

EFFECT OF BLOCKADE

Farmers count loss as paddy prices fall

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

The price of recently harvested aman paddy has started falling in the local markets of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts due to transportation problem amid BNP-sponsored non-stop countrywide blockade from January 5.

Despite bumper yield, especially the sharecroppers, marginal and small farmers are counting losses as they have to sell their produces to manage expenses for cultivating boro paddy and robi crops including wheat, potato, maize and groundnut in the ongoing peak cultivation season.

Meanwhile, a section of profit-greedy traders have raised prices of agro-inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, taking advantage of the frequent blockades, much to the worry of the small-scale farmers.

During a visit to different local markets including Khochabari, Gorea, Bhulli and Farabari Bazar in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila and Boda, Moidandighi and Sakoya hats in Boda upazila of Panchagarh, this correspondent saw the small farmers sold aman paddy for prices lower than that of a week ago.

Osman Ali, 35, a marginal farmer of Shahapara village in Boda upazila, said "Eight days ago, I sold 12 maunds of paddy at Tk730 per maund. But now the price has reduced to Tk 660. Despite low price, we have to sell paddy to manage expenses of potato and maize cultivation."

The nonstop blockade



PHOTO: STAR

Rice sellers at Gorea Haat in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila pass their time mostly doing other works as the market sees only a few customers due to the transport problem amid the countrywide nonstop blockade enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

for over a week has led to fall of aman paddy price by Tk 70-80 per maund, said Anikul Barman, 55, a sharecropper of Moidandighi village in Boda.

"Besides, we have to buy agro-inputs with high price as the trader hiked price on the pretext of supply shortage," he said.

Taking the opportunity of small farmers' helpless situation and obstruction in carrying goods due to blockade, some local traders are hoarding huge paddy after buying it for low prices, markets sources alleged.

Kademul Islam, 48, of Gorea village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, said the paddy price at Gorea hat is gradually falling as the paddy buyers from other

districts are unable to come to the local market due to transportation problem.

Taking advantage of inadequate buyers, several local buyers of Gorea have made a syndicate and they are buying paddy for lower prices, Kademul alleged.

Md Zaman, a rice mill owner and rice trader of Boda, told this correspondent paddy price has continued decreasing as supply to other districts including Dinajpur, Joypurhat, Bogra, Natore and Dhaka remained virtually suspended due to non-stop blockade.

Local traders are buying lesser amount of paddy from the markets as they can not supply it to outside the district, he said.

According to sources of

the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), farmers of Thakurgaon district had cultivated aman paddy on 1 lakh 28 thousand 435 hectares of land against the target of 1 lakh 20 thousand 995 hectares with a production target of 3 lakh 28 thousand 387 tonnes.

The farmers have produced 3 lakh 88 thousand 151 tonnes.

In Panchagarh, about 95,185 hectares land had been brought under aman cultivation against the target of 94,524 hectares with a production target of 2 lakh 54 thousand 676 tonnes.

The growers have produced 2 lakh 75 thousand 253 tonnes of aman rice.

Housewife killed for 'dowry' in Benapole

Husband, 2 others held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole jessore

A housewife was beaten to death by her husband allegedly for dowry in Bujtala village under Benapole Port Police Station on Wednesday night

The victim was identified as Reshma Khatun, 20, wife of Sagor Hossain of the village.

Following a case filed by victim's family, police arrested Sagor, his father Anisur Rahman and mother Kabita Begum.

Locals said Sagor married Reshma, daughter of Emadul Haque of Alipur village in Satkhira district, two years ago. He had been putting pressure on Reshma's father for dowry for the last one year, they added.

At around 11:00pm on Wednesday, Sagor locked in an altercation with Reshma over the issue. At one stage, he beat up Reshma mercilessly, resulting in her death on the spot.

Being informed, law enforcers from Benapole Port Police Station went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

BCL man held for stabbing rickshaw-puller

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A rickshaw-puller was stabbed allegedly by a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist over a trifling matter at Sathmatha intersection in the town yesterday.

The victim is Alamgir Hossain, 30, son of Afzal Hossain, a resident of Nimgachhi village in Dhunat upazila of the district.

Police arrested Shahi Mia, 20, son of Hefjul Bari of Chalklokman area of the town.

The arrestee is an HSC second-year student at Government Shah Sultan College and also a BCL activist of the college unit, he added.

Police quoted witnesses as saying that Shahi stabbed Alamgir as the latter delayed to giving him passage so that he could make way with his bike while going to join an anti-blockade rally.

Locals rescued Alamgir and sent him to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH).

Gaziur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police (Sadar-media) in Bogra, said Shafi confessed to his involvement in the attack.

Abandoned for years, 100 houses in Ashrayan project getting damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Most of the 100 houses built five years ago in an Ashrayan project at Bogi Bazar in Bauful upazila under the district are getting damaged as the houses meant for poor homeless people are lying abandoned for long.

The allottees, allegedly people from outside the upazila, left the houses after a short stay, and local gangs often loot different materials like CI sheet, doors, windows, iron ankles from the structures.

In 2009, Relief and Rehabilitation Department built the 100 houses with the financial help from Japan International Cooperation Agency, at a cost of Tk one crore to rehabilitate victims of super cyclone Sidr and Aila. A tube well, two toilets and a bathroom

were also built for a group of 10 houses.

But there are allegations that these houses were not allocated among the really needy people.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent found that several poor families are living in a few project houses for 2/3 years without any allocation while many of the vacant houses are used for keeping straws and cows.

Locals alleged that drug addicts often use the abandoned houses as their safe haven.

Md Faisal Hossain alias Monir Mollah, chairman for Kalaiya union parishad (UP), also secretary of Bauful upazila unit of Jubo League, said upazila administration allocated the houses to people from outside the upazila.

"All the houses went

vacant as the allottees left after some days. I raised the issue in the upazila development committee meeting several times but the local administration did not take any step regarding the matter," he said.

SM Delwar Hossain, Bauful upazila project implementation officer said, "We built the houses as per government instructions but the responsibility of their allocation lies with the upazila parishad."

ABM Sadiqur Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer of Bauful, said, "We allocated the Ashrayan houses to poor people but most of them left the place. We will arrange fresh allocation if we find people who are really interested to live there. We have already asked a local UP member to look after these



PHOTO: STAR

Houses of Ashrayan project at Bogi Bazar in Bauful upazila under Patuakhali district are getting damaged as the structures meant for the rehabilitation of the victims of super cyclones Sidr and Aila have remained mostly abandoned for years.

1500 poultry birds poisoned to death in Nilphamari

Fire kills 4500 others in Dinajpur

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Miscreants poisoned to death 1500 chickens of a farm in Nilphamari Sadar upazila while a devastating fire killed 4500 chickens of another farm in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur on Wednesday night.

Around 1500 chickens worth about Tk 5 lakh died in the poultry farm of Azizul Islam at Tupamari Fakirpara village in Nilphamari Sadar on Wednesday night, reports our Nilphamari correspondent.

Azizul, 47, said he set up the poultry farm beside his house one year ago with loan from Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank.

"I went to the farm to feed the fowl yesterday morning but found that all 1500 layer chickens

there dead as someone fed them poison mixed feed last night," Azizul told this correspondent during his visit there yesterday noon.

A large number of dead chickens were lying in the farm amid odour of poison spreading from there.

"I suspect that my neighbour Badrul Ali, 45, committed this heinous act as there is a land dispute between us and he implicated me in a false case.

A few days ago, the two rivals engaged in a scuffle and Badrul openly threatened to take revenge on Azizul that time, said locals.

"Some of the layer chickens in the farm had already started laying eggs and by selling it I managed to repay first instalment of the bank

loan a few days ago. But all the hopes are ruined now. How can I repay the loan?" Azizul said in a choked voice.

Using litter of the poultry farm, Azizul also set up a biogas plant to get fuel for family requirement, said Mosirat Ali Shah Fakir, chairman of local Tupamari union parishad said.

Contacted, Badrul Ali denied the allegation against him and said, "Azizul himself poisoned chickens in his farm to make me fall in an odd position."

Sadar upazila livestock officer Rezaul Hasan said he conducted autopsy of several dead chickens of the farm and became sure that the birds died due to serious poisoning.

Azizul was preparing to

file a case with the local police station accusing Badrul and three others in the afternoon.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: At least 4500 chickens of a poultry farm were burnt alive in a fire at Namapara village in Parbatipur upazila under the district on Wednesday night.

The fire caused damage worth Tk 10 lakh.

The fire broke out at the poultry farm of Sohul Rana at Namapara village around 9:30pm on Wednesday and it rapidly engulfed the entire farm, said police and fire brigade officials in the upazila.

Later, the fire fighters doused the fire.

Farm owner Sohul Rana claimed that somebody set fire to his farm out of enmity.



PHOTO: STAR

Azizul Islam looks hapless as criminals poisoned to death around 1500 chickens at his farm at Tupamuri Fakirpara village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila Wednesday night.

Arrest warrant against ex-minister Milon, 7 others

They had skipped court in case for violating electoral code of conduct

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A court here yesterday issued arrest warrant against BNP leader and also former state minister for education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon and seven others in a case filed for violating electoral code of conduct in 2008.

The court of Chandpur Senior Judicial Magistrate Ashim Kumar Dey passed the order as the eight, including Milon, also the former

lawmaker of Chandpur-1 constituency, failed to appear before it.

The others include Abdul Haque, a candidate backed by Bangladesh Islami Front for the same constituency, Abu Bakar Siddique, the Gono Forum candidate and Md Billal Hossain, the LDP candidate for Chandpur-2 constituency, Md Mizanur Rahman of Tarikat Federation and Matiul Islam of Islami Front for Chandpur-4 constituency and Hafiz Masud, a candi-

date of Gono Forum and Mohamamd Hossain of Khelafat Majlish for Chandpur-3 constituency.

Milon's lawyer Kamrul Islam said the then election officer Mesba Uddin filed a case on July 29, 2009 as the former minister failed to submit the poll expenditure report in due time.

Meanwhile, Golam Sarwar, personal secretary to Milon, said he was staying in Saudi Arabia since December 22 to perform Omrah.

ADEX-AEL

বাংলাদেশে তৈরী বিশ্বমানের NIRAPOD সার্কিট ব্রেকার ব্যবহার করুন নিরাপদে থাকুন

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