

# Scarcity of quality seeds upsets potato farmers

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Potato farmers in eight northern districts constituting the country's largest potato growing region are upset due to scarcity of quality seeds and its high price at the onset of potato sowing season.

As supply of quality seeds from BADC (Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation) is too scanty, farmers are buying uncertified low quality seeds from markets for high prices.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Rangpur set a target to cultivate potato on 1.72 lakh hectares of land in Rangpur, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts to get 33.69 lakh tonnes of yield and the demand of potato seeds in the eight northern districts is 2.58 lakh tonnes.

As November is the peak time for potato cultivation, farmers are now preparing their lands for the purpose.

Farmers said they prefer BADC seeds as those are cultivated and preserved in scientific ways, are free from virus and fungus, and give high yield.

Sources of BADC seed department in the region said it supplies only 4.40 thousand tonnes of potato seeds to farmers through 5550 dealers in eight districts, which comprise only about 2% of the requirement.

Admitting the situation, Nurul Islam, deputy director of BADC regional seed marketing department,

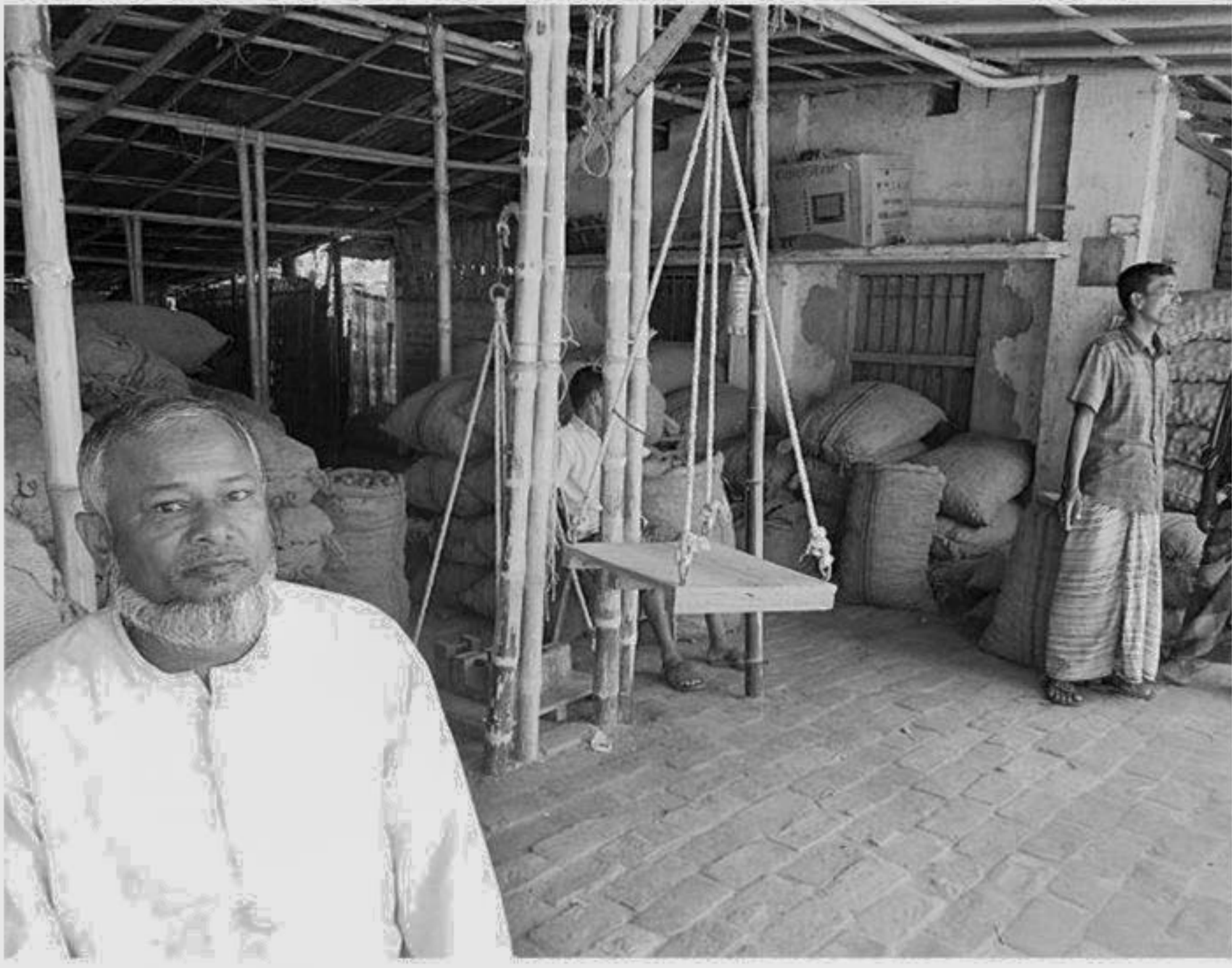


PHOTO: STAR

With hardly any customer, a potato seed trader at Mirganj seed market in Nilphamari district passes idle time as farmers are hesitant to buy potato seeds that are mostly without any quality certification of the government's seed department.

suggested that farmers procure the required seeds from big farmers, NGOs, seed traders etc.

He, however, could not specify what percentage of the requirement would be available from these sources.

The government rates for seeds of different grades and varieties range from Tk 24-35 a kg but BADC seeds are rarely seen in the markets as recruited dealers sell them in advance to big farmers or seed companies for Tk 30-48 per kg, farmers alleged.

During visit to different markets like Tengenmari Haat of Nilphamari,

Mohishkhocha Haat of Lalmonirhat and Sakoa Haat of Panchagarh, this correspondent saw large-scale selling of low quality seeds, mostly virus and fungus affected ones.

An 80-kg bag of low quality uncertified cardinal variety potato is selling for Tk 1600-Tk 1650 per maund (40 kg) which was Tk 800-Tk 1000 last year. Same is the case with other potato varieties like granola, diamond, courage, asterisk, lady roseta, beeline etc.

Monju Alam Sarker, government seed certification officer for Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat, said 90% of seeds in markets are of

