

Winter crop gains popularity among Pabna farmers



PHOTO: STAR

Corn planted as 'relay-crop'. Of the winter crops, wheat, corn, lentil (moshur and kheshari) and garlic have been brought under beyond-plough cultivation.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, Pabna

There is a rush of farmers to cultivate 'winter crop', which has a positive impact on the environment and is also more profitable. According to experts, the crop counters the bad effects of climate change. The winter crop planted at the paddy field just before harvesting as a 'relay-crop' enables farmers to produce as a very low cost of production. "Farmers sow the seeds of the winter crop at their paddy fields just 8 to 10 days before harvest. Using the existing water at the paddy field, seeds grow within a few days." Dr. Md. Rabiul Alam, a senior scientific officer of Agriculture Research Institute, Pabna told the Daily Star. Through this method, farmers can use the fertility of the paddy field, said Alam, adding that the new method of cultivation was introduced to save the environment from climate change. "We have seen rapid extraction of 'Methane Gas' from the field due to excessive plough. If the cultivation stops once in a year that should keep from contamination," Dr. Alam said. Using rain water for growing seeds implies that there is no need to extract ground water.

Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) introduced the new methodology of cultivation for winter crops without plough field in 2012 as a test cultivation method. It became popular in the last two years. A total of 72 hectares of land in the two villages

have been brought under relay crop cultivation in 2014, and this has reached 105 hectares this year, according to BARI, Pabna. "BARI introduced the method of cultivation keeping climate change in mind, but this also allows the farmers to earn extra profit," commented Dr. Shafikul Islam, Chief Scientific Officer of BARI, Pabna. "I have cultivated wheat this year on 4 bigha land. Following this method, I have



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Farmers planting 'winter crop'; this has a positive impact on the environment and is also more profitable.

gotten bumper output!" said Md. Afzal Hossain, a farmer of Baoikola village of Atghoriaupazila. He also informed that this method enables farmers to save 2 to 3 thousand taka in production costs. Furthermore, the method allows for greater yield compared to traditional cultivation methods. "I will be able to take my harvest to the market early so good price is available for the crop," he added.

Farmers of Baoikola village in Atghoriaupazila and Pushpopara village of Pabna Sadarupazila have been encouraged motivated to introduce the new method of cultivation to keep methane contamination at bay as well as to reduce dependency on ground water for cultivation. At the research areas of Baoikola village of Atghoriaupazila and Pushpopara village of Pabna Sadarupazila, farmers are seen converting to winter crops using the new method of cultivation. Over a hundred farmers use this method in the area, according to BARI. Of the winter crops, wheat, corn, lentil (moshur and kheshari) and garlic have been brought under beyond-plough cultivation.

Farmers are becoming interested in adopting the method for the sake of economic benefit as well as for environmental reasons. BARI is working hard to popularize the method and spread its knowledge among farmers at large in other parts of the country as well. The researchers are working hand-in-hand with farmers towards the adoption of this method of cultivation.

A glimmer of hope in the life of Taramoni Das



PHOTO: STAR

Taramoni Das and her family members in their residence at Baishshopara village of Mahishkchocha union at Aditmari upazila

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Taramoni Das, living at Teesta River basin's Baishshopara village of Mahishkchocha union at Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat has received assistance of Tk 20 thousand from a kind hearted Dhaka resident (who requests to remain anonymous) last Friday. After reading news headlined "107 Year Old Taramoni Das struggles to survive", which was published at Star Insight in the Daily Star on 8 April 2015, the woman decided to come forward and lend a helping hand to Taramoni Das. "I will continue my support to Taramoni Das according to my ability in the future," the donor informed the Daily Star.

After receiving the fund, Taramoni cried out in happiness at her home on Friday morning. Nearby villagers gathered and was

also happy to learn that the senior citizen had received such support. She will use the fund to make her life better. "I will repair the fences of my house. I will purchase some bamboos for producing bamboos made goods," Old Taramoni said. "If I didn't get the fund, I couldn't repair fences of my tin-shed hut and I would face a lot suffering in the coming rainy season," she said, thanking Almighty and her donor for the kindness she has received.

Taramoni Das, old widow of the village Baishsho Para is struggling for her daily bread at the age of 107. She has been preparing different kinds of handicraft items with bamboo since she was a teenager. She works hard in her hut from morning to nightfall everyday producing baskets, dali, kula (winnowing tray), sieve and others,

which brings her Tk 40 to 45 income a day. She got married to Tarok Chandra Das, of Baishsho Para village at Mahishkchocha union of Aditmari in 1923 when she was 16. She had learnt to make things out of bamboo at her parents' house at Kathal Bari village of Kurigram. After marriage, she continued the job to help her husband. She became mother of five daughters and one son. Taramoni lost her husband Tarok Chandra 18 years ago and since then she has been bearing the burden of the family.

The generosity bestowed upon her will make the next few months easier and more bearable for Taramoni. She is happy and remains determined to work hard everyday to produce things out of bamboo. That is her trade, and she hopes to continue it until her death.

