

Bumper yield, good price bring smile to potato growers

Target exceeded in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh districts due to timely supply of agro-inputs, favourable weather

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Farmers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are reaping potatoes in a happy mood as the crop that yielded well this season has good prices too.

Traders from different districts have already started buying potato from the fields at prices from Tk 9:30 and Tk 12, depending on the size and quality of the item, while the selling prices at wholesale markets range between Tk 13 and Tk 16.

The farmers have cultivated potato on 21,800 hectares of land in Thakurgaon and 9,505 hectares in Panchagarh district this year, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

The production target -- four lakh 13 thousand 728 tonnes and one lakh 84 thousand 530 tonnes of potato in the two districts, is going to exceed as per hectare yield is 18 tonnes, they said, adding that around 90 per cent of the harvesting has already completed.

Visiting different areas on Thursday, this correspondent saw farmers busy reaping several varieties of potato at Nargoan, Salondar Shingpara, Bhulli and Balia villages in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila and Sathkhamar and Roseya villages in Atwary upazila of Panchagarh.



A potato farmer sews bags containing potatoes reaped from his field at Kochubari village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

"I cultivated potato on six bighas of land (one bigha = .3306 acre) and got 470 maunds of potato. I spent Tk 1,20,000 and sold the total produce at Tk 1,74,840 -- making a profit of about Tk 54,840," said Sajjad Selim of Roseya village under Atwary upazila of Panchagarh.

Boytul Islam of Bhulli village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila said he has got a net profit of Tk 24,955 by cultivating potato on three bighas of land.

Several farmers said they have got good yield of potato this season due to favourable weather and availability of agro-inputs including fertilisers and quality seeds with low prices during the sowing season.

Amid good demand and high prices of potato from different districts, many farmers are selling the item shortly after harvest, instead of preserving it in the cold storages.

Arms trader held with pistol, bullets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of Raid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested an arms trader at Baro Roshia village in Shibganj upazila on Tuesday.

They also recovered a foreign made pistol, seven bullets and two magazines from his possession.

The arrestee is Ashrafal Alam alias Babu, 30, son of Sa id u r R a h m a n o f Munshipara village in the upazila.

On secret information, a R a b t e a m f r o m Chapainawabganj camp went to a mango orchard at 6:45pm and arrested Babu along with the firearm and bullets, said sources.

Jubo Dal leader held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Ahmedul Haque Sathil, president of Tangail district unit of Jubo Dal, youth wing of BNP, was arrested on Tuesday night.

A team of Tangail Model Police picked him up from near his residence in Kumudini College Gate area in the town at around 9:30pm.

Golam Mostofa, officer-in-charge of the police station, said Sathil was arrested on charge of torching a passenger bus in the area on Monday.

Police produced Sathil in the Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail yesterday afternoon, seeking five days remand.

Sonia Ahmed, senior judicial magistrate, granted one day's remand for the Jubo Dal leader, court sources said.

SNIPPETS

Housewife found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police recovered the body of a housewife from Birganj upazila of the district on Tuesday night. The deceased was identified as Rabeya Khatun, 38, wife of Javed Ali of Basar village. She went missing in the afternoon, said family sources. Locals found her body hanging from a tree in the area and informed the police. The law enforcers then reached the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital morgue for autopsy, said police.

Two sand traders stabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulribazar

Two sand traders were stabbed by criminals at Bongaon village in Sadar upazila of Habiganj district early yesterday. The injured are Sheikh Samsul Haque Talukder, 60, and Modrish Miah, 42, of Jamunabad village in Bahubal upazila. They were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital. Police said a gang of 5/7 attacked the duo with sharp weapons in the area at 12:00 noon, leaving them injured. The criminals later took away Tk one lakh and mobile phones from them, said Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Sadar Police Station.

Beheaded body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Police recovered the beheaded body of an unidentified man, aged about 50, from Gopalpur rail gate area in Jessore Sadar upazila yesterday morning. Moniruzzaman, in-charge of Jessore Railway Police Camp, said locals found the body in the area and informed the police. The law enforcers went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Jessore 250-bed General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

9 bombs seized in Narsingdi

UNB, Dhaka

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two youths along with nine crude bombs in Marjal area under Raipur upazila of the district early yesterday. The arrestees are Ashique, 25, and Alamgir, 25. Assistant Police Superintendent Farjana of Rab-11 said the elite force, acting on a tip-off, conducted a drive in the area and arrested the duo with the bombs at around 1:30am.

2 Jamaat men arrested

UNB, Manikganj

Detectives in separate drives arrested two Jamaat leaders in Daulatpur and Saturia upazilas of the district on Sunday afternoon on charges of subversive activities. The arrestees are Maulana Tajul Islam, ameer of Daulatpur upazila unit of Jamaat, and Shawkat Ali, secretary of the party's Saturia upazila unit. The two were arrested on charges of subversive activities, said police.

TWO SCHOOLS IN ISHWARGANJ UPAZILA OF MYMENSINGH

Construction materials occupy playgrounds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Construction materials are kept in front of the classrooms of two government primary schools in Ishwarganj upazila of the district, disturbing lessons as well as extra-curricular activities of over 700 students.

During the recess, the students of the two institutions can hardly walk or play on the playgrounds.

A construction firm, which got the tender for building Ishwarganj-Uchakhila road in Ishwarganj upazila, has kept the materials on the premises of Narayanpur Government Primary School and Paikura Government Primary

School for more than 15 days, teachers of the schools said during this correspondent's visit three days ago.

