



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers thresh newly harvested paddy at Purbo Hazaratpara in Dinajpur Sadar upazila a couple of days ago. However, the good yield fails to make the growers happy, as evident in a demonstration with paddy spread on Thakurgaon-Dhaka road Khochabari Haat in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.



Boro farming not profitable as price Tk 400 per maund

Farmers blame late procurement drive for the situation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Frustration has gripped farmers as paddy price continues to be low in the markets. Besides, delay in the rice procurement drive of the government in Dinajpur, Joypurhat and Naogaon is also allegedly depriving farmers of fair prices for their produce.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said at least 4,38,651 hectares of land have been brought under Irri-boro farming in the three districts, and total paddy production would be around 26,33,766 tonnes this year.

Of the cultivated land, 1,76,651 hectares are in Dinajpur and 1.90 lakh hectares in Naogaon.

Paddy harvesting has started in these districts, and around 50 percent of the crop has been harvested so far.

The district food controlling departments will procure 63,784 tonnes of paddy in the three northern districts through 57 centres.

Abdul Kadir, Anwar Hossain and Iqbal Chowdhury, district food controllers of Dinajpur, Naogaon and Joypurhat, respectively, said paddy procurement is going at a slow pace because there is more than 14 percent moisture in the paddy. It has to be less than that before procurement.

"It will take some time for procurement to gain momentum," said Abdul Kadir.

Talking with this correspondent, most farmers said they got bumper production, but low price is a cause of concern as it is difficult for them to cover their expenses from Irri-boro farming.

This correspondent visited two big wholesale markets in Panchbari and

Gopalganj in Dinajpur Sadar upazila and found farmers selling paddy at Tk 370 to Tk 400 per maund.

"You know the price of one kilogram of mutton? It is Tk 650. The price of one maund of paddy is not even equivalent to the price of one kilogram of mutton," said Achhim Uddin, a farmer of Uttar Gosaipur village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila. He spent Tk 15,000 for producing paddy on one bigha of land.

In Joypurhat, farmers alleged that this year buyers from other districts are allegedly being barred from procuring paddy by the local rice millers, who have formed syndicates among themselves. "We are forced to sell our produce at throwaway price to the local millers," said Abdul Gafur of Kalai upazila. Paddy is being sold at Tk 360 to Tk 380 per maund in Joypurhat.

Farmers in Naogaon too got bumper production this season. Sirajul Islam of Nitpur village in Porsha upazila said he got 25 maunds paddy from one bigha. But low price marred his hope of earning a profit. "I don't know how I will repay the loan I took," he said.

The situation is worse for the farmers who cultivated paddy taking land on lease.

Siddiqui Rahman, a farmer of Niamatpur upazila, said that he cultivated boro on one bigha this year and got 25 maunds of paddy. He sold his produce for Tk 9,500, while his expenditure was around Tk 17,000. "I have to pay the bills for irrigation, pesticide and fertiliser, and also give money to the land owner," he added.

The situation will improve soon, said Satyabrata Saha, deputy director of DAE in Naogaon.

2 to die for murder in Rajbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

A Rajbari court yesterday handed down death sentence to two people for killing schoolboy Rifat Hossain in 2013 in Rajbari district.

The convicts are Roktim Ranjan Sarker, 24, and Rony Sheikh Russel, 30, of T&T area of Rajbari town.

According to the prosecution, a gang abducted Rifat Hossain, 11, a Class V student at Rajbari Kindergarten and son of Mukter Hossain, from Char Narayanpur under Sadar upazila of the district on November 6. Mukter is an expatriate in Bahrain.

The gang kidnapped Rifat while he was returning home from school at noon. The abductors phoned Rifat's family members the following day, demanding Tk 15 lakh as ransom. The family refused to give the money.

The gang killed the boy and dumped the body in a sewage-disposal tank owned by Rakhtim Ranjan Sarker at T&T Para.

Police recovered the body on November 13.

Police arrested Rifat's cousin Kiam Uddin, 30, and Rony Sheikh, 24, of Char Narayanpur village, Ranjit Sarker, 55, and Rakhtim Ranjan Sarker.

After a long trial, Additional District and Sessions Judge Osman Haider sentenced Roktim Ranjan Sarker and Rony Sheikh Russel to death, while the others were acquitted.

PUST staff want student adviser to quit admin posts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Officers and employees of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) staged a demonstration in the campus yesterday, demanding removal of a teacher for misbehaving with the officers and employees.

Teachers and employees formed a human chain in front of the administrative building of the university yesterday, halting all administrative activities for an hour. A protest meeting held on the occasion was addressed by workers and employees of the university.

The accused teacher Dr Md Habibullah is chairman of the History Department, and also director of the students advisory committee and the Modern Language Institute of the university.

"Dr Habibullah has been holding three administrative posts for the last few years by 'managing' the university authorities. Using his power and position, the teacher often misbehaves with the officers and employees of the university," officers and employees alleged at the protest rally.

Director (finance) Mintu Kumar Bishwas, assistant registrar Rezaul Haque and officer Shohag Hossain spoke at the rally, demanding removal of Dr Habibullah from the administrative posts.

"Holding important posts, the accused teacher does not perform his duties properly, hampering administrative activities in the university," they claimed, adding that they would go for tougher agitation programme if their demand was not met.

Contacted, Dr Habibullah said he is being victimised for protesting irregularities. "A few workers and employees do not perform their duties properly. They are angry at me because I protested against it," Habibullah said, adding that he performs all his duties perfectly.

FLASH FLOODS HIT SYLHET, MOULOVIBAZAR



PHOTO: STAR

Onrush of water triggered by torrential rain floods croplands and houses at Shimulkandi village in Khadimnagar union of Sylhet Sadar upazila, above, and Kulaura-Baralekha road in Moulvibazar district, like many others areas of the two districts.

Man gets life for selling wife to brothel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A man was awarded life imprisonment and fined Tk 50,000, in default to suffer more one year jail, for trafficking his wife to India. Judge of the District and Sessions Court in Lalmonirhat Miah Mohammad Ali Akbar Azizi delivered the verdict yesterday.

The convict is Meser Ali, alias Bacchu alias Siddique, 38, of Dowani village in Barakhata union under Hatibandha upazila of the district.

The case statement said Meser Ali married 19-year-old Ayesha Begum in February 1999, and sold her to a brothel in Shillong in India in June the same year.

The victim returned home in March 2005. She lodged a case with Hatibandha Police Station on April 6, 2005, accusing her husband Meser Ali.

Hatibandha police said the convict was arrested from his house in November 2014.

The victim's father said "Meser Ali took our daughter to India to look for a job," adding that he had no contact with his daughter and her husband since then. "We came to know about the matter clear when our daughter returned home," he added.

"I was sold to a brothel in Shillong for one lakh Indian Rupees. There was no scope to escape from there. Finally, with the help of a Bengali customer, I managed to run away from the brothel on April 1, 2005," she said.

The victim said she believed her husband and loved him very much, so she went with him to India easily. "I'm happy as the criminal, culprit, cheater who was my husband has been awarded life imprisonment," she said.

Youth beaten dead over mobile theft

UNB, Chittagong

A man was beaten to death allegedly by a group of local youths at Shitalpur village in Sitakunda upazila early yesterday on allegation of stealing a mobile phone set.

The deceased, Abdul Malek, 26, son of Siddik Patwari of Chandpur district, used to live at a rented house at Bagula Bazar in the upazila.

The law enforcers yesterday arrested five people in connection with the killing.

Quoting locals and victim's family members police said a group of 10/12 youths led by one Azam picked up Malek from Bagula Bazar and took him to Shitalpur village on Tuesday night for stealing a mobile phone.

Azam and his men tortured Malek and beat him mercilessly, leaving him dead, Sub-inspector Kamal of Sitakunda Police Station said.

Locals spotted Malek's body lying beside a road and informed the police, who recovered the body and sent it to the hospital for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR

A large tree lies uprooted at Koyetpara in Panchagarh Sadar upazila where a hailstorm hit on Tuesday night.

Crops, houses damaged as storm hits different areas

Tree collapse kills college boy in Jhenidah

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A college student was killed and a number of houses and vast croplands were damaged as storms lashed Panchagarh and Jhenidah districts on Tuesday.

A college boy died as a big branch of a tree fell on him during a storm at Borai village in Sadar upazila of Jhenidah at night, reports our correspondent.

The victim is Rana Ahmed, 22, a student of Dakbangla Abdur Rauf Degree College, and son of Kamal Hossain of Potahati village.

Police and locals said when Rana and one Shimul Hossain, 15, riding a motorbike were returning home, a big branch of a tree broke down and fell on them during a violent storm

around 9:00pm.

Seriously injured Rana and Shimul were rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital where on-duty doctors declared Rana dead.

In Panchagarh, a number of houses and vast croplands were damaged as a storm accompanied with hailstorm hit different villages in the district the same day, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

The most affected villages are Jalashi, Bakuakhali, Tunirhat, Chakla, Mirgarh, Dudumari, Molanipara in sadar upazila, Dhonipara, Moidandighi, Sakoya and Mirpara, in Boda upazila and Sathkhalmar, Radhanagar, Farkirganj and Torea in Atway upazila.

The storm that started around 9:30pm damaged many houses and

different crops including boro paddy, maize, sesame and chili and fruit orchards.

The electricity supply was disrupted as poles were uprooted and electric wires tore at different places due to storm, said the villagers.

Farmer Khatibar Rahman of Jalashipara village in Sadar upazila said his boro paddy on two acres of land was damaged due to the storm accompanied with hailstorm.

Maize plants on his two bighas of land were damaged fully due to the storm, said Nur Islam, a farmer of Moidandighi in Boda upazila.

Engineer of Panchagarh Power Development Board (PDB) Ahsanul Kabir said they were working to restore electricity supply in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Jhenidah Polytechnic Institute demonstrate on the campus yesterday protesting what they said misappropriation of stipend money for students and annual sports fund of the institute.