Under-construction bridge in Sirajganj town collapses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Five workers were injured as an under-construction bridge collapsed at Ramgati Ghonapara of Sirajganj town on Monday afternoon.

The accident took place when the workers started putting concrete on the bamboo support to make the deck of the bridge near Mallika Sanaullah School around 5:30 pm on Monday. "Thin bamboos were

used for the support to make the concrete deck of the bridge and so, it could not bear the load. Besides, the recent earthquake might have weakened the structure. It collapsed when the workers started concrete work here," said Brenjon Chamu Gong, Sirajganj Sadar upazila nirbahi officer.

Of the affected workers, seriously injured Sadek Hossain, 55, and Amir Hossain, 25, are undergoing

treatment at Sirajganj General Hospital.

The 40-metre-long bridge was being constructed on a channel of the Jamuna River at Ramgati at cost of Tk 28 lakh under the supervision of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, the UNO said.

An official inquiry team visited the spot yesterday to examine the reason behind the accident, said sources of district relief and rehabilitation office.



PHOTO: STAR

This under-construction bridge at Ramgati in Sirajganj town collapsed when workers were putting concrete mixture to the temporary bamboo structure to make the bridge deck on Monday afternoon.

SNIPPETS

Stalker jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A mobile court sentenced a youth to two months' imprisonment for stalking female students in LGED Road area of the district town yesterday. The convict is Ariful Alamin, 29, son of Azizur Rahman of Taluk Khutamara village in Sadar upazila. The court also fined him Tk 5,000. In default, he is to suffer another one month in jail. Police said locals caught Ariful while he was stalking the female students of a local school in the area. He was later produced before the court, led by Executive Magistrate MM Arafat Hossain, which punished him, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Smugglers attack villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

At least four people were injured in an attack by smugglers at Sadipur village under Benapole Port Police Station on Monday night. The injured are Jasim Uddin, Lavlu, Miaraj and Mehedi Hasan of the village. They were admitted to different private clinics in the area. Police and locals said a gang, allegedly led by Selim, Alauddin, Ilias and Firoj of Bhabber village, attacked a group of villagers guarding a mango orchard as the light of their torch directly fell on the faces of the smugglers. Apurba Hasan, officer-in-charge of the police station, confirmed the incident.

Two youths electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A young man died from electrocution at Ghuridaha village in Saghata upazila under the district on Monday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Asadul Islam, 30, of the area, reports our correspondent. Locals said when one Altab Hossain was taking a dip in a pond in the area, a live electric wire suddenly got snapped and fell into the pond at around 2:00pm. Witnessing the scene, Asadul jumped into the pond to rescue Altab but he came in contact with the live electric wire. Asadul later died at the upazila health complex. Away in Sirajganj, a youth was electrocuted at Goprekhi village in Belkuchi upazila on Friday, reports UNB. The dead is Khokon Miah, 30, tractor driver of a construction company, and son of Shahjahan Ali of Talgasi village in Shahjadpur upazila. Police said Khokon came in contact with a live electric wire while workers of the company were giving new connection of electricity in the afternoon. He died on the spot.

50,000 Indian rupees seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in separate drives seized 1500 ampoules of Indian sedative injection and 50,000 Indian rupees in two upazilas of the district yesterday and the day before. On secret information, the border guards raided Bivatia Beel (water body) in Shibganj upazila early yesterday and seized the ampoules, said Lt Col Zahid Hasan, commanding officer of BCB-43 Battalion. In another drive, a BGB team seized the Indian rupees from two packets of cumin seeds in Lalmatia paddy field of Gomostapur upazila on Monday night. None was arrested in this connection, said the CO.



PHOTO: STAR

Toxic gas emitted from an adjacent brick field causes serious damage to standing boro paddy in Boali Kabjer Bazar area of Sundarganj upazila under Gaibandha district.

Toxic fumes from brick kiln affect crops, pollute environment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Boro paddy on at least 30 acres of land is getting damaged due to toxic fumes emitting from a brick kiln at Boali village in Sundarganj upazila of the district.

Locals said a brick kiln named Sithi Bricks was set up on agricultural lands at the village ignoring rules and laws. It uses wood and coal for baking bricks and has a low chimney, which adversely affects crops, trees and plants in adjoining areas and pollutes the environment to a great extent.

"I cultivated crop on three bighas of land adjacent to the brick kiln, but the plants are gradually drying up due to the smoke, ash and heat from the kiln," said Saiful Islam, a farmer of the village. "I harvested early variety of boro from my two bighas of land next to the brick kiln, but got a negligible quantity of paddy against the expectation of over 40 maunds," said another affected farmer, Abdur Rahman, of the same village.

Denying crop damage from smoke and ash, the owner of the brick kiln, Rajib Rahman Dulal, said it

might be caused by changing climate.

"Ash from the kiln spreads to the nearby houses, and covers the plants," said local resident Milon Mia.

Local people complained to the upazila nirbahi officer and asked for shifting of the kiln to another place to save crops, plants and the environment.

After visiting the affected area, Rashedul Huq Prodhon, assistant commissioner (land), told local farmers that appropriate measures would be taken against the owner of the kiln.