

Budding mango trees spread fragrance all around

Farmers in Rangpur division expect bumper yield as weather favourable

EAM ASADUZZAMAN,
Nilphamari

Sweet smell from budding mango trees fills the air in and around the orchards during the ongoing Bangla month of Falgun, making the farmers in eight northern districts of Rangpur division hopeful of bumper yield of the popular summer fruit amid favourable weather prevailing so far.

This year the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) set a target of commercial mango cultivation on 19,107 hectares of land accommodating 33 lakh trees in the division, said sources of the regional office of DAE in Rangpur.

The target area is 617 hectares larger than last year's, they said, adding that of the eight districts under Rangpur division, Thakurgaon sees the highest cultivation area -- 8029 hectares.

This year, target of yield is 1.55 lakh tonnes, which was 1.50 lakh tonnes last year.

Of over 20 varieties of mangoes being cultivated in the region, most prominent ones are amropali, kapil bangri, rajbhog, sada aam, surjapuri, chhatapara, fazi, haribhanga, aswina, kharshapati, guti and mistimodhu, said farmers and horticulturists of regional DAE.

Visiting different mango gardens, this correspondent saw the farmers busy in taking care of the trees as fruits started arriving at many places.

Golam Mostofa, who



A profusely flowering mango tree at an orchard in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

has cultivated mangoes on five acres of land at Chilahati village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila, said he is expecting to get bumper yield if the weather remains favourable throughout the season.

A number of mango traders from Dhaka, Chittagong, and other big cities signed agreement with the mango farmers in the

northern districts and gave them handsome amounts as payment in advance to get the mangoes in harvesting time.

As in other years, attack of insects and diseases and natural calamities like cyclones and hailstorms remain as risk factors for mango production, said farmers.

Sayed Mahmud Hossen,

horticulture specialist of divisional DAE, said with the onset of spring season, temperature in this region sees a smooth rise, which is favourable for growth of mango at the early stage of fruiting.

"In case of attack of insects like mango hopper or any disease, we suggest farmers to spray medicines belonging to Mencozeb

group and Cyper Methrin group," he said.

Sub assistant agriculture officers of the agriculture department are working in all unions of the division to provide farmers necessary support for mango cultivation in scientific ways, said Protit Kumar Mondol, additional director of divisional DAE.

WATER BODIES IN GAIBANDHA DRY UP

Boro farming on 2,000 hectares uncertain

KM REZAUL HOQUE,
Gaibandha

Boro cultivation on around two thousand hectares of land depending on natural water resources has become uncertain as canals, ponds and marshy lands are drying up much earlier than usual in the district this year.

This season 1,325 hectares of land in Gaibandha district have been brought under boro cultivation with water from rivers, canals and marshy lands, using diesel and electricity-run low lift pumps, while 625 hectares of land is supposed to be irrigated with locally made

equipment like donga and hocha, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

"Boro farming on my one bigha of land is uncertain, as I cannot draw water to the land from the adjoining marshy land that has nearly dried up," said Amzad, a farmer of Kuptola village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

"We set a diesel-run low lift pump on the bank of a tiny tributary of the Teesta River, but now the canal is drying up and we are worried about boro farming," said Hafizur Rahman of Belka village in Sundarganj

upazila. This year the DAE set a target of boro cultivation on 1,24,159 hectares of land in Gaibandha district, which has already exceeded by 536 hectares.

The rivers and marshy lands are being silted up, while huge deep tube-wells continue lifting underground water, causing fall of the water level, said Mi Abdur Razzaque, deputy director of the DAE Gaibandha.

Dredging of riverbeds and erecting water reservoirs to store water in the rainy season is needed for using in the dry season, he added.

BOGRA, HABIGANJ

Land disputes leave two dead, 13 injured

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two people were killed and 13 others injured over land disputes in Bogra and Habiganj districts yesterday and the day before.

Our Bogra correspondent reported that two groups of people clashed over a piece of land at Rampur village in Shahjahanpur upazila on Tuesday, leaving a man killed and three others injured.

The deceased was identified as Bablu Mia, 45, son of late Bhulu Shah of the village.

Police and locals said there had been a long-standing dispute between Mehedul and Bablu over a piece of land at the village.

As Bablu and his brother Babul went to the land at noon, Mehedul and his men rushed to the spot and locked in an altercation with Bablu. At one stage, they hit Bablu with sharp weapons,

leaving him dead on the spot.

Later, the supporters of Bablu and Mehedul, equipped with lethal weapons, attacked each other. At least three people from both sides were injured during the clash that continued for an hour.

The injured are Palash, 34, brother of Bablu, Shakil, 29, brother of Mehedul, and his supporter Mintu, 18. Being informed, police went to the spot and dispersed the clashing groups.

The injured were admitted to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH).

Bablu's brother Babul filed a murder case with Shahjahanpur Police Station on Tuesday night, accusing Mehedul and five others. The accused had gone into hiding soon after the incident, police said.

In Habiganj, land dispute left a woman killed and 10

others injured at Majhisail village in Madhabpur upazila yesterday, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The dead is Sufia Begum, 45, wife of Lal Kha of the village.

Police said the supporters of Hafij Miah and Ashkir Miah of the village locked in a clash over capture of a disputed land in the afternoon.