Nazneen Sultana, headmistress of Narayanpur Government Primary School, said the contractor concerned has kept the materials on the field, ignoring their request. Study and sports of 235 students are being disturbed due to the situation, she added.

Shahinoor Alam and Borhan Uddin, both Class V students of Narayanpur Primary School, said they cannot play on the school ground due to keeping of the construction materials there.

"We urged the school authorities to take immediate steps to remove the materials, but no step has

been taken yet," they said. Dust from the stones causes health hazard for students as well as nearby residents, said a few locals.

Fazlul Haque, headmaster of Paikura Government Primary School, said the contractor has kept the construction materials on the school playground without taking permission from the authorities concerned.

Members of the school managing committee and local people repeatedly urged the contractor to remove the materials but to no effect, said the headmaster.

Engineer Din Mohammad of LGED in Ishwarganj said construction materials were kept on

the school fields for a certain period and these will be removed as early as possible.

Contacted, Jahangir Alam, proprietor of the construction firm, Associate Builders, said they have kept the materials on the playgrounds of the two schools, taking prior permission from the local administration. "We will remove the materials from the fields soon," he said.

Ishwarganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Tahmina Akhter said the contractor did not take her permission to keep materials on the school playgrounds.

"The upazila administration will take necessary steps to remove the construction materials," the UNO said.

2 abductees rescued in Bogra town, three arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Detective Branch (DB) of Police in separate drives rescued a Saudi expatriate and an employee of Walton Electronics from in the town early yesterday, a day after their abduction.

The law enforcers also arrested three abductors. They are Abdullah Al M a m u n, 20, Anwar Hossain, 33, and Ripon, 30.

Police said a gang picked up Shah Alam, 40, an expatriate in Saudi Arabia, from Malotnagar area of the town on Tuesday afternoon and later asked the family members to send Tk 2 lakh though a bKash number for his release.

Following a complaint from the victim's family, the Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Mاماun, son of late Shahidul Islam of Phulbari Madhyapara village, tracking the bKash number the same night.

According to his confessional statement, police raided Matidali area in the town early yesterday and rescued Shah Alam from there.

Meanwhile, a gang abducted Shahadat Hossain, 27, an employee of Walton Electronics, from Hakirmore area in the town the same day.

Later, the kidnapers demanded Tk 5 lakh from his employer for his release. Being informed by the Walton authorities, law enforcers set a trap and told Shahadat's family to comply with the demand of the abductors.

When the abductors came to collect the ransom in Chawk Suttrapur area, police arrested them. The arrestees are Anwar and Ripon.

Later, according to their confession, police rescued Shahadat from Joypurpara area in the early hours of yesterday. Amirul Islam, officer in-charge of Bogra DB police, said all the arrestees were produced before a Bogra court that sent them to jail.



A two-day fair meant for the underprivileged children on the premises of Dinajpur Shishu Academy saw inauguration yesterday. The programme organised by World Vision Bangladesh includes cultural functions and recreational programmes like merry-go-round, magic show, puppet show, games etc.

PHOTO: STAR

VIDEOING RAPE OF GIRL

Three students sent to jail in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A court yesterday sent to jail three students of Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute to a house in Titas Cinema Hall area of Patuakhali town on Monday noon. There Tahsan raped the girl while two others captured the scene on camera," said SM Ziaul Haque, OC of Patuakhali Police Station.

They told the girl not to reveal the matter to anyone and threatened to publish the scene on the Internet.

"The three accused

brought a 2nd semester female student of Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute to a house in Titas Cinema Hall area of Patuakhali town on Monday noon. There Tahsan raped the girl while two others captured the scene on camera," said SM Ziaul Haque, OC of Patuakhali Police Station.

They told the girl not to reveal the matter to anyone and threatened to publish the scene on the Internet.

Returning home, the

victim told her family of the matter and the family members submitted a complaint to police.

On Tuesday noon, police arrested the three from Patuakhali town and also seized the camera and the laptop that were used in the act.

"Police produced the three to the court that ordered sending them to jail today [Wednesday]. We are taking lawful steps over the matter after proper investigation," the OC said.



Construction materials occupy the ground of Narayanpur Government Primary School in Ishwarganj upazila of Mymensingh district, disturbing classes and extra-curricular activities of the kids and posing health hazard for the learners and teachers.

PHOTO: STAR

11 shops, 10 houses gutted

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Fire gutted 11 shops and 10 houses in Gaibandha and Sylhet districts early yesterday and the day before.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported that 11 shops were gutted in a fire at Pakarbazar in Sadullapur upazila of the district early yesterday.

Fazlur Rahman, station officer of Gaibandha Fire Service Station, said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a grocery shop owned by Faruk Mia around 1:15am and soon engulfed 10 other adjacent shops.

Being informed by the locals, a fire fighting unit from Gaibandha town rushed to

the spot and doused the flames after two hours of frantic efforts.

The affected shop owners claimed that the loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 40 lakh.

Away in Sylhet, fire destroyed at least 10 houses of a shelter project at Ashampara in Jaintapur upazila on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Contacted, Javed Hossain, senior station officer of Sylhet Fire Service Station, said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a house of the shelter project around 9:00pm and soon spread to nine other houses.

On information, three fire fighting units reached the spot around 10:00pm and extinguished the fire.