Manik Lal Dewan, Jagat Jyoti Chakma, former chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council, Goutam Dewan, president of CHT Citizens Committee, addressed the rally presided over by Prakriti Ranjan Chakma, CHT unit president of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum.

Later hundreds of ethnic people joined a colourful procession that paraded the road from the premises of Rangamati municipality office to Shilpakala Academy in the town.

Three outlaws to die for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday sentenced to death three members of outlawed Purba Bangla Communist Party (ML-Janajuddha) on charge of killing a member of their gang in 2005.

The three convicts -- Shaheed Sheikh and Yasin of Kumarkhali village in Mongla upazila, and Yasin Hawlder of Kumlai village in Rampal upazila under Bagerhat district, were tried in absentia.

The judge, SM Solaiman also awarded life term imprisonment to Masum Gazi.

On June 7 in 2005, Masum Gazi of Kumarkhali village Mizan Sardar, son of Shafiz Uddin Sardar of the same village, out of home and police recovered the body with slit throat from an embankment in Mirakhali area the next day, goes the case statement.

Mizan's brother Syed Sardar filed a murder case accusing Masum, Yasin, Shaheed and other unnamed people in connection with the killing.

After investigation, police submitted a charge sheet against five people on November 29 in 2006.

Another person was acquitted of the charge.

ASSAULT ON KHDC STAFF

Khagrachhari AL leader, two others sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Two employees of Khagrachhari Hill District Council (KHDC) were beaten up by a local Awami League leader on Wednesday noon.

Soon after the incident, KHDC employees went on an indefinite strike, demanding arrest of the AL leader, also an enlisted contractor of the hill district council. They, however, called off the strike at 4:00pm yesterday at the request of KHDC acting Chairman Chai Tow Aong Marma.

The two KHDC staff, who were beaten up by the AL man, are office assistant Mafiz Uddin, 30, and peon Mintu Das, 50. Mintu was admitted to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital while Mafiz given first aid at the hospital.

A case was filed with Sadar Police station yesterday afternoon, accusing AL leader Ashu Tripura and his

two supporters--Sultan and Swapon.

KDCH office sources said Ashu Tripura, Science and Technology Secretary of Awami League Khagrachhari municipality unit, came to the office along with Sultan and Swapon at around 11:30am.

He locked in an altercation with office assistant Mafiz over preparing a bill. At one stage, he stated beating Mafiz. As Mintu came forward to save Mofiz, Ashu also beat him up and left the office.

Contacted, Officer-in-charge Mizanur Rahman of Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station said they will take legal action against the people responsible for the incident after proper investigation.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not talk to Ashu Tripura as his mobile phone remained switched off.



PHOTO: STAR

This bridge over Putimari canal beside Bagerhat town collapsed on Tuesday, snapping communication between the district town and several villages in the nearby area.

Robbers stab UNO, one arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Kamalaganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer was stabbed by robbers in Lawachhara area under Srimangal upazila early Tuesday.

Police arrested a youth from Srimangal town area in connection with the attack yesterday afternoon.

The arrestee is Md Al-Amin, 25, son of late Ful Miah of Sindurkhan road area under Srimangal, said police.



PHOTO: STAR

Ethnic girls dance at the venue of 'Bijhu rally' on the premises of municipality office in Rangamati town yesterday. Indigenous people arranged the function ahead of their traditional Bijhu festival to be celebrated on April 12, 13 and 14.

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