The clashing groups used sharp weapons during the clash that lasted for one and a half hours. At least 10 people from both sides were injured in the clash.

Critically injured Sufia was admitted to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex and then referred in Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital where she died soon after admission. The rest of the injured were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital and the upazila health complex.

Kids attend classes under open sky as schoolhouse risky

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Students of Pashchim Ratandi-Taltali Government Primary School in Galachipa upazila of the district are attending their classes under the open sky due to awful condition of the school building.

In December last year, the authorities asked the schoolteachers to stop taking classes in the rooms after huge cracks developed in the roof and chunks of plaster often fell off from the wall and ceiling of the building.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the teachers conducting classes beside Galachipa-Char

Biswas road near the risky school building.

"Despite poor condition of the building, we have to do the official works in a room amid risk," said Shamsul Haque Gazi, an assistant teacher of the school.

Liva Akhter, a student of Class V, said "On sunny days, we have to suffer a lot for attending classes under the open sky."

"Apart from this, we have to leave the school when it starts raining," she said.

More than 150 students are now studying at the school set up a tin-shed house in 1987, said Headmaster Md Delwar Hossain.

In 1993-94 fiscal year, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built the school building consisting of five rooms, he said.

But the building has become unfit for use as it saw no renovation work after construction, said the headmaster.

Contacted, Md Mahtab Uddin, Galachipa upazila education officer, said the teachers were asked to stop taking classes inside the dilapidated building fearing the risk of accident.

"We already wrote to the higher authorities for replacing a new building there," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Ratandi Taltali Government Primary School in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district attend classes under the open sky as the schoolhouse has turned too risky in absence of repair for long.

SNIPPETS

JMB man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested a suspected member of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Muktagachha upazila of the district on Tuesday night. The arrestee is Abdus Samad, 45, son of Raj Mahmud of Binnahuri village. He was produced in a court that sent him to jail yesterday, said Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Muktagachha Police Station.

Robbers loot house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Armed robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth about Tk 8 lakh from a house in Uttar Kalimabad area under Sadar upazila early yesterday. Police said a gang of 10/12 swooped on the house of one Rowshan Ara Zaman, a doctor of Rajnagar Upazila Health Complex in the district, at around 3:00am and took away money and valuables. A case was filed in this connection, said Abdus Salek, office-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

2 smugglers held with gold

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Police arrested two alleged smugglers along with one kg and 150 grams of gold in Kotchandpur bus stand area under Kotchandpur upazila yesterday. The arrestees are Sunil Karmakar, son of Swasti Karmakar, and Obaidullah, son of Faizullah Mollah of Jibonnagar Bazarpara in Jibonnagar upazila of Chuadanga district. On secret information, a police team raided a passenger bus in the area and arrested the duo along with the gold, said Superintendent of Police Altaf Hossain. They had been involved in gold smuggling for long, said the SP.

28 bombs seized

UNB, Naogaon

Police seized 28 crude bombs from Par-Naogaon area beside Marchhula Girls' High School in the district town on Tuesday night. Zakirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said on secret information, a police team raided the area and seized the bombs at around 10:30pm. They also arrested six people for their alleged involvement in the incident. The bombs were kept in the area to carry out subversive activities during the countrywide hartal, said the OC. A case was filed in this connection.

Two arrested with Yaba

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and police in a joint drive arrested two women along with 9,700 Yaba tablets and one LG in Teknaf upazila of the district early yesterday. The arrestees are Nur Begum, 50, wife of Mohammad Islam, and her daughter Shabnur, 18, of Nazirpara area in the upazila. Abu Rasel Siddique, additional director of BGB-42 Battalion, said a joint team, led by Executive Magistrate Jahid Iqbal, raided the house of Islam and arrested the duo along with the Yaba. Later, a case was filed against the arrestees, Islam and his son Ziaur Rahman, said the BGB official.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals form a human chain on Gaibandha-Palashbari road at Matherhat in Gaibandha district yesterday demanding early steps for resumption of electricity supply in 19 villages under two unions of Sadar upazila, where power supply has remained off for over two weeks following damage of two transformers.

19 villages in Gaibandha without power for 15 days

Villagers form human chain, demanding early resumption of electricity supply

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

People of 19 villages under two unions in Sadar upazila formed a human chain on Gaibandha-Palashbari road at Matherhat point yesterday, demanding immediate restoration of power supply at their villages.

They also brought out a procession and held a rally at Matherhat to mount pressure on the authorities concerned for early resumption of power supply at their villages.

Addressing the rally, the speakers said two trans-

formers under Matherhaat union in Sadar upazila and Bedkapa union in Palashbari upazila went out of order on February 17, plunging 19 villages into darkness.

Despite repeated requests, the authorities concerned didn't replace the transformers, they alleged.

Mostafizur Rahman, former chairman of Matherhat UP, said we were compelled to stage the demonstration as PDB officials took no initiative to replace the transformers even after 14 days.

Farmers said Irri-Boro fields in the unions are drying up for want of water as power pumps have remained inoperation since the day.

PDB source said the transformers went out of order due to over loading and they have no extra transformers to replace the damaged ones.

PDB officials said it will take a few days more to resume power supply at the village as the damaged transformers have already been sent to their workshop in Bogra for repair.