



A farmer holds a groundnut plant at his field of Musullipara village in Jatrapur union under Kurigram Sadar upazila. The area sees good yield of the popular nutritious item this season.

CHAR ARES IN KURIGRAM

Farmers expect bumper yield of groundnut

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Groundnut farmers in the district are expecting bumper yield and good profit this year.

Groundnut cultivation, especially in char (landmass emerged from riverbed) areas, requires very small investment and labour, farmers said.

In Kurigram district, 2,253 hectares of land have

been brought under groundnut cultivation while the area was 1,448 hectares last year, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

During this correspondent's visit to different char areas of the district, groundnut farmers expressed their satisfaction about the yield this year.

"I have cultivated

groundnut on four bighas of land and will harvest it in a week or two. I am expecting a total of 80 maunds of yield and the profit is likely to be around Tk 80 thousand," said Abu Bakar Siddik, 60, a farmer of Musullipara village in Jatrapur union of Sadar upazila.

Now wet groundnut is selling at Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 per maund and dry

groundnut at Tk 2,500 in local markets, he said.

Shawkat Ali Sarker, deputy director of the DAE, said, "Char areas along the 16 rivers in the district are suitable for groundnut cultivation that helps many farmers to gain solvency. We are trying to introduce high yielding varieties of groundnut among the farmers."

Poultry trader murdered in Laxmipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A small trader was murdered near Fazumiarhat area in Kamalnagar upazila of Laxmipur district early yesterday.

The deceased, Abul Kashem, 50, son of Shamsul Haque of Saheberhat union, was a poultry trader at a local market of the upazila.

Kashem's son Mohammad Rony said criminals intercepted his father near Killar Rasta intersection when he was going to Charkandia on his bicycle for buying chickens in the wee hours.

The gang stabbed Kashem mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot. They took away the money he was carrying and a mobile phone set before fleeing the scene, added Rony.

Locals spotted Kashem's body in the morning and informed the police.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Humayun Kabir, officer in charge of Kamalnagar Police Station, adding that the body bore several stab marks.

5 firearms seized in Satkhira

UNB, Satkhira

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized five firearms from Alipur village in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, the elite force raided the area at around 1:00am and recovered one shutter gun, three light guns and a pistol in an abandoned condition.

However, no one was arrested in this connection, said Assistant Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman, commanding officer of Rab-6.

Meanwhile, the elite force recovered 300 bottles of Indian phensidyl from Nalta Kalnipara in Kaliganj upazila on Tuesday night.



PHOTO: STAR

Molla Bricks at Amua in Kathalia upazila under Jhalakathi district has continued illegal use of wood to make bricks, causing harm to environment in the area.

Wood burning at brick kiln poses environmental threat

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, Jhalakathi

A brick kiln at Amua in Kathalia upazila under the district has continued wood burning illegally, much to the harm of environment in the area.

Visiting the brick field named Molla Bricks a couple of days ago, this correspondent saw huge quantity of wood piled up on the brick field premises.

A sawmill was established there for cutting the logs into convenient sizes.

Tonnes of wood is burnt

in the kiln daily, said workers there.

"The smoke from burning wood round the clock here badly affects us," said a resident adjacent to the brick kiln.

Massive use of wood and topsoil of farmlands for making bricks poses threat to the environment in the area, said several locals.

"Law does not allow use of wood for brick burning. I did not know about the burning of wood at the brick kilns of the upazila. I will take action against it soon," said Abul Bashar

Mohammad Ameer Uddin, upazila nirbahi officer of Kathalia.

"I don't know anything about the use of wood in the kiln," said Dulal Molla, one of the owners of the brick kiln.

He suggested this correspondent o contact with Mahatab Molla, another owner of Molla Bricks.

Mahatab received this correspondent's cell phone call but as the latter introduced himself as a journalist, he snapped the line, saying, "It's a wrong number."

Main accused in murder case murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sherpur

The main accused in a murder case was hacked to death at Nalbaind village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Shekandar Ali, 60, of the village. He was the prime accused in the case for murder of one Jural Mian over a land dispute at Tangaria village in the upazila on

January 18.

Md Suruzzaman, brother of Jural Mian, filed a murder case with Sadar Police Station, accusing Shekandar, who went into hiding soon after the incident.

Locals found Shekandar's body on a land near a bridge at Nalbaind village yesterday morning and informed the police.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Sherpur

Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Md Fasiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Criminals might have killed Shekandar over previous enmity and dumped the body in the area, said the OC.

Meanwhile, police recovered the body of a five-year-old girl from Maliji Jheel (water body) in Jhenaigati upazila of the district the same day.

Women Language Movement heroes of Nilphamari

They took to the street, braving conservative attitude of then society

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

The Language Movement in Nilphamari is glorified by participation of a good number of female activists who braved the conservative attitude of the society that time to uphold the honour of mother language Bangla.

They organised processions and meetings at different places of the town and arranged cultural programmes where they sang patriotic songs and recited poems, urging people to protest conspiracy against our mother tongue.

"A good number of girl students took active part in the Language Movement here. It added a new dimension during the then socio political environment," said Language Movement veteran advocate Mahbubar Rahman Dulu, 80.

