

# Homestead potato storage

Farmers say it is more cost-effective than cold storage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Small and marginal farmers in the district are beginning to adopt a system of natural storage of potato at their homesteads instead of storing their produce in cold storage.

The system requires very little expenditure and allows them to market the produce at any time.

A government project titled 'Potato preservation, processing and marketing at homesteads' has attracted farmers to the new system of potato storage.

Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) GM Idris said potato yield is 4.35 lakh tonnes this season, of which only about one-fifth can be preserved in the 11 cold storages in the district.

"Due to lack of space in cold storages and inability of most farmers to bear the high charge, they are compelled to sell their produce at very low prices during harvest time," he added.

District Marketing Officer (DMO)

ATM Ershad Alam Khan said, "To relieve potato farmers from storage problem and ensure fair price, the government initiated the 'natural potato storage at homesteads in non-cold method'."

"We provided financial and technical support to three groups of farmers, each consisting of 30 members, to make three natural potato storages at their homesteads as models. Each storage room measures 25-foot by 15-foot with a tin roof and walls and floor made of bamboo slats, through which enough light and air can pass," Ershad said.

"Farmers can store 30 tonnes of potatoes in such a specialised storage for three to four months after harvesting in March," he added.

Representatives of the groups were given one-day training at the district marketing office on natural potato storage method, the marketing officer added.

"Seeing its success, other farmers

have made 10 such storages at their own initiative at different villages this year, taking suggestions from us," he said.

Visiting such a natural storage at Motukpur village in Domar upazila recently, this correspondent found that it was situated on a high and partially shady land, and potatoes were piled up on some hollow pipes made of bamboo to allow air flow to keep them fresh.

Abiul Islam, member of a group, said, "At harvesting time, many farmers sell their produce directly from the field at Tk 180 to Tk 200 per maund as they cannot store the potatoes in cold storages. We stored potatoes in the household storage and some of us sold our share for Tk 550 per maund in the last week of April."

President of a farmers' group at Panchapukur village in Sadar upazila, farmer Kamrul Islam said, "We are lucky to be able to store potatoes in a natural storage place as it requires very little cost."



A natural potato storage system, using fences and tubes made of bamboo slats to provide required ventilation and light to preserve the vegetable for a couple of months, comes as a boon for growers. The photo was taken from Motukpur village in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari. PHOTO: STAR

## Jhathibhanga mass killing day today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Valiant freedom fighters and different local socio-political organisations have taken different programmes to observe the Jhathibhanga mass killing day in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila today.

The programmes include placing floral wreaths at Jhathibhanga Monument and a discussion meeting at the venue.

On April 23 in 1971, thousands of villagers of Jagannathpur, Gora, Shukanpokhori and Balia unions under the upazila left their homes for neighbouring India to save their lives from the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators.

As the innocent people, mostly belonging to the minority Hindu community, gathered at Jhathibhanga village in the upazila members of Razakars and Al Badars informed the Pakistani army of the matter.

Being informed, the Pakistani occupation forces encircled the area, placed the innocent villagers in several rows and killed about 3,000 people, including women and children. They later buried the bodies at a mass grave at Jhathibhanga village.



## A forgotten massacre of 1971

SUKANTA PARTHIB

Today is April 23. On this day in 1971, the Pakistani occupation army aided by their local collaborators Rajakars went into an orgy of massacre and pillage at Chowdhurybari in Dupchanchia thana (now upazila) headquarter area, 20 kilometres from Bogra town.

Jogendranath Chowdhury (popularly known as Kshitish Chowdhury), Manmath Kundu, Kalachand Kundu, Santosh Kundu, Durga Kundu, Kanailal Poddar, Brajomahan Saha and several unnamed people lost their lives during the carnage.

The brutal forces also killed five-year-old Kakoli and gang-raped Manmath Kundu's young daughter.

Local union parisad fadard Tahiruddin Shah, businessman Satish Chandra Basak, Sharot Majumder, Akshay Kundu and the family members of the then manager of Muslim Commercial Bank were also killed by the occupation force that day.

The Pakistani army riddled with

bullets the artistic sculptures created by renowned sculptor Nalini Mohon Kundu while Rajakars vandalised and looted temples and houses in the area. Several houses were torched too.

Two days later, the bodies were buried in a mass grave near Chowdhurybari's Shyam Sarobar as locals could not perform the religious rite in fear of the barbaric forces.

The upazila administration and Muktiyoddha Sangsad in 2012 arranged setting a plaque of martyrs at the mass graveyard.

"The government should take necessary steps to build a monument at the mass grave of martyrs. The list in the plaque should be corrected as names of a few martyrs have been dropped and some are misspelled," said Abdul Mazid, commander of upazila unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

"If the government gives us direction to preserve the mass grave, we will take necessary steps in this regard," said Shahed Parvez, upazila nirbahi officer of Dupchanchia.

## Chuadanga BNP leader murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Unidentified criminals stabbed a local BNP leader to death at Jagannathpur village in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga yesterday.

The deceased, Shawkat Ali Farazi, 42, was president of ward no 6 of Kalidaspur union unit of BNP.

Quoting witnesses, Officer-in-Charge Akram Hossain of Alamdanga Police Station said four to six criminals attacked Shawkat when he went to visit his maize field around 1:30pm and stabbed him with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot.

## Housewife found dead in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police recovered the body of a housewife in Dhunat upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Tahrira Khatun, 19, was wife of Jahangir Alam.

Quoting deceased's family members, police said in the dead of Friday night, Tahrira's father-in-law Tota Mia phoned her father Solaiman Ali and said she had committed suicide by hanging herself from a tree.

## Stalking victim kills herself

Raped speech-impaired girl takes own life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Failing to bear the harassment by a stalker, a college girl allegedly committed suicide in Joypurhat while a speech-impaired girl killed herself after allegedly being gang-raped in Naogaon on Thursday.

Police said Munisha Begum, 17, daughter of Menhaz Ali of Uthrail village in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat, also a student of degree first-year at Nandail Degree College, took her life by hanging from the ceiling in her bedroom after having dinner around 10:00pm on Thursday night.

Quoting Menhaz, police said Mohammad Shahin, 22, son of Montu Mia of the village, used to stalk his daughter on her way to and from college and her private tutors. Shahin also tried to abuse her physically while she was returning home on Thursday.

A murder case was filed with Kalai Police Station against Shahin and his father.

Away in Naogaon, speech-impaired Kohili Khatun, 21, daughter of Abdul Mannan of Manahagar village in Manda upazila, hanged herself on Thursday night after allegedly being gang-raped by three unidentified youths on Wednesday.

Deceased's family members said three youths entered the house when Kohili was alone at home on Wednesday noon and raped her.

Abdul Mannan said his daughter could only give an idea about the number of the culprits, nothing more.

Officer-in-Charge Anisur Rahman of Manda Police Station said police recovered the body and sent it to Naogaon General Hospital for autopsy, adding that they will take necessary action after getting the autopsy report.



Harijan Oikya Parishad in cooperation with Jonoudyog and Abalamban forms a human chain on DB Road in Gaibandha yesterday demanding necessary allocation in the national budget for socio-economic development of the disadvantaged community. PHOTO: STAR

## Storm ravages primary school

Children attend classes under open sky in Sundarganj, attendance decreasing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Students of Bekatari Government Primary School in Sundarganj upazila are attending classes under the open sky as their schoolhouse was blown down in a storm on April 15.

The school authorities have not been able to repair the schoolhouse as yet, so they are holding classes under the open sky to avoid interruption in schooling.

The school was set up in 2009 with the help of local people and national-

ised in 2013 with 269 students. There are 38 students in infant class, 37 in Class I, 60 in Class II, 59 in Class III, 43 in Class IV and 32 in Class V.

"We have to take shelter in nearby houses when it rains, so attendance of students is decreasing," said Pallabi Rani, a student of Class IV.

"The classrooms and toilets were shattered in the storm. The schoolhouse needs to be repaired for smooth education of the children," said Sheuli Khatun, headmaster of the school.

"Benches and educational equip-

ment were also damaged in the storm, as a result, the students cannot learn their lessons properly," said assistant teacher Mohosina Begum.

"We have informed the higher authorities about the situation and requested them to repair the schoolhouse immediately. However, a temporary shed will be erected on emergency basis so that the education of the children is not hampered," said Mozaffar Hossain, president of the school managing committee.



Students of Bekatari Government Primary School in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha attend classes under the open sky beside the schoolhouse that lies mangled after being hit by a storm on April 15. PHOTO: STAR

## Abducted Gazipur boy killed in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Local people found the body of a schoolboy floating in a water body in Dhargoan area of Nandail upazila in the district on Friday morning.

Local people said they found the body, wearing school uniform along with schoolbag, floating in Awaile Beel and informed the police.

Police recovered the body of eight-year-old Rezaul Karim, a Class-II student of Tekpara Government Primary School in Joydevpur of Gazipur, said Md Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nandail Police Station.

Ataur quoting family members said Rezaul, son of rickshaw-puller Sobhan Mia, was abducted from Joydevpur on Tuesday noon when he was returning home from school.

The abductors took the boy to Nandail in Mymensingh and strangled him, said the OC, adding that later, they left the body in the water body to hide the murder.

The body has been sent to Kishoreganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the OC.

Victim's father Sobhan lodged a case with Nandail Police Station accusing several people, including two named ones, on Friday, said the OC.

None was arrested as of filing this report.

## Rickshaw-puller strangled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man was found strangled in Purba Aliabad area of Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased Mamun Sheikh, 35, son of Babul Sheikh of Ibrahim Dangi village, was a rickshaw puller.

Mamun's cousin Jiku Sheikh said, "Mamun came out of his house at 9:00am on Friday with his rickshaw but did not return.

Sub-inspector Ashim Biswas said Jiku identified the body. A towel was wrapped around the neck of the corpse.

## Boat capsized: Man still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A man who went missing when a boat capsized in the Bishkhali river in Barguna on Friday is still untraced.

Joint operations by the fire service, coastguards and naval police at Bainchutki area under Pathorghata upazila of Barguna have failed to find him.

Shakir Jubayer Khan alias Tutul, 36, of Joarsahara area in Dhaka was going with his family to Tenragiri eco-park under Taltali upazila of Barguna when the hired country boat they were in capsized.

Tutul came to Bainchutki village on April 20 to visit his sister. Deputy Assistant Director of fire service Md Sohel Rana said they are continuing the rescue operation, but could not find Tutul.

A team of divers from Barisal also reached the spot at about 6:00pm on Friday and joined the rescue operation, Sohel said.

Tutul is a businessman. His elder daughter Rimjhim was an examinee in the SSC exam this year from Vikarunnesa Noon School and College while his younger daughter Bristy is studying in Class IV at the same institution, Tutul's family members said.

## Dalits want budgetary allocation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Speakers at a human chain programme on DB road rail gate demanded adequate allocation for Dalit community in the national budget.

They also demanded quota in government services, education and other sectors and a law for establishing equal rights of all citizens, including the Dalits.

Harijan Oikya Parishad, Jonoudyog and Abalamban organised the programme. The people of Dalit community joined the rally carrying placards and festoons for realisation of their demands.

The speakers said there are about 65 lakh people of the Dalit community in Bangladesh. They are marginalised and neglected in society for being Dalits, the speakers added.

The Dalit community has remained backward and far from the mainstream due to their status, for which they are deprived of social and government amenities, the speakers said.

Gaibandha Nagorik Parishad President Advocate Sirajul Islam Babu, Abalamban Executive Director Probir Chakraborty, Gaibandha Harijan Oikya Parishad Convener Kitton Basfore and Dalit women's leader Mohua Basfore spoke at the human chain.