low quality while no individual, trader or seed company came to them for testing seeds and getting quality certification this year.

Sreedam Das, president of Nilphamari district unit of Krishok Samity, said a section of seed traders are selling low quality seeds for high prices, taking advantage of poor monitoring by the government's department concerned.

Shakhawat Hossain, additional director of the regional office of DAE in Rangpur, said action will be taken against dishonest traders if farmers lodge complaints, he said.

## 18 Jamaat, Shibir men arrested in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police arrested at least 18 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir from eight upazilas of the district on Saturday night and early yesterday.

Police said the Jamaat-Shibir men were held on charge of planning subversive activities during the party's countrywide demonstration programme yesterday, said Shariful Alam, Sub-Inspector (SI) of Detective Branch (DB) police in Rangpur.

The arrestees were also absconding accused in different cases filed with the police stations, including for attacking police, preventing the law enforcers from performing their duties, attacking and torching polling centres and snatching ballots during the January 5 parliamentary elections, the SI added.

On Saturday, Jamaat announced that it will stage demonstrations across the country yesterday, demanding release of its leaders who are facing charges of committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

Meanwhile, the law enforcers arrested 57 more people from the upazilas as they are fugitive accused in different cases, the SI said, adding that after primary interrogation all the arrestees were sent to jail yesterday afternoon.

## 4 Kushtia teachers jailed for cheating in JSC exams

Madrasa teacher held in Munshiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A mobile court sentenced four teachers to two years' imprisonment in Khoksa upazila under the district yesterday on charge of writing answer scripts of mathematics of the ongoing Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinations.

The convicts -- Afil Uddin, Deb Kumar and Sarwar Hossain of Shomospur High School and Biswanath Das of Ambaria High School of the upazila, were also fined Tk 5,000 each, said Khoksa Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Rebeka Khan, who led the mobile court.

Following information that they were doing the illegal act at the house of Deb Kumar, half a kilometre off Shomospur High School

examination centre, the mobile court assisted by police officials raided the house around 12:30pm and caught them red-hand, said the UNO.

During the drive, the mobile court seized a question paper, nine sets of answer sheets and a calculator from the four teachers.

Our Munshiganj correspondent adds: Police arrested a madrasa teacher from Adhara village in Munshiganj Sadar upazila yesterday morning on charge of spreading rumour of Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations' question leakage on Facebook.

The arrestee, Russel Sarder, 28, a teacher of Adhara Darul Sunnat Madrasa, is the son of Liaquat Ali of Adhara vil-

lage. "Using modern technology, we detained Russel from his residence at Adhara village early yesterday [Sunday]," said Additional Police Superintendent ABM Masud Hossain, who led the drive. Russel however claimed that he uploaded a handwritten suggestion for mathematics examination on Facebook.

District administration sources said there was no similarity between the uploaded suggestion and the real question paper and so, the matter will not affect the examination.

Munshiganj District Magistrate Md Saiful Hasan said legal action will be taken as any act that misleads examinees is a crime.

## PHARMACIST HELD IN DRUG THEFT CASE

# Medicine distribution at DjMCH halted for 2 hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested a pharmacist of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital [DjMCH] on Saturday evening in connection with November 2 medicine stealing case.

Md Bazlur Rashid, sub-inspector (SI) of Dinajpur DB, also investigation officer of the case, arrested the pharmacist, Md Nurun Nabi Islam Milon, from the hospital complex on Saturday night.

Protesting the arrest, the staff of medicine distribution department of the hospital stopped their ser-

vice from 9:00am till 11:00am yesterday.

Visiting the hospital during the time, this correspondent saw several patients purchasing their prescribed medicines from the medicine shops outside as medicine distribution at the hospital remained suspended.

Dr Md Siddiqur Rahman, director of DjMCH, confirmed it.

Police said they arrested pharmacist Nurun Nabi upon specific information provided by the other arrestees during their interrogation.

A few staff of Dinajpur Medical College and

Hospital caught two employees on November 2 with some stolen medicines. Later the two men were handed over to police and a case was filed.

Later, the DB men of Dinajpur conducted raids at a pharmacy and a clinic in the town and arrested four others in connection with the medicine stealing incident. Police also seized medicines worth Tk 4 lakh.

"We have arrested seven people, including the pharmacist, store officer, and storekeeper of DjMCH in connection with the medicine stealing case," said SI Bazlur Rashid.

## Woman UP member murdered, 4 sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A woman union parishad member was murdered at Jamalpur village under Singair upazila of the district on Saturday night.

The victim, Monowara Begum, 64, wife of Nurul Islam of the village, was a member of Baira Union Parishad (UP) under Singair upazila. She was elected from reserved seat for women, said Dewan Sohel, chairman of the union.

Quoting family members, police said UP member

Monowara went to her relative's house at Joymontop village in the upazila on Thursday. She went missing while returning home on Saturday night.

Locals found the body lying beside a road at the village at around 8:30am yesterday and informed the police, said Officer-in-Charge Syeduzzaman of Singair Police Station.

Police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Manikganj Sadar Hospital Morgue for autopsy. Police said the

body bore several injury marks.

Monowara had a dispute with her husband's nephew Mosharrif Hossain over a land, OC Syeduzzaman said, adding that they are trying to unearth clue to the murder.

Victim's son Rafiqul Islam filed a murder case with Singair Police Station yesterday, accusing Mosharrif and three others of the village. None of the accused was arrested as of 5:00pm yesterday as they went into hiding soon after filing of the case.

## 4kg heroin seized in Benapole, one held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested a youth along with 4 kilograms of heroin at a furniture shop at Benapole land port yesterday.

The suspected heroin trader, Shariful Islam Sharif, hails from Gaira under Benapole Port Police Station.

Lt Col Jahangir Hossain,

commanding officer of BGB-26, said a team of border guards, on secret information, raided Hamid Furniture at College Road in the area around 6:00pm and seized 35 packets of heroin.

They also arrested Sharif on charge of possessing the heroin smuggled from India, said the officer.

A case was filed in this connection, he said.

## OBSCENE DANCES, GAMBLING

# Two groups clash over sharing of money

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least six gamblers were injured in a clash between two rival groups over sharing money earned from obscene dances, gambling and drugs selling in Aditmari upazila early yesterday.

Locals said a gang has arranged obscene dances, gambling and illegal selling at Char Almar, Char Narsingh and Char Kutirpar in the Teesta basin area of the upazila.

Obscene dances, gambling and drug selling are going on at the char villages openly but police remain inactive due to some

unknown reasons despite repeated pleas, they alleged.

The villagers even did not raise their voices against the anti-social activities, fearing attack by the gamblers, said the locals.

Contacted, Kafil Uddin, officer-in-charge of Aditmari Police Station, said it is not under his jurisdiction as the Teesta River

## Indefinite transport strike in Sylhet divn from tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Transport owners and workers of Sylhet division will enforce an indefinite strike in all routes of the division from tomorrow to press their seven-point demand.

Sajib Ali, general secretary of Sylhet Bibhag Paribahan Malik Sramik Sangram Parishad announced the strike

programme following an extended meeting chaired by its President Jamir Ahmed on Saturday.

Selim Ahmed, president of Sylhet Zila Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union, Abul Kalam, Sylhet Zila Sarak Paribahan Malik Samily President and representative from three other districts were present at the meeting.

The demands include

ban on plying of battery-run east bikes on the highway, immediate repair of Sylhet-Tamabil Road, steps to stop extortion on the highway and harassment of transport workers.

The transport owners and workers went on an indefinite strike in the division on October 19 to press the same demands. They later postponed the strike until November 5.

## Teenage boy drowns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

An 18-years-old boy drowned in a pond in the district on Saturday. The deceased, Dhruva, son of Dr Belal Uddin of Courtpara area, was a first-year student of Chuadanga Government College.

Police quoted witnesses as saying that Dhruva drowned in the pond while he along with his friends was swimming at around 3:30pm.

Hearing screams of his friends, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the boy. They took Dhruva to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.




PHOTO: STAR

Solar power run electric bulbs light a cloth store at Char Kalikapur of Bhotmari union in Kaliganj upazila under Lalmonirhat district. As many as 5,000 families of remote char (landmass emerged from riverbed) villages in Dharla and Teesta river basin areas are now getting benefit of electricity produced from solar power, thanks to the initiative of a few NGOs.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients and their attendants coming to collect prescribed medicines from the dispensary of Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital had to undergo a 'patience test' as the dispensary staff suspended services for two hours from 9:00am yesterday protesting arrest of a pharmacist on charge of medicine stealing from there.



**DIRECTORATE GENERAL DEFENCE PURCHASE**  
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### TENDER NOTICE

1. Sealed tenders in local currency are invited from bonafide Manufacturer's/ Dealer's/ Supplier's (Enlisted Firms in DGDP) for supply of the following item for Bangladesh Army :

Ser	Nomenclature	Date of Selling		Date of Opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To			
1.	SECTION: B-3. SPARES/ ACCESSORIES FOR 7.62 MM SMG T-56 (CHINA). QTY-04 LINE ITEMS	12-11-14	09-12-14	10-12-14	Local	218.006.14
	1. BCH-01-012-Upper hand guard with piston tube, Quantity-1150 Numbers					
	2. BCH-05- Stock assy (for forged receiver), Quantity-1000 Numbers					
	3. BCH-06A- Lower hand guard (for forged receiver), Quantity-650 Numbers					
	4. B3/BCH-F05- Brush, Quantity-2000 Numbers					

2. Tender schedule with detail specifications & conditions will be available on payment as per IT selling rate (Non Refundable) during office hour between 0800 to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hours and will be opened at 1005 hours on 10 December 2014 in presence of vendors.

Dated: 29 October 2014  
 ISPR/Mics/2014/4075  
 5/11/14  
 GD-4140

**SYED FAZLE NUNEEM**  
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