"Most prominent female activists of Language Movement in Nilphamari were Fouzia Begum, Zakia Sultana, Chhomela Begum, Feroza, Halima, Rabeya, Saleha, Sufia, Bulu and many others whose names I cannot recall," he said.

"Most of them were students of Nilphamari



Chhomela Begum



Fouzia Begum

Government Girls' High School. There was no college here at that time," he added.

On 21 February, 1952 an all-out strike was observed in the educational institutions of Nilphamari. A big rally was held on the premises of Muslim Hostel of Nilphamari High School. Female activists Fouzia Begum and Feroza Begum addressed the rally along with male participants.

As the news of killing of Rifqi, Salam, Barkat, Jabbar, Shafiq and others by Pakistani police in Dhaka on February 21 reached the then sub divisional town, people got agitated.

The next day, the area saw huge processions and meet-

ings all day long as thousands of people burst into protest, defying threat by the Pakistani administration.

Agitation intensified further when police in Dhaka arrested Khairat Hossain, a member of the then East Pakistan provincial assembly, elected from Nilphamari.

Khairat Hossain, a leader of the then opposition Awami Muslim League, faced the wrath of Pakistan authorities as he walked out from the assembly along with Moulana Abdur Rashid Tarkobagish in protest against the February 21 killing.

Thousands of people including a good number of girls and women staged agitation in Nilphamari on

February 24, 25 and 26 demanding release of Khairat Hossain and others.

To suppress the movement, police arrested local Awami Muslim League convenor advocate Dabiruddin Ahmed and educationist Abu Nazam Mohammad Ali on the night of February 26.

As many others went into hiding, there was a vacuum in leadership, but female activists including Fouzia, Chhomela and Halima continued arranging cultural functions on streets where calls for continuation of movement were made indirectly.

Encouraged by those programmes, people besieged the local police station on February 28.

To tackle the situation, the then Urdu speaking sub divisional officer (SDO) Monwar Hossain warned the guardians of female activists to check their daughters but to no effect.

Police issued arrest warrant against leading female activists Fouzia and Halima and they went into hiding.

Fouzia, daughter of a local landlord, continued financing for the agitation

Land office gutted in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Around 1,000 documents and furniture were gutted in a fire at Begumganj upazila land office in the district early yesterday.

Being informed by the musallies who came out of the nearby mosque after saying Fazr prayer at around 5:30am, a fire fighting unit rushed to the spot and doused the blaze.

The fire might have originated from an electric short circuit, said Sahadat Hossain, inspector of Begumganj Fire Station.

Contacted, Assistant Commissioner (land) Khondakar Rezaul Karim said "Visiting the spot in the morning I saw a window-pane of my office broken and a bottle of kerosene there."

Noakhali Deputy Commissioner Badre Munir Ferdous and Superintendent of Police Ilias Sharif visited the spot.

45 shops burnt

UNB, Nilphamari

At least 45 shops were gutted in a fire at Babur Haat Bazar in Dimla upazila early yesterday.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit at a shop at the market at around 4:00am and soon engulfed the adjoining shops, said Abdul Wahed, stationmaster of Sadar Fire Service.



PHOTO: STAR

Plying of launches with twice or thrice the usual capacity of passengers is a common sight on Shimulia-Kawrakandi route, thanks to the callousness of the authorities concerned who value money more than the lives of people.

Businessman's body found 30 days into abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The body of a businessman, abducted in Pirganj upazila town of the district last month, was found in a septic tank at Gaurishwarpur village in the upazila on Tuesday.

The deceased is Ashraful Islam, 35, son of Abdus Samad of Anantapur village. He was the owner of Walton Showroom and a market in Chatra Haat area of the town.

Police said a gang called Ashraful, also the co-owner of Shishu Bhuban Kindergarten in the area, out of his showroom on January 18 and since then he remained missing.

The gang then phoned his wife Morsheda Khatun, demanding Tk 3 lakh as ransom for her husband's release, said Md Israil Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pirganj Police Station.

The same day, Morsheda filed a general diary with Pirganj Police Station and also informed Rab-13 about the matter.

After tracking mobile phone calls, the elite force arrested three people on February

1 and 2. They are Abdul Khalek, 40, son of Abdul Khalil of Gaurishwarpur village, his wife Ripa Begum, 30, and Mostafa Kamal, 35, son of late Abdul Jalil Mian of Iklimpur village in the upazila.

On February 16, the arrestees were produced in a court that placed them on a three-day remand. During interrogation, they told police that village doctor Azahar Ali of Chatra Haat and Pharmacist of Pirganj Upazila Health and Family Planning office Mokbul Hossain were involved in the killing.

The law enforcers later arrested Azahar Ali and Mokbul Hossain from Chatra Haat area, said OC Israil.

According to their confessional statements, police recovered the decomposed body of the businessman from the septic tank of a flood shelter centre at Gaurishwarpur village in the upazila early Tuesday, he added.

The body was later sent to Rangpur Medical College and Hospital morgue for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Fire Service and Civil Defence jointly organise a demonstration on Thakurgaon BGB headquarters ground yesterday to make all concerned aware about quick ways to douse fire, against the backdrop of fire bomb attacks on vehicles during the non-stop countrywide blockade enforced by BNP-led 20-party alliance since January 6.