

Watermelon farming on the rise in Patuakhali

Bumper yield, good prices make growers happy

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Farmers of the district, especially in sandy lands of coastal islands, are getting encouraged to cultivate watermelon on more areas of land as the popular summer fruit brings more profit than traditional crops including paddy.

This year 13,368 hectares of land in seven upazilas under the district has been brought under watermelon cultivation while it was 10,250 hectares last year, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Patuakhali.

The district's total production may cross six lakh tonnes, the value being Tk 110 crore, they said.

Land of Rangabali, Galachipa and Kalapara upazilas see large areas of watermelon fields as those are very suitable for watermelon cultivation due to soil, weather condition, availability of irrigation water, said Md Ziaul Islam, crop specialist of DAE in Patuakhali.

Of them, Rangabali upazila sees the highest 4,510 hectares of land under watermelon cultivation this year.

Now retail market prices of large, medium and small sized watermelons are Tk 130-150, Tk 70-80 and Tk 40-50 at par respectively.

Sandy soil in the area is very much suitable for watermelon cultivation and a good number of rivers and canals there provide irrigation facility, said Lutfur Rahman, assistant plant preserver of DAE in Rangabali



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers load huge quantity of watermelons onto a trawler at Baher Char in Rangabali upazila under Patuakhali district that sees gradual rise in the cultivation of the popular summer fruit. The photo was taken on Sunday.

Local farmers are encouraged to cultivate watermelon, as it is more profitable than paddy, he added.

During the ongoing harvesting season, traders from different areas of the country are coming to buy watermelon from the fields in the district.

During a visit to Koralia village under Rangabali upazila on Sunday, this correspondent saw many farmers and their family members busy with reaping watermelon from the fields, and/or loading it to trawlers, launches and boats to send it to different places including Dhaka, Rajshahi, Bogra and

Khulna.

"I cultivated watermelon on my 20 acres of land, spending Tk about 2 lakh. I have already sold watermelon worth Tk about 5 lakh and hope to get Tk 20 lakh more by selling rest of the produce," said Abbas Uddin Howladar, a watermelon farmer of Koralia village in Rangabali upazila.

Abdur Rahman, another farmer of the same area, cultivated watermelon on 15 acres of land.

"I hope to earn Tk 20 to 25 lakh by selling watermelon this year. We are very happy to see bumper yield of watermelon," he said.

"Cultivation of watermelon is more profitable

than that of paddy and I think it can help to change our lot. I hope to earn at least Tk 25 lakh by selling the fruit this year as many wholesale buyers from Dhaka and other places are coming here to buy it," said Abdul Awal Mia of the same village.

"Seeing our success, more and more farmers are engaging in watermelon cultivation in the area," he added.

Farmers have urged the government to set up cold storages in the area to preserve watermelon properly.

They also demanded taking step to export the delicious fruit abroad for getting higher prices.

Early taking of answer scripts irks examinees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The HSC examinees at a centre in Birganj upazila yesterday went on rampage as the invigilators allegedly took the answer scripts 10 minutes before end of the examination time.

The incident took place at Birganj Women's Degree College centre in the upazila.

They vandalised windowpanes and furniture of different classrooms of the centre and four motorcycles of invigilators. The angry students also confined the

principal of the college to his office.

The invigilators took the answer papers of the examinees at 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 number rooms just 10 minutes before the end of the examination time, said the students.

Protesting the incident, they burst into agitation and went on the rampage. Later, they confined Principal Md Zahurul Islam till 3:30pm.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said Arman Hossain, officer-in-charge of Birganj Police Station.

Man hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Palma

A 52-year-old man was hacked to death allegedly by his son-in-law at Khudramatia village in Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj district on Tuesday night.

Police and family sources said Ibrahim Hossain married Kohinur Khatun, daughter of Shah Alam of the village in 2010.

After the marriage, Ibrahim often tortured Kohinur over a family feud. Fed up with the incident, Kohinur filed a case with Sirajganj court recently, seeking divorce. The court

issued a notice to Ibrahim for appearing before the court.

Enraged by her act, Ibrahim along with his brothers attacked Shah Alam with sharp weapons, leaving him seriously injured while he was watching TV at a nearby tea stall in the village at 10:30pm.

Shah Alam was rushed to the upazila health complex where on duty doctors declared him dead, said officer-in-charge of Belkuchi police station Md Abdul Hai Sarkar.

Ibrahim and his family members went into hiding after the incident, he said.

Tortured AL leader dies after 18 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A local leader of ruling Awami League (AL), rescued in a critical condition by police on April 4, hours after his abduction, died at a hospital in the capital early yesterday.

The victim, Ebadat Hossain, 51, was a member of convenor committee of Benapole municipality unit of AL.

