

Drastic price fall frustrates guava farmers in Pirojpur

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Good yield of guava in Nesarabad upazila under the district fails to make growers happy as prices of the popular fruit remains unusually low in the local wholesale market.

On Tuesday a maund of guava sold for Tk 80-120 at Atgar-Kuriyana, a large wholesale floating market that sees sellers from Nesarabad upazila as well as adjacent Barisal and Jhalakathi districts.

Tasty varieties of guava from the area are sent to different areas including capital Dhaka.

"Before Eid we could sell a maund (40 kg) of guava for around Tk 500. As the fruit has become more available with harvest the prices has come down to around Tk 100," said Mosarraf of Atgar area in Nesarabad.

"A labourer employed for Tk 300 daily can pluck four maunds of guava that sells for around Tk 400," said Tapan Mollik of Kuriyana village in the upazila, who cultivated guava on his ten-bigha garden.

A local grower arriving in Dhaka expressed surprise after seeing that the fruit is selling there for Tk 100 or over per kg, the prices being around 40



PHOTO: STAR

This famous floating market at Atgar-Kuriana in Nesarabad upazila under Pirojpur district sees huge supply of locally produced tasty varieties of guava. But the prices, now as low as Tk 80-120 a maund (40 kg), are too frustrating for the growers.

times than that in Nesarabad.

Last year too, local guava farmers incurred huge losses as the business saw serious setback due to countrywide political agitation like frequent hartal and blockade.

Quality varieties of guavas grow at Atgar, Kuriyana, Jalabari, Shangal, Swarupkathi, Alankarkathi, Samudoykathi, Mahamudkathi and some other places of Nesarabad upazila and areas in adjacent Barisal and Jhalakathi

districts.

Farmers have demanded that the government take steps for ensuring fair prices of guava for continuation of the nutritious fruit in the area.

According to Nesarabad

agriculture office sources, 1,250 farmers have cultivated guava on 650 hectares of land in the upazila this year.

Last year 8.5 tonnes of guavas were harvested from one hectare of land on an average.

18 hurt as AL, BNP clash in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least 18 people were injured in a clash between the activists of Awami League and BNP in Kabakhali area under Dighinala upazila on Wednesday night.

Locals said Aslam Uddin, organising secretary of Kabakhali unit of AL, beat-up Abdul Aziz, president of Kabakhali ward unit of Jubad, at Kabakhali Bazar on Wednesday evening as a sequel to previous enmity.

Hearing the news, local leaders and activists of BNP equipped with lethal weap-

ons attacked the ruling party men, prompting them to retaliate.

Chase and counter chase also took place during the clash that left at least 18 people from both sides injured. Rawshan Ali Bhuyan, organising secretary of AL Dighinala upazila unit, and Abdul Alim, president of Kabakhali union unit of Jubo League, are among the injured.

The injured were admitted to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested BNP activists Azizul Haque, Jasim Uddin, Suman Mia

and Dewan Ali from different areas of the upazila yesterday for their alleged involvement in the clash.

Mohammad Delwar Hossain, organising secretary of AL upazila unit, said BNP men attacked on his party men at the bazaar without provocation.

Refuting the allegation, upazila BNP President Moslem Uddin said the ruling party men swooped on the BNP men when they were going to submit complaint to local security personal against Aslam Uddin for beating up Jubo Dal leader Aziz.

Scanty rainfall hampers jute rotting process

Plants drying up in fields

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Scanty rainfall is hampering the process of rotting jute plants during the peak period of monsoon, much to the worry of the growers in many districts.

Due to inadequate rain, jute plants are drying up in the fields, said several farmers in Gaibandha, reports our correspondent.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, this season jute cultivation target was fixed on 15,863 hectare of land but 14,265 hectares of land were brought under plantation in seven upazilas of the district.

For absence of sufficient rain, the water pools are yet to store necessary rainwater for rotting jute, plunging the farmers into great difficulties, said Amjad Hossain, a jute grower of Haldia village in Saghatia upazila.

This year jute growers may not get fair price because of delaying the process of jute cultivation

and rotting, said worried jute growers.

Besides, the farmers could not start plantation of aman seedlings in the dried up lands.

Although solvent farmers have prepared their aman fields using irrigation pump, the seedlings are new getting yellowish for want of sufficient rainwater.

Farmers in Jhenidah district are also facing crisis of water needed for rotting green jute in the season.

The situation turned grave as the water bodies in the district have almost dried up, reports our correspondent.

Farmers feared that the crisis would be acute this year as rainfall was scanty in the rainy season.

Abdul Latif, a farmer of Roghunathpur village in Kaliganj upazila, said that water at the local water bodies like ditches, canals and ponds has dried up because of poor rainfall in the monsoon.

He said, they might be

deprived of fair prices of the fibre this year for low quality as they were unable to rot jute in proper time.

Contacted, the deputy director of the department of agriculture extension, Jhenidah Hazrat Ali admitted that severe water crisis was seriously hampering jute rotting in the region.

Jute grower Helal Uddin at Teesta village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila told our correspondent, "I have cultivated jute on eight bighas of land this season and I have already harvested it from five bighas land. I am rotting jute in a canal beside my homestead but I am facing serious trouble due to shortage of water in this waterbody".

This year 4,250 hectares of land were prepared for jute cultivation in five upazilas of the district, said an agriculture extension department official.

Inadequate rainfall is hampering jute rotting seriously, he added.

ATTACK ON HINDU FAMILY

Two more held in Patgram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police yesterday arrested two more accused in the case for stabbing four people of a Hindu family and setting fire to their house at bordering Shafirhat village of Bawra union in Patgram upazila under the district on July 13.

The same day, police arrested three people in this connection.

The two others who were arrested yesterday are Samiul Islam, 30, and Nuru Miah, 42, -- both residents of Hosnabad village of Bawra union in Patgram.

On July 13, a gang allegedly led by main accused Abul Hossain set fire to the house of Pushpa Rani Sen, 68, wife of late Debendra Nath Sen, in a bid to grab her two bighas of land, police said.

As the family members tried to resist, the attackers stabbed Pushpa Rani, her two sons Shyamol Chandra



PHOTO: STAR

Goons allegedly led by a land grabber burnt down the house of widow Pushpa Rani Sen at Shafirhat village in Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district on July 13.

Sen, 45, and Kamol Chandra Sen, 38, and Shyamol's wife Dipali Rani Sen, 30.

Seriously injured Pushpa, Shyamol and Kamol were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital on the night of July 13.

As their conditions deteriorated, they were shifted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in Dhaka with the help of

Human Rights Organisation Ain O Salish Kendra on July 18.

Dipali Rani Sen lodged a case with Patgram Police Station against eighteen named people and eight unnamed ones accusing them of the attack.

Police are trying to arrest all the accused, said Amiruzzaman, officer in charge of Patgram Police Station.

Youth shot by BSF on Satkhira border

UNB, Satkhira

A Bangladeshi youth was shot by members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Bhomra border in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Nazmul Islam, 35, son of late Nurul Islam of Mahmudpur village in the upazila.

Nur Islam, subedar of Bhomra camp of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), said BSF members from

Panitar camp of India opened fire on Nazmul in the border area at about 5:45 am, leaving him injured.

Being informed, BGB men took him to Satkhira Sadar Hospital, said the subedar.

Victim's mother Ayesha Begum said Nazmul is a labourer of Bhomra land port. BSF members detained him from the port area and shot at him.

Woman gets life for killing stepdaughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A court here yesterday sentenced a woman to life imprisonment for killing her stepdaughter in 2009.

The lifer is Jannatul Lucky, 25, wife of Omar Gony of Ufarmara village in Patgram upazila.

On the night of July 22 in 2009, Lucky hacked nine-year-old Jannatul Ferdousi to death following a family feud.

The following day, Omar Gony filed a murder case with Patgram police station, accusing his second wife Lucky.

After examining witnesses and evidence, District and Sessions Judge Siddiqui Arefin Chowdhury found Lucky guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Meanwhile, Omar Gony, father of the deceased, expressed his satisfaction over the judgment.

Patuakhali bus terminal in awful state

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

With dirty water and stink all around, Patuakhali central bus terminal remains a public nuisance for long.

The Local Government Engineering Department built the bus terminal on two acres of land at Kalikapur in the town at a cost of Tk 1.65 crore.

Formally opened in 2008, the terminal beside Patuakhali-Kuakata road was later handed over to Patuakhali municipality

that leases it on yearly basis.

Due to lack of drainage system and faulty sanitation, dirty water comes out, spreading bad smell all around.

The situation worsens during the rains when dirty water floods the compound, said Abul Hossain, a passenger.

"Passengers often decline to enter the terminal due to its bad condition. They want to get on and down from buses on the road and it poses risk of accident," said Ali Hossain, a bus owner of Patuakhali.

The problem arises as the terminal has been built without any drainage system, said Golam Maula Dulu, secretary of Patuakhali district bus owners association.

The authorities should take immediate step to solve the problem, said Abu Zafar Khan, manager of bus transport agency Sakura Paribahan.

Patuakhali municipality Mayor Dr Md Shafiqul Islam said they are taking steps to solve the problem.



PHOTO: STAR

PICTURE TELLS THE TALE: The central bus terminal in Patuakhali town gets flooded even during a moderate rainfall, making it virtually unusable for passengers. The photo was taken a couple of days ago.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer of Durgapur village in Kaliganj upazila under Jhenidah district loads his jute onto a truck to take it to a water body some kilometres away as water is not available at the village for rotting the item due to lack of sufficient rain this monsoon.

Dowry-greedy husband throws acid on wife

UNB, Magura

A housewife sustained severe burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly by her husband for dowry at Phulbari village in Sadar upazila on Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as Shirina Begum, 24, wife of Arafat Ali of the village.

Family sources said Arafat married Shirina, daughter of Waliur Rahman of Baroipara village in Shreepur upazila, in 2008 and has been demanding Tk one lakh as dowry from her father since after marriage.

On the fateful night, Arafat picked up a quarrel with Shirina over the issue and at one stage, he threw acid on her.

Shirina sustained burn injuries in neck, hands and legs and was admitted to Sadar Upazila Health Complex.

TORTURE, RAPE OF INDIGENOUS WOMAN LEADER

Accused put pressure on victim to withdraw case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

The accused in the case for torturing and raping an indigenous woman leader in Gomostapur upazila of the district are giving threat to the victim to withdraw the case.

Lying at Chapainawabganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital, the victim yesterday told this correspondent that "Criminals threatened me repeatedly over mobile phone, saying they would cut off my limbs and legs and kidnap my daughter if I do not withdraw the case".

On Monday noon, a gang of 30/35 demanded Tk 3 lakh from the president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad Chapainawabganj unit when she along with her labourers was planting aman seedlings on her land at Zinarpur village under Parbatipur union of

Gomostapur upazila.

As the indigenous woman leader, also the member of Parbatipur Union Parishad, refused to pay heed to the demand, the gang members swooped on the leader and

beat her. They also attacked the labourers, who managed to flee the scene.

The victim alleged that three of the gang took her to one side of the farmland and raped her while others

took away her power tiller, two bullocks and a shallow pump machine.

She filed a case with Gomostapur Police Station on Monday night, accusing 18 named and 14/15 unnamed people. The indigenous leader was admitted to Gomostapur Upazila Health Complex on the day and shifted to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital early Tuesday.

Sub-Inspector Mominur Rahman, also the investigation officer of the case, said police recovered her power tiller, bullocks and shallow pump machine from different parts of Naogaon district in an abandoned condition on Wednesday night.

We were trying to track the mobile phone calls of the accused, the SI said, adding that three of the named accused-- Ziaul Karim, Azizur Rahman, and Anisur Rahman were arrested.



PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous people form human chain in new court building area in Rangamati town yesterday, protesting torture and rape of a woman indigenous leader in Gomostapur upazila of Chapainawabganj on Monday.