

Mustard farming increasing in northern districts

Growers expect bumper production of the more profitable item

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Bumper yield of mustard is expected in several northern districts this season due to favourable climatic conditions.

Bogra district sees gradual increase of mustard cultivation for last few years, reports our correspondent.

This year 27,846 hectares of land have been brought under mustard cultivation in 12 upazilas of the district and the production target is 32,048 tonnes, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

The cultivation area in the district was 27,035 hectares, 25,890 hectares and 23,374 hectares of land in 2014, 2013 and 2012, according to DAE office.

"Six to eight maunds of mustard is produced from each bigha of land. A maund of raw mustard usually sells

for Tk 1800-2000 and dried mustard for Tk 2200," said Nazrul Islam, a farmer of Chatusa village in Adamdighi upazila of the district.

Large-scale cultivation of mustard is also helpful for apiculture, said apiculturist Riajul Islam of DAE.

Supervision by field level DAE staff and suggestion for timely apply of fertiliser and insecticides at the 'yard meetings' with the farmers contribute to good yield of mustard for years, said Bazlur Rashid Raza, additional director of DAE, Bogra.

Our Kurigram Correspondent reports: Farmers have cultivated mustard on 13,021 hectares of land in the district against the DAE's target of 10,007 hectares.

"Encouraged by good yield of mustard and its

fair price, the farmers have cultivated mustard early (in October) to recover their losses due to the floods this year. The cultivated varieties include BARI (Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute) Sarisha-9, 13 and 14, Tori-7 and Sampad," said Tajul Islam, sub-assistant agriculture officer of DAE.

"I have cultivated mustard on six bighas of land this year spending Tk 8,000. Now I expect to get 22 maunds of yield that will sell for at least Tk 33,000," said Sirajul Islam of Kachichar village of Ghogadaha union in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent reports: Farmers and agriculture officials in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are expecting a bumper yield of mustard this season

although the cultivation area falls behind the target.

The farmers have cultivated mustard on 9,750 hectares of land this season against the target of 13,194 hectares in Thakurgaon district and 1,500 hectares of land against the target of 1,693 hectares in Panchagarh, said officials of DAE.

"Bumper yield of mustard is expected this season due to favourable climatic condition and arrival of more honey bees in the fields, which helps healthy fertilisation and pod formation in the plants," said Zaherul Haque, crop production specialist of Thakurgaon DAE office.

Several other districts including Lalmonirhat and Tangail also show signs of good yield of mustard this season, according to our correspondents.



PHOTO: STAR

THE YELLOW CARPET: A woman worker removing weeds from a mustard field at Poila village in Tangail Sadar upazila.

Man 'commits suicide' after killing wife in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A man allegedly committed suicide after killing his wife at Chandkhali village in Kaliganj upazila of the district yesterday.

The couple are Bimol Kumar Sarkar, 50, and his wife Maloti Rani Sarkar, 45, also parents of two sons.

Police quoting Bidesh Sarkar, younger son of the couple, said the couple used to quarrel over trifling matters on and off.

At one stage of their altercation early yesterday, Bimol hit Maloti with a spear repeatedly, leaving her dead on the spot. As the boy tried to resist, Bimol also beat him up, police said.

After killing his wife, Bimol also took poison in a bid to commit suicide. However, hearing Bidesh's screaming, neighbours took Bimol to Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex where he died yesterday morning.

Abdul Latif, chairman of Tarali Union Parishad, said the couple used to quarrel on suspected extra-marital affairs by both of them.

Recently, he tried to mediate the issue, following a complaint by Bimol in late November, Latif said.

Emdad Sheikh, officer in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, said on information, they recovered the bodies and sent those to Satkhira Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Bad days for radish growers

The item now sells for Tk 20-25 a maund on fields and Tk 45-50 in Lalmonirhat markets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Radish growers in the district are upset as they are going to incur a huge loss despite a bumper production.

Many farmers are not interested to harvest radish anymore as the money from the sold vegetables does not cover the labourers' cost.

