

TAGORE'S BIRTHDAY President opens celebration at Patisar today

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinaipur

Patisar, a village associated with Rabindranth Tagore in Naogaon, is set to welcome President Abdul Hamid to celebrate the 156th birth anniversary of the Nobel laureate poet today.

Security arrangements have been beefed up for his visit to the area, said Deputy Commissioner Aminur Rahman.

The president will inaugurate the programme, he said. Ministry of Cultural Affairs is hosting the programme for the first time at Patisar.

Every year the district administration arranges cultural programmes to celebrate the birth anniversary of Rabindranth Tagore. Nearly 2,000 people, including cultural personalities, politicians and journalists got invitation to attend the special programme, said the DC.

The President will fly to Patisar by a helicopter from Dhaka today. A helipad was also set up at Agro Institute ground in Atrai upazila of Naogaon.

Beside, the Kacharibari a sculpture of Rabindranth Tagore and his used items have been kept for exhibition to attract the visitors to mark the birthday.

The Kacharibari ground, Rabindranth High School, Zila Parishad Bungalow also wore a festive look.



Like a few hundred others of the kind, a rice mill on Station Road in Nilphamari municipality and another at Joynagar in Ishwardi upazila under Pabna district look deserted as the husking mills suspended production due to unavailability of paddy.



PHOTO: STAR

Paddy shortage forces rice mills to shut

Workers become unemployed in Nilphamari and Pabna, known for surplus rice output

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Unusually low supply of paddy has led to closure of most of the rice mills in Nilphamari and Pabna districts, well-known for surplus rice production.

Prices of rice see rise in local markets while thousands of mill labourers have become unemployed as most of the rice mills in Nilphamari have stopped production due to scarcity of Aman paddy, reports our correspondent.

There are 613 traditional husking rice mills and 17 ultra-modern automatic rice mills in the district having capacity to produce around 65 thousand tonnes of rice in a month, said Azizul Islam, general secretary of district rice mill owners association.

"Aman paddy is not available in local markets this year as a section of millers and hoarders from other districts purchased a

greater portion of paddy at cheaper prices during the harvest," he said.

Visiting different paddy markets in the district including Ramganj Haat, Dhelapeer Haat, and Boragari Haat, this correspondent learnt that paddy prices have risen by Tk 200 to Tk 250 per sack (each sack containing 75 kg) in a month.

At present, a sack of Gutti Swarna variety of Aman paddy is sold at Tk 1875-Tk 1900 which was Tk 1675-Tk 1650 two months ago.

And the paddy, like other varieties, including Paizam, Swarna, Ranjit, and Mamun, is found only in small quantities.

Owner of Fakir Rice Husking Mill, Monjur Alam Fakir of Gachhbari area in Sadar upazila said he shut down the mill one month ago as paddy is not found as per requirement.

Due to the closure of a large number of

rice mills, around six thousand labourers have become unemployed and are passing hard days with families, said Amzad Hossain, president of district unit of Jatiya Sramik League.

District Controller of Food Kazi Saifuddin Ahmed said Nilphamari is a food surplus district and the situation will normalise as Boro paddy will be harvested and flood the market in a short time.

Our Pabna correspondent reports: Inadequate supply of paddy coupled with rainy weather badly hampered rice production in the district for last couple of weeks.

"We could not buy targeted paddy this year due to the paddy price hike and so, most of the 715 rice mills in the district have stopped production," said Idris Ali Bishwas, president of Pabna district rice

mill owners association.

Visiting Joynagar area of Ishwardi upazila last week, this correspondent found most of the 400 rice mills in the area closed.

"Although this is the high time for rice production, we can hardly buy paddy from the wholesale market as the supply is poor. In last couple of weeks, price of paddy in the wholesale market rose by Tk 100 to 200 per maund (40 kg), and it caused rise in rice production cost," said Khairul Islam, president of Ishwardi rice mill owners association.

A kg of rice is selling for Tk 38 to 48 although it was sold for Tk 32 to 40 early last month, rice traders said.

The recent loss of paddy in Chalanbeel and Haor areas have badly affected the paddy market, said Sadek Ali Bishwas, a leading rice trader of Ishwardi.

One dies, 200 houses damaged in Mymensingh storm

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A man was killed and 15 others were injured, two of them critically, when a nor-wester lashed Muktagachha and Phulbaria upazilas of the district on Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Abdul Mazid, 70, of Borogram village in Muktagachha.

Quoting locals, Officer-in-Charge of Muktagachha Police Station Akhter Morshed said Mazid died on the spot when a huge tree fell on his house.

Around 200 houses were razed to

the ground and over 2,000 trees uprooted in 30 villages of five unions - Tarati, Ghoga, Dullah, Mankone and Kashempur -- of Muktagachha, the OC said.

Twenty seven electric poles were also uprooted, he said. The loss is initially estimated to be around Tk 2 crore, he added.

Officials of the police and the upazila administration visited the affected areas yesterday.

At least 15 persons were injured when a nor-wester hit around 25 villages in four unions of Phulbaria

upazila on Saturday night.

Over 200 houses were damaged and about 3,000 trees, including fruit bearing ones, were uprooted in the storm, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Phulbaria Lira Tarafder.

Of the injured, two were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while the others were given first aid at Phulbaria Upazila Health Complex, the UNO said.

Seven educational institutions were also damaged in the storm, she said, adding that the loss was yet to be assessed.



Buddhist monks under the banner of Parbatya Bhikkhu Sangha, Bangladesh, distribute food among 52 families in Sajek union under Baghaichhari upazila of Rangamati yesterday. Faced with food crisis, at least 2500 families in the hill areas of Sajek will require persistent relief supply for three to four months, said local public representatives.

100 years not enough to be old?

Poor Akub suffers for want of allowance

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An over 100-year-old man in Barguna district has not yet been listed for receiving government allowance meant for the elderly people.

Poverty-hit Akub Ali Howlader of Patakata village under Amtali upazila has been passing his days amid hardship as he is deprived of the allowance.

His youngest son Babul Howlader runs the family of five, including Akub who urged the authorities concerned to include his father's name in the list for the allowance.

According to his national ID (041094733322) his date of birth is September 12, 1917. His father's name is Hatem Ali Howlader.

Akub has five sons and four daughters who live separately along with their families while he is living with Babul Howlader, a day labourer.

Babul said his father is very old and sick. He has been suffering from different diseases like gastric and blood pressure, Babul added.

He said he can't manage foods and medicine for his father with the income that he earns as a day labourer.

Akub said he appealed to local UP member Zakir Hossain several times in this regard but in vain.

Zakir said they are trying their best to include Akub's name in the list.

Expressing his ignorance about the matter, Upazila Social Welfare Officer Md Oliul Islam said they would consider the matter on priority basis if Akub applies for the allowance.



The mother cries holding a photograph of Shuvo, who was abducted from Hareram village in Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat 14 days ago.

Parents cry for son's rescue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Parents of a kidnapped schoolboy are passing agonising days as police are yet to rescue the 12-year-old boy two weeks into his abduction.

The victim is third grader Shuvo Das, 12, son of Dipu Chandra Das and Shyamoli Rani Das of Hareram village in Kaliganj upazila.

On April 24, a gang abducted the boy from the village and demanded Tk 1.10 lakh from his father over cellphone.

After tracking the phone number, the law enforcers arrested Abdul Malek, 28, one of the gang

members, from the village on May 4, said Sub-Inspector Matiar Rahman of Kaliganj Police Station.

They also seized the motorbike of the gang leader from the spot but he managed to flee the scene, said the SI, also the investigation officer of the case.

The victim's father Dipu alleged that the gang leader gave illicit proposal to his wife several times and on her refusal, he abducted his son.

Police do not seem willing to rescue his son, said Dipu.

Officer-in-Charge Maqbul Hossain said they are trying to rescue the boy and raiding different areas for the purpose.

Panchagarh people want return of acquired land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Over 500 people of different upazilas in Panchagarh besieged the deputy commissioner's (DC) office yesterday, demanding return of their lands acquired by the forest department in 1962.

They also submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through Deputy Commissioner Amal Krishna Mandal, demanding cancellation of the forest department's record and restoration of ownership to the victims, taking land taxes from actual land owners.

In the memorandum, they said the then government acquired 5,602 acres of land under Boda, Debaganj, Tentulia and Panchagarh Sadar upazilas for the forest department in 1962 without giving compensation.

Wrong treatment makes woman infertile

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A fake doctor was arrested here after a woman filed a case against him, claiming that wrong treatment by the physician has led her to infertility.

Nasima Begum, 34, wife of Toslim Uddin of Kashira village in Joypurhat's Akkelpur upazila, filed the case against eight people, including the arrestee Ashish Kumar, 46, of the town on Saturday night.

The other accused in the case are Jewel Sarkar, clinic owner Rezaul Karim, its manager Apollo Sarkar, Dr Manobendra Paul Niloy, Dr Habibur Rahman Habib and two nurses Sathi and Shamima.

According to the case statement, Nasima, who had been suffering from uterus-related problems, was admitted to Shah Sultan Clinic and Diagnostic Centre in Kanochhari area of Bogra town by introducer Jewel Sarkar, son of Geda Sarker of Khandakarpara village, on April 8.

Following a wrong diagnosis, arrestee Ashish, who only has a medical diploma, later conducted an emergency operation and removed the victim's uterus.

After being released from the hospital, Nasima consulted with some other expert doctors and came to know that it was not necessary to remove her uterus.

Inspector (investigation) Aslam Hossain of Sadar Police Station said police produced the arrestee before a court that sent him to the jail yesterday.

Mystery shrouds death of Indian

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Mystery shrouds the death of an Indian national in Ishwardi upazila.

Victim Yadab Lal, 45, son of Ram Bilash Yadab of Patna in Bihar, came to Pabna a year ago and joined Rashid Oil Mill as a plant in-charge.

Yadab lost his job last year and since then he was staying at the house of Md Saifullah in the area.

Officer-in-Charge of Ishwardi Police Station Abdul Hai said Yadab developed a relationship with Nasima Akter, daughter of Saifullah.

Early yesterday, Yadab killed himself by taking poison.

Yadab might have committed suicide following a dispute over the relationship with Nasima, said the OC.

Police picked up Saifullah for interrogation.



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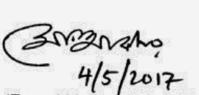
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