

Worsening plight of potato growers

Joypurhat farmers incur huge loss for low price, leaving potato at cold storages

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur
Cold storages in Joypurhat are still full as farmers are not collecting the stored potatoes due to low price in the markets.

Farmers in the district are busy cultivating potato this season with the hope of overcoming the losses they suffered last season due to low prices.

District Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director (DD) Surendranath Roy said around 42,000 hectares will be brought under potato farming this year with a production target of 10.30 tonnes.

The district is the 2nd largest potato producing district in the country, he added.

Potato growers suffered massive losses as the market prices of potatoes started dropping from August this year. Besides, the flood, which hit the region in mid-August, also hampered storage of potatoes.

Farmers who stored potatoes in cold storage for earning high profit are not collecting those to save themselves from losses due to low market price. "Farmers pay Tk 300 to the cold storage for storing each bag (75kg) of potatoes, while the

farmers can hardly save Tk 200 from the selling price after deducting associated costs like transport," said Md Rafiqul Islam of Kalai upazila of Joypurhat.

Potatoes are selling at Tk 7 to Tk 8 per kg in local markets.

Shishir Mondal of Hanail village in Sadar upazila said he spent Tk 16,000 last year to cultivate potatoes on 50 decimals of land and got 80 maunds of potatoes, adding that he sold half of his produce for Tk 8,000 and kept the rest at a local cold storage so he could recover from the loss by selling it later.

"Abundant production is the key reason behind the dip," he observed. He is cultivating potatoes on the same area this year, Shishir said.

Price of potato seeds have also dropped, said Bakul Hossain of Mundaal village in Khetlal upazila. Besides, paddy production was not satisfactory this year because of flood at the onset of the cultivation season, he said.

"Farmers have been passing hard days due to the adverse weather and low market rate of their produce," said Golam Rabbani of Mundaal village.

There are 16 cold storages in the



Farmers prepare the land for cultivating potatoes in Hanail village under Sadar upazila of Joypurhat. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

district, DAE officials said. Most of them usually become empty after November every year, but the farmers are not willing to collect their potatoes due to low price, a cold storage operator said.

"Cold storage operators suffer loss too if farmers do not collect

their potatoes," said Golam Mostafa, manager of Abir Specialised Cold Storage in Kalai upazila. One lakh sixty-five thousand three hundred and twenty bags were stored in his plant this year, he said, adding that most farmers have not collected their

bags as yet. The cold storage is likely to suffer Tk 3 crore losses this year, he said.

DD Surendranath said bumper production is the reason for price fall this year, but he is hoping that growers will get good price in the coming days.

40-DAY JOB SCHEME

9246 beneficiaries in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The ultra poor people in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat are very happy after getting opportunity to work under the government-run 40-day job scheme.

The project, meant for providing employment facilities to the seasonal jobless poor, started in the district on Saturday.

Under the scheme, a total of 9,246 beneficiaries, of whom seventy percent are women, of 405 wards under 45 unions in five upazilas of the district have started working this year.

According to District Relief and Rehabilitation Office in Lalmonirhat, the government has sanctioned Tk 7 crore 36 lakh and 68 thousand against the wages for over nine thousand sand labourers this year, which was Tk 6 crore 10 lakh eight thousand for 7,620 workers last year.

This year, over 1620 fresh beneficiaries are newly included to work under the scheme.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Office sources said each of the 9,246 beneficiaries will get Tk 200 as daily wage for working eight hours a day.

One of the labourers, Pushpa Rani, 46, of Doljor village in Aditnari upazila, said "We are getting Tk 200 as daily wage which will help us to earn up to Tk 8,000 till the end of the 40-day scheme."

"I will spend half of my earnings for my three children's education purposes while the rest as additional support for maintaining my family," Pushpa added.

Abdur Rahman, 48, another beneficiary under the job scheme of the village, said they generally do earth filling works on earthen roads and on the premises of different mosques, temples, graveyards and even schools and colleges.

Rahman said the earning they generate from working under the scheme help them to mitigate their poverty during the acute job crisis at this time of the year.

DISPUTE OVER LAND ACQUISITION

Kushtia drainage system work stalled for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Construction of modern drainage and sewerage system in Kushtia municipality has remained stalled for years due to dispute over land acquisition and fixing of the land values.

The municipality authorities asked the district administration for acquisition of about 3.22 acres of fallow land at Chourhas, Mollahteghoria and Kalishankarpur on February 7 in 2011 to build two modern water treatment plants and seven master drains. They also requested for reconstruction of seven existing drains.

Accordingly, the district administration asked its Land Acquisition (LA) section to assess the land. The LA section classified the land as paddy field and fixed its value at Tk 2.56 crore.

One Amirul Islam lodged a case against the land acquisition with the High Court. A High Court division bench pronounced the acquisition valid. The complainant then appealed to the Supreme Court and the apex court upheld the High Court verdict.

Amirul claimed that the value of the land would have to be fixed as for wetland, but it was fixed for paddy field. The district administration found two documents that proved the land was wetland, he added.

LA section said value of any land would be fixed on the basis of nearby lands as per the land acquisition law.

Later, the LA section fixed the land's value at Tk 4.56 crore and a report was submitted to the deputy commissioner (DC) on February 2 in 2015 in this regard. Then, the DC asked the municipality authorities on March 3 the same year to pay the money for completing the acquisition process.

The municipality paid Tk 2.90 crore but declined to pay the rest, saying that the rate fixed earlier was correct.

After visiting the spot, the Khulna divisional commissioner asked for classification of the land as wetland and said the rate of Tk 4.56 crore is correct.

"A vested quarter wants to exploit the project for its own interest," said municipality Mayor Anwar Ali, adding that the process of rate fixing of the land was dubious as the district administration fixed two rates, which has caused confusion.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the delay in land acquisition, DC Zahir Raihan said he would take steps to solve the problem after further direction from the High Court.

The municipality needs about 3.22 acres of land to build two modern water treatment plants and seven master drains.



'Raj Dental and Technician' owned by fake dentist Saiful Islam at Shahrail Bazar of Shayesta union in Singair upazila under Manikganj. PHOTO: STAR

Fake dentist in lucrative practice

Without even high school education, he continues the illegal business for years

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj

Without any professional degree in dentistry, Saiful Islam Shimul has continued treatments of tooth problems at Shahrail Bazar of Shayesta union in Singair upazila under the district, hoodwinking the treatment seekers from the rural area.

Saiful, aged around 55, owner of Raj Dental and Technician at Shahrail Bazar, himself conducts all treatments on teeth including patchwork, scaling, filling, and root canal while Abdul Alim, a Class 10 student of local Shahrail High School, assists in his work.

During a recent visit to the spot, this correspondent learned that Saiful, hailing from Dudghata village in Dhaka's Nababganj upazila, has continued the work for more than seven years there.

Saiful claimed that he became a dental technician through experience.

"As the number of patients increased, I am also training my wife in dental care," Saiful said.

His wife Mitali Khatun said, "My husband passed the SSC from a school

in his area. He worked at a dental clinic in Satkhira. Seven years ago, he came to Shahrail and opened a dental chamber. After learning from him, I am also conducting dental treatment."

Further enquiry, however, revealed that Saiful did not even pass the SSC.

Saiful's assistant Abdul Alim said, "I have learned all the things related to teeth from my maternal uncle Saiful who is skilled in treating all kinds of tooth problems."

According to Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Act, a doctor has to be a BDS degree holder for dental treatment and a diploma degree is required to be a qualified assistant. There is provision for imprisonment and fine for unauthorised practice, according to the law.

Civil Surgeon Dr Khurshid Alam said, "It mandatory to follow the health department's rules and regulations for medical treatment. Legal action will be taken after investigating the matter."

Singair Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Jubayer said necessary steps will be taken if the person under question is found guilty.



People of Dalit community accompanied by locals join a human chain on Station Road in Gaibandha town yesterday marking International Human Rights Day. They demanded end to discrimination against the marginalised people. PHOTO: STAR

Fake DIG arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police arrested a fake deputy inspector general (DIG) of police from Champadaha village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The arrestee is Ataur Rahman alias Atik, 43, son of Abdur Rahman of the village.

Police said Atik had been collecting tolls from different organisations and persons introducing himself either as DIG or superintendent of police.

He often cheated people by promising employment in the police department in exchange of money.

Atik is an accused in several cases, including fraudulence and toll collection, said Khan Md Shaharier, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.



Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)

IEB Bhaban (5,6 & 7th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka, Bangladesh
www.btrc.gov.bd

Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Chartered Accountants Firm for Information System Audit

1.	Ministry/Division	Posts and Telecommunications Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology.
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).
3.	Name of procuring entity	Chairman, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), IEB Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
4.	Procuring entity code	Not applicable.
5.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
6.	Expression of Interest for selection of	Chartered Accountant Firm (Audit firm) registered with Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) with Affiliation/Association of Consulting/IT Firm and Foreign Chartered Accountant Firm (Audit firm).
7.	EOI Ref. No.	14.32.0000.400.01.002.17
8.	EOI approval date (dd/mm/yy)	28/11/2017
KEY INFORMATION		
9.	Procurement sub-method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10.	Budget and source of funds	BTRC's own budget.
11.	Development partner (if applicable)	Not applicable.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12.	Project/programme code (if applicable)	No applicable.
13.	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Information System Audit of Two Cellular Mobile Phone Operators, namely (1) Banglalink Digital Communications Limited (Banglalink) (2) Airtel Bangladesh Limited (Airtel).
14.	EOI closing date and time	11 January 2018 by 17.00 hour Bangladesh Local Time (GMT+6).
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
15.	Brief description of the assignment	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission" or (BTRC) intends to appoint Chartered Accountants Firm for Information Systems Audit/Procedure & System Audit of Cellular Mobile Operators in Bangladesh. The major scope of auditing services is, but not limited to the followings: i) To verify, examine and analyze the provisions of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulation Act, 2001 (Amendment 2010), Rules, Regulations, Directives, Directions, Order, Circulars, Decisions, Permission/NOC of the Government/Commission and the licensing obligations. ii) To find out the actual revenue generated and the calculation procedure to make the payment to the Commission for a particular or whole licensing period and reconcile those with the operator's financial statements and other records. iii) Analysis of the audited financial statements to discover understatement/ misstatement/manipulation of any facts. iv) To find out revenue sharing, spectrum charge, license fee, royalty, VAT, AIT and other fees/charges, etc. payable to BTRC. v) To analyze CDR, network traffic, transmission & access networks, IN, HLR, Billing systems, CRM, VAS systems, etc. for assessing regulatory compliance.
16.	Instruction to submit EOI	i. The interested bidders should submit separate EOI for M/s Banglalink Digital Communications Limited (Banglalink) and M/s Airtel Bangladesh Limited (Airtel). ii) For each EOI, one set of Expression of Interest (EOI), both hard and soft copy (soft in DVD-Word format) must be delivered to the Chairman, BTRC, IEB Bhaban (5th, 6th & 7th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh on or before 11 January 2018. iii) On the envelope, please clearly mark "Expression of Interest for Selection of Chartered Accountants Firm (Audit firm) for Information Systems Audit of M/s Banglalink Digital Communications Limited (Banglalink) or "Expression