Police and locals said

Ebadat was abducted from his shop at Benapole bazar around 10:30pm on April 4, allegedly by a faction of AL for defying their threats and submitting tender documents of a construction work in Benapole Municipality area.

Police rescued him near Satmail Bazar area in Sharsha upazila of Jessore in an unconscious condition.

SNIPPETS

Eight gamblers held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested eight alleged gamblers at Jamundarpara village in the district town on Tuesday night. The arrestees are Sanjoy, 25, of Gobindanagar, Nahid Rahman, 22, of Kalibari, Dulal, 29, of Tikkipara, Naru, 30, of Fakirpara, Sajjad Hossain, 30, of Mondirpara, Motin, 34, Pervez, 24, of Collegepara and Serekul Islam, 32, of Munshipara in the town. On secret information, a team of DB men raided the house of one Nitai of Jamundarpara in the area and arrested the eight while they were gambling, said Sub-Inspector Rawshan Ara Khatun.

Body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Police recovered the beheaded body of an unidentified man, aged about 35, from the Launch ghat in the district yesterday morning. Abdur Rahim, sub-inspector of Jhalakathi police station, said locals found the body floating on the river and informed the police. The body was sent to Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the SI.

Indian betel nuts seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 225 sacks of Indian betel nut worth Tk 15 lakh from Jatrapur border area in the district early yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, the BGB men raided two houses at Sarkerpara and Bhushirvita villages in Jatrapur union and seized the betel nuts. However, the smugglers managed to flee, sensing the presence of the border guards, said Lt Col Mozaffar Hossain Akhanda, commanding officer of 45 BGB Battalion.

Shibir man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested a leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir at Nimgachhi village in Bholahat upazila yesterday morning. The arrestee is Soheli Rana, 22, general secretary of Bholahat upazila unit of Shibir and son of Jamshed Ali. He was arrested on charge of killing Jubo League activist Abdur Rahman, said Abu Farhad, officer-in-charge of Bholahat Police Station.

'Arrest the attackers of journos'

BAU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Bangladesh Agricultural University Journalists' Association (BAUJA) formed a human chain on the campus yesterday, protesting attack on journalists at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) and Mitford Hospital. They also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the attackers. Journalists from different print and electric media in the district town also joined the programme. Earlier, they brought out a procession on the campus to realise the demand.



PHOTO: STAR

GIVE ELECTRICITY, SAVE CROPS: Farmers form a human chain at a crop field of Gopalpur village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila yesterday demanding smooth power supply for ensuring irrigation to their crop fields during the ongoing boro season.

BAU students return to classes

To continue exam boycott until Saad's killers are brought to book

BAU CORRESPONDENT

Agitating students of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) yesterday went back to their classes after giving an ultimatum to the university authorities that they will not sit for any examination until their demand for ensuring punishment to the killers of fellow student Saad Inbey Momtaz is met.

On April 2, the students began the agitation programme, protesting the killing of Saad and demanding expulsion for life of those involved in the murder and immediate arrest of all the accused.

killers under the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act.

Saad Inbey Momtaz, a final-year student of the fisheries faculty at BAU, died from his injuries at a private clinic in Mymensingh district town on April 1, a day after some Chhatra League men had beaten him up mercilessly at Ashraf Haque Hall on the campus.

On April 15, a five-member probe body, headed by Prof Abu Taher Muhammad Zia Uddin, was formed for further investigation into the killing incident. The probe body has been asked to submit the report within the next 21 working days.

Earlier on April 9, the BAU authorities expelled three students and suspended three others for their alleged involvement in the murder following the first investigation committee report on the Saad murder.

Although 23 days have elapsed, police could arrest only two of the accused. At a discussion with campus correspondents yesterday, Prof Rafiqul Hoque, vice-chancellor of BAU, said, "I have assured the students of taking stern action against all the accused. Six students have already been punished by the university authorities."

A third party is trying to create further anarchy on the campus. They are misleading the students, added the VC.

BCL leader's

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The incident happened around 10:45pm on Tuesday when Nahid, son of Abul Kalam Azad of Sonamasjid in Shibganj, and some other activists of pro-Awami League student body Chhatra League, were heading home from the campus of Chapainawabganj Government College.

"In less than two minutes, we heard a loud cry of Nahid and rushed back to where the sound was coming from. Seeing us, the assailants exploded two cocktails. They were 20 to 25 people," said an associate of Nahid.

But just before the explosions, he said at the hospital, he had heard Nahid saying, "Kabir, why are you killing me?"

Kabir is a student of the mathematics department of the college and a Shibir activist, said the friend of Nahid, adding his presence at the scene confirmed that the youths accompanying him were also Shibir activists. They used Chinese axes and machetes to attack Nahid.

As the assailants left, the security men of the college took the injured to Chapainawabganj Sadar

Hospital. After primary treatment, doctors there suggested shifting him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Doctors at RMCH provided him with some treatment and then referred him to NICVD, said a friend who accompanied Nahid to Dhaka early yesterday.

Nahid's tendons of both legs and left hand were cut and he was also injured in the head and shoulders, said his brother Moinuddin Zaman Rony.

Walid Ahmed Komol, assistant secretary of central Chhatra League, who hails from Chapainawabganj, said Nahid was not the only victim of Shibir attacks in the district.

In November and December last year, members of Chhatra Shibir attacked two other district BCL leaders.

"We demand immediate arrest of the attackers," he said.

Contacted, Golam Mostofa, president of Chhatra Shibir Chapainawabganj town unit, denied the allegations and demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the attack.

Probe at final stage

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The Daily Star earlier. At yesterday's press briefing, Faizur said ACC was probing corruption allegations against Rana while the Criminal Investigation Department was investigating the criminal charges against him.

"We have been communicating with them [CID] to make sure that there is no overlapping in the probe reports," he said, adding that the CID's investigation was also at the final stage.

According to ACC's monthly activities presented at the briefing, the anti-graft body received 744 corruption complaints in March, of which only nine were approved for investigation after primary scrutiny and inquiry.

The nine-storey Rana Plaza was not approved by Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) though Rajuk's approval was mandatory, its Chairman Nurul Huda told

Criminal killed

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described the incident as crossfire.

With this death, the number of people killed in "shootouts" this year has shot up to 53, according to joint statistics of Ain o Salish Kendra and The Daily Star.

The deceased is Saiful Shikari, 32. He was an accused in at least eight criminal cases, including the murder case of Alamgir Hossain Shimul, former general secretary of Noapara

Municipality Jubo League, said

Khabir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station.

Police said they took Saiful to Shashan Ghat area around 1:35am for recovering arms. Sensing the presence of law enforcers, Saiful's cohorts opened fire on police, forcing the cops to return fire. Saiful was caught in the line of fire and died from bullet wounds.

A pipe gun and two

bullets were recovered from the spot.

Saiful was arrested during a raid in Shanka Pasha village in the upazila on Tuesday evening.

Earlier in March, Raju Biswas was killed in a "shootout" between cops and his cohorts in Narail when police took him to an area to recover stolen arms.

Kiron Bepari was killed in February in a similar incident of "shootout" in Madaripur.

Request for Expression of Interest giz

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is an International cooperation enterprise owned by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, for sustainable development with worldwide operations. GIZ is implementing "Vocational training for women workers in the RMG industry in Bangladesh" jointly with the Department of Women Affairs, Bangladesh (DWA) of the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (MoW&CA).

GIZ invites reputed private service providers/firms/organizations to submit proposals for RMG and Textile Industry Mid Level Manager's Development Training for 428 women. The training curriculum will also include courses for Floor Supervisors and Sewing Operators will be held in the Shahid Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Women's Training Academy, in Jirani, Gazipur. The trainings will be conducted in five fully equipped class rooms located within the premises. The contract period is from 15 of May 2014 till 15 of January 2015.

- The service provider will deliver the following tasks:
- Conduct 4 two-months training courses for Mid Level Manager's according to a standard curriculum including Merchandising, Pattern, Design.
 - Conduct 4 two months training courses for Floor Supervisors and Quality Manager's according to a standard curriculum.
 - Link the trainees with the RMG and textile producers and organizations in order to secure jobs after the training.
 - Train Government officials of DWA/MOWCA as RMG and textile trainers (training on the job).
 - Keep records of all the trainings, collect relevant data on the participants and report regularly to GIZ according to requirements.

Details of the tasks are mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR). TOR, and Guideline for Technical & Financial Proposal should be collected and any queries within April 24-May 02, 2014 by Email: contracts@gizbd.org specifying "Tender for RMG and Textile Industry Mid Level Manager's Development Training" in the subject line. Proposal Submission deadline May 03, 2014.

Interested bidders should submit their "Technical" and "Financial" proposal in separate sealed envelopes by respective stated deadline of May 03, 2014 to the reception desk of GIZ Office Dhaka, Road 90, House 10/C, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212. The envelopes shall be addressed to "GIZ Contracts Division" and bear the remark of "Application for Mid-Level Manager's RMG Training: 83170830".

The interested bidder should apply for the entire training program as a "Single package" and no partial/incomplete application will be considered during selection process.

Please note that GIZ has the right to accept or reject the offer in part or full or may correct, modify or rectify discrepancy, if any, in the offer document without assigning any reason whatsoever.