One maund (one maund equal 40 kg) of radish is now being sold at Tk 20-25 in the field and at Tk 45-50 in the local retail markets, farmers said.

"I cultivated radish on my four bighas of land this season. I have sold them from two beihis. I'm not interested to harvest radish from rest the two bighas for I will even not get back the labour' cost from it," said farmer Nirmal Chandra Barman at Kalmabari village of Aditmari upazila.

"Due to low price of radish, I along with my family members harvested the vegetable from one bigha of land to save the labourers' cost. The harvested radish was later used as fodders for the cattle as I failed to sell those in the local market," said farmer Rahim Bux at Uttar Saptana village in Sadar upazila.

Farmer Taherul Islam at Mahendranagar village said he sold radish on his three bighas of land at Tk 20 per maund (40 kg) on the field.

"I spent Tk 21 thousand for farming radish on three bighas but I got only Tk seven thousand by selling the item," he said, adding that radish growers won't get back their capital this season.

Local vegetable trader Salam Mia at Goshala Bazar in the town said he purchased radish at the rate of Tk 20-25 per maund on the field and sold those at Tk 45-50 in the market.

"After payment of transport and other cost I will be able to earn only Tk 10 to 12 from each maund of radish," he said, adding the prices of the vegetable fell due to low demand and huge supply in the local markets.

The agriculture department officials said that radish was cultivated on six thousand hectares of land in the district. Farmers cultivated this vegetable expecting to earn a good profit but their hope was dashed due to huge production that resulted in the nosedive of price.



PHOTO: STAR

A radish grower, who harvested the item along with family members, at Saptana village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, looks upset as he does not know what to do with vegetable now.

Elephants from India damage 7 houses in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A herd of 80 wild elephants entered bordering Pathorerchar village in Dewanganj upazila from Indian Meghalaya state and attacked the houses of seven families.

However, no casualties were reported, said locals.

Sensing the arrival of the animals, the villagers lighted up the area with the help of a generator to prevent possible attack around 6:00pm.

But their attempts went in vain as the wild elephants finally stormed into the village and damaged the houses within two hours.

During the incident, an elephant sustained injuries when it came in contact with the live electric wire of the generator.

Around 8:00pm, the villagers somehow managed to drive away the elephants from the locality, said Abdur Rashid Mandol, chairman of Dangdhora union parishad.

Yesterday morning, hundreds of local people gathered near the frontier line at the village and protested at the attack on the locality by the Indian elephants.

"Elephants from across the border often enter our villages killing people, damaging houses and crops", alleged a protester.

Later, a flag meeting was held between the members of BSF and BGB to resolve the issue, said local administration sources.

Earlier, the animals went on rampage at the village on Friday and Saturday.

With the latest raids, the wild elephants attacked two frontier villages—Pathorerchar and Makhonerchar—11 times this month.

Rival AL men in Jessore clash, 5 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

At least five people were injured as two rival groups of the ruling Awami League clashed at Satmile village in Sharsa upazila on Monday night allegedly, over capturing a local cattle market.

Police, however, arrested four people, including UP Chairman Elias Kabir Bokul yesterday in connection with the clash.

Shahidar Rahman, officer in-charge of Sharsa Police Station, said supporters of two local leaders of AL, Elias Kabir Bokul and Latif Dhabok, locked in a clash over establishing supremacy and capturing Bagachhra cattle market at the village around 9:00pm.

Both the groups, equipped with sharp weapons swooped on each other and blasted at least 10 bombs during the hour-long clash, added the OC.

Meanwhile, protesting Bokul's arrest, Sharsa upazila unit AL and its associate bodies blocked the Jessore-Benapole road for an hour. Later, police rushed to the spot and removed the barricades.

Crude bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 25 handmade bombs from a mahogany orchard at Purbo Chhunakali village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-5 from Chapainawabganj camp raided the village around 6:30am and recovered the bombs from the orchard in an abandoned condition, said Major Kamruzzaman, commanding officer of the camp.

However, none was arrested in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

The husband and two hapless kids of schoolteacher Shamsun Nahar, who was killed after pickets threw stone at her during Monday's hartal, mourn with the pictures of the deceased in Noakhali yesterday.

Hapless family mourns death of Shamsun, seeks justice

Police sue 50 BNP-Jamaat men, 200 unnamed others in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Fifty men of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami along with 200 unnamed people have been sued in connection with brutal the killing of schoolteacher Shamsun Nahar by picketers during the daylong hartal enforced by BNP-led 20-party alliance on Monday.

Mahbub Alamgir Alo, Sadar upazila BNP secretary, also district unit president of Jubo Dal, Nurul Amin Khan, Noakhali district unit president of Chhatra Dal, Saber Ahmed, its general secretary, Abdul Karim Mukta, joint convener of the district unit of Swachhchasebak Dal, are among the accused.

Police have detained five people in connection with the case filed by SI Masud Alam, said Anwar Hossain, officer in charge of Suddharam Model Police Station.

Shamsun Nahar had resigned from her job as a teacher of Agargaon Tawhid Laboratory School in Dhaka



Shamsun Nahar

to join as principal of Hajiganj Model Academy in Ramgati upazila under Laxmipur district.

She along with her husband Shahjahan Siraj and the youngest son was going to their Charporagachha village home in Charporagacha union of Ramgati upazila by a covered van.

As picketers threw bricks into the covered van near Noakhali Municipality Market around 10:00am on Monday, one hit Shamsun Nahar on the head. Locals rushed her to Noakhali Abdul Malek Ukil Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared her dead.

"We were going to Ramgati upazila in Laxmipur as I got transferred to Noakhali from Dhaka and my wife would join as principal of Hajiganj Model Academy in Ramgati," said Shamsun Nahar's husband Shahjahan Siraj, who earlier served as an area manager of Anwar Agency of Alico at New Eskaton in Dhaka.

"The picketers destroyed my life. What will happen to my two sons?" a weeping Shahjahan said, showing his blood-stained shirt.

"My mother will never ask me to take meal or go to school," said Shamsun Nahar's elder son Shah Md Sreeman, crying.

After his recent promotion to Class VIII, he was transferred to Rastarhat Haji A Gofur High School in Ramgati as his mother was going to join Hajiganj Model Academy in the area.

Shamsun Nahar was buried at the family graveyard at Charporagacha village at 10:00am yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

A man at a Jhenidah village, with the help of four artistes, made around 200 sculptures on the historic events of the country and put them on display while celebrating the Victory Day recently.

A show with a difference

A young villager in Jhenidah engages four artistes to make 200 sculptures portraying historic events

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

A unique exhibition with 200 sculptures portraying historic events including the Language Movement, the Liberation War, March 7 speech of Bangabandhu, and August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally, attracted a good number of visitors at Modernpara in the town.

Rokibul Bashar, 32, of Modernpara village took the initiative to make the new generation enlightened about the important national incidents.

On the Victory Day, ruling Awami League lawmaker Abdul Hye, also a former state minister, inaugurated the two-week-long exhibition which

ended yesterday.

"I have arranged this exhibition in honour of the martyred freedom fighters. I hope the new generation will be able to know about our Liberation War, Language Movement and other historic events," said Rokibul Bashar, a medicine trader by profession.

He spent Tk 5 lakh to get the sculptures made by four sculptors in six months, keeping in mind this year's Victory Day.

Visiting the exhibition a few days ago, this correspondent saw that people were watching with interest the sculptures symbolising the 1952 Language Movement, 1971 Liberation War, historic

March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, massacre of innocent people by the Pakistan occupation forces and their local collaborators in 1971, and many other incidents.

"The exhibition helped me to get some idea about the brutalities committed by the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971," said Swapnil Biswas, a student of Class X.

Alamgir Hossain, a student of Class IX, said he was surprised to know about the role of Rajakars (local collaborators of the Pakistan occupation forces) during the Liberation War.

He demanded justice for the heinous crimes.