



PHOTO: STAR

Women farmers collect mung bean from a farmland in Char Kajal area under Golachipa upazila of Patuakhali district that sees bumper yield of the popular vegetable.

Patuakhali farmers see good mung bean yield

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

A large number of farmers are now busy harvesting mung bean in the district that sees good yield of the popular vegetable.

Around 62,000 hectares of land has been brought under mung bean cultivation in the district this year while it was 60,000 hectares last year.

"I cultivated mung bean on my five hectares of land this year and expect 50 to 60 tonnes of yield as I got 45 tonnes from four hectares last year. It is more profitable than paddy cultivation," said Abul

Kalam, a farmer of Char Kajal village in Galachipa upazila.

Md Mainul Islam of the same village said he has cultivated mung bean on six hectares of land and hopes to get 60 to 70 tonnes of yield. He has already harvested 40 tonnes.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw many farmers collecting mung bean at their fields.

Many women labourers are employed to collect the item as the harvest is going on in full swing. They get one-third of the collection as wage.

"I can collect 10 to 12 kg of mung bean daily and get 3 to 4 kg worth Tk 300 to 400 for the work. I have already earned five maunds of mung bean this season," said Amena Begum, a women labourer.

"Local farmers are very much interested to cultivate mung bean as it brings good profit. They get 900 kg to 1,200 kg of yield per hectare of land by cultivating high yielding varieties. Now a kg of mung bean is selling for Tk 80 to 100," said Abdus Salam, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Sadar upazila.

However, farmers had to irrigate their fields as there was scanty rain this season, he said.

Mung beans from Patuakhali are now exported to foreign countries including Japan and so, local farmers are getting good prices, said Md Ziaul Islam, crop specialist of the Department of Agriculture Extension.

At least 30 tonnes of mung bean was exported to Japan only from Dashmina upazila last year as a group of Japan businessmen bought the vegetable from local farmers, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles lie stranded on Thakurgaon-Dhaka highway in Thakurgaon yesterday as transport workers block the road, demanding release of eight fellow workers.

ARREST OF 8 FELLOW WORKERS

Transport workers block roads in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Vehicular movements on all routes in the district have remained suspended since Wednesday night as transport workers blocked Panchagarh-Thakurgaon-Dhaka highway, demanding immediate release of their eight fellow workers.

They also stopped the vehicles of a number of government officials, including DC and SP, plying the road at Thakurgaon intersection yesterday afternoon to press their demand.

Due to the sudden blockade, hundreds of vehicles, including ambulance, got stuck on the highway and regional roads, causing immense sufferings to the passengers and patients.

At 11:30 pm on Wednesday, police arrested eight transport workers on

charges of collecting illegal tolls from goods-laden vehicles at Thakurgaon Bus Terminal and gambling there.

The arrestees are Abdul Hakim, Abdus Samad and Atiqul Islam, members of Thakurgaon Truck and Tank Lorry Workers' Union and Sohel Rana, Gaziul Islam, Habib, Jafar Hossain and Masum, members of Dinajpur Transport Workers' Union.

They have been committing the crimes in the area for long, said police.

Of the arrestees, Hakim, Samad and Atiqul were held on extortion charge, said officer-in-charge of Thakurgaon police station AKM Mehedi Hasan.

Refuting the allegations, Abdul Jabbar, general secretary of Thakurgaon Transport Workers' Union, said

police arrested the eight when they were gossiping at the terminal.

Jabbar, however, admitted that illegal toll was collected from different vehicles for Thakurgaon District Truck and Tank-lorry Samity in regular basis over years.

President of Thakurgaon District Truck and Tank-lorry Samity Sujon Ali said the blockade will continue until release of the transport workers.

The district administration held a meeting with the transport leaders last night to resolve the issue. At the meeting, the transport leaders said they would withdraw the road blockade if their demand is met, the OC told the correspondent.

Police sources said they will release the eight arrested transport workers after taking undertakings from them.

Elephants kill one in Kaptai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A man was trampled to death and another injured in an attack by a herd of wild elephants at Balukhali village in Kaptai upazila early yesterday.

The victim Abdus Sattar, 38, of the village died one spot and the injured Md Idris, 35, was given primary treatment locally.

Locals said a herd of wild elephants entered Balukhali village, in search of food and attacked the house of Sattar around 2:00am and killed him while he was asleep.

Later, the herd attacked Idris's house and hit him with its trunks, leaving him injured.

The elephants also damaged some croplands and several houses of the village, said Zahirul Alam, officer-in-charge of Chandraghona

Man beaten to death by in-laws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was beaten to death allegedly by his wife and in-laws under Sadar upazila of Joypurhat district yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sohel Rana, 23, husband of Kulsum Begum, 18, and son of Abul Kalam Azad of Uttar Dogachhi village in the upazila.

Police arrested deceased's wife Kulsum Begum, daughter Joynal Abedin of Terogachhi village in the same upazila, for her alleged involvement in the killing.

Family sources alleged that Kulsum along with her parents and brother beat Sohel mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot at her home in Terogachhi in the morning.

The body was sent to Joypurhat Modern Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Md Asad, sub-inspector of Joypurhat police station.

Hili port users on strike to realise 3-point demand

Export-import activities suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Activities at Hili land port remained suspended for the second day yesterday due to an indefinite strike enforced by the port users to press home their three-point demand.

Hili Land port C & F Agent Association, Customs Operators Association, Truck Driver Association and workers Federation went on the strike on Wednesday to press for the demands.

The demands are putting an end to giving seal on the manifest of imported goods, harassment by members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), and filing of cases by BGB without informing the C&F agents and importers.

The port users said they will continue strike until their demands are met. Around 3,000 workers at the port have become jobless as loading and unloading of goods have remained suspended since Wednesday morning.

Around 500 goods-laden trucks got stranded inside the Indian territory as these were not allowed to

enter Bangladesh through Hili land port due to the strike.

According to the customs official, the strike is causing a loss one crore in revenue each day.

Leaders and members of the five associations yesterday formed a human chain in front of the customs office in port

area for an hour from 11:00am, demanded removal of the commanding officer [CO] of Joypurhat BGB-3 Battalion.

Addressing a rally at the venue, leaders of the association alleged that the BGB commanding officer unilaterally introduced the system on

April 27 to check the import documents in the name of security in the port area.

The system kills time and truckers and helpers are being harassed by BGB men at the time of checking documents, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

Port users of Hili Land Port form a human chain in front of the customs office at Hakimpur in Dinajpur yesterday to press their three-point demand.

MMCH docs resume duties, body to probe child's death formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Doctors of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH), who began work abstention on Wednesday protesting attack on their fellows by the outsiders, joined their duties yesterday.

At a meeting held on Wednesday night, the doctors of the hospital withdrew their agitation programme, considering the sufferings of the patients, hospital sources said.

Relatives of a child patient, who died at ward No 25 on Wednesday morning, attacked the doctors and nurses at the ward, alleging wrong treatment.

Nirob, 7, son of Shahidul Islam of Mashkanda High School Road area in the town, was admitted to the hospital with fever and pain in the abdomen on Tuesday night.

He was diagnosed with brain infection and given an injection under the supervision of Prof Azizul Haque, head of paediatrics department, Wednesday morning, hospital sources said.

After pushing the injection, the condition of the child deteriorated and he died at around 10:30am.

Bringing allegation of wrong treatment, patient's relatives and locals rushed to the hospital and assaulted the on-duty doctors and nurses. They also vandalised the ward.

Immediately after the incident, doctors of the hospital began work abstention, demanding arrest of the attackers.

Meanwhile, a five-member body headed by Prof Shankar Narayan Das, head of medicine department, was formed yesterday to investigate the death of the child, said Dr Md Tajul Islam, assistant director of MMCH.

The committee will submit its report within seven days, Dr Tajul said, adding that a case will be lodged against the attackers with Kotwali Police Station soon.

Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Mymensingh unit, said the MMCH doctors resumed their duties, considering the sufferings of the patients.

He urged the hospital authorities to ensure security of the doctors and bring the attackers to book immediately.

100 schoolhouses unfit for use in Chandpur

UNB, Chandpur

Although more than one hundred schoolhouses in the district have been declared unfit for use in a recent inspection, classes are still being held at the risky buildings.

Teachers concerned said they fear the buildings may collapse anytime, but have no other alternative to holding the classes in the unfit buildings.

Rabeya Akhter, headmistress of Bolakhal Government Primary School in Hajiganj upazila, said the students of the school are attending the classes in the dilapidated building amid risk of accident.

During a visit to the school, this correspondent found that each pillar of the building has developed cracks.

The plasters on the walls and the ceiling are falling every now and then, complained the students and the teachers.

Rabeya said she had informed the higher authorities about the vulnerable condition of the school building on April 28 last year, but to no effect.

M Nazmul Huda, headmaster of Belcho

Government Primary School in the same upazila, said the main building of the Belcho Government Primary School was declared abandoned by the higher authorities last year.

Since then, 350 students of the school are attending their classes in two small rooms with great difficulties, he added.

This correspondent also visited a dilapidated building of Olipur High School in the upazila. Many cracks have developed in the school building, causing panic among the teachers and the students.

District Primary Education officer Md Akter Hossain said Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in a recent inspection has identified over 100 unfit school buildings in the district.

"A fresh list of the dilapidated school buildings in the eight upazilas of the district is being made. The number of dilapidated school-building is likely to increase after the physical inspection," he said.

Most of these school buildings were constructed by the LGED 15 to 16 years ago.

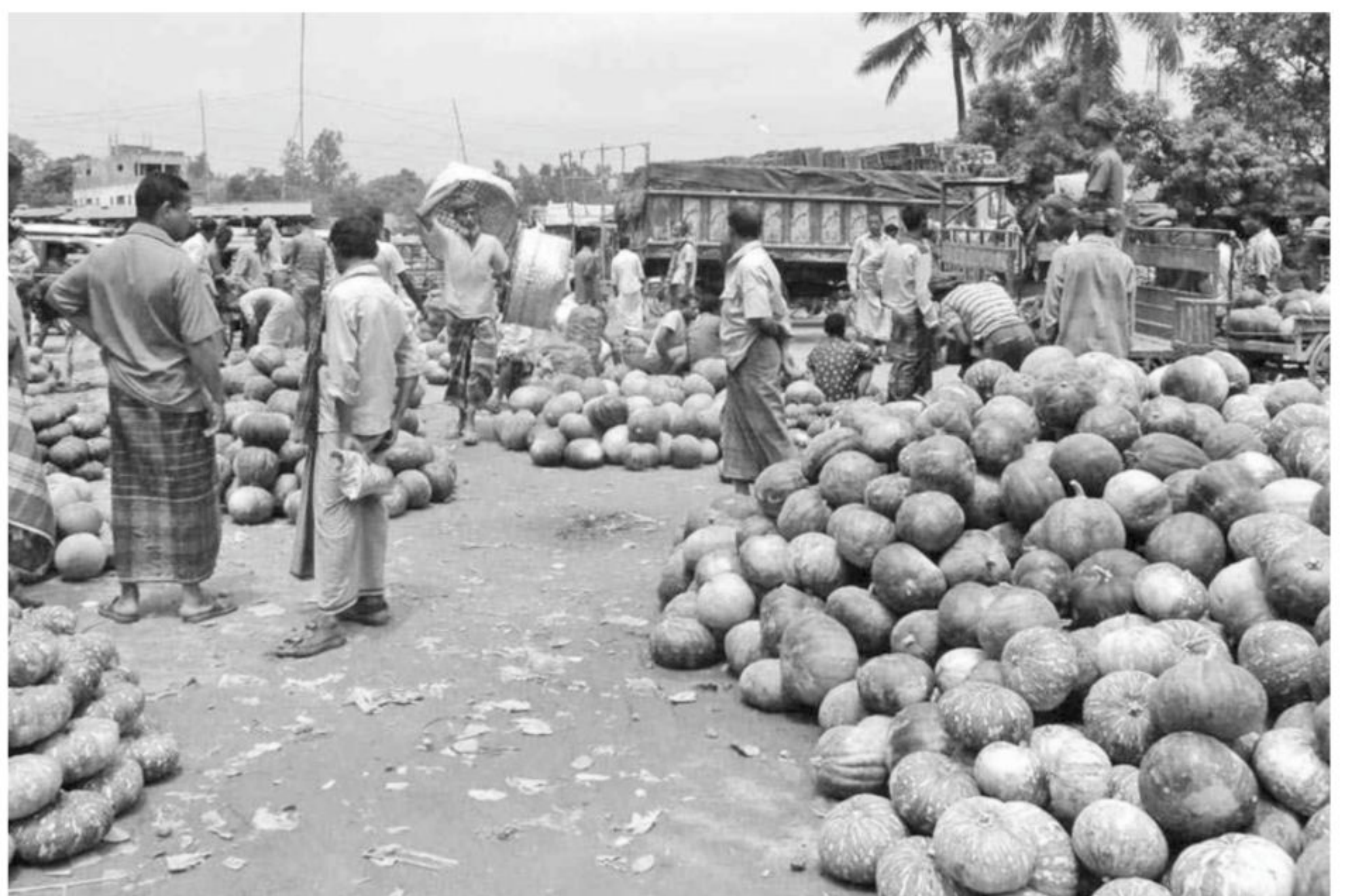


PHOTO: STAR

Pumpkins are being loaded onto trucks at Mahasthangarh in Bogra to supply the vegetable to other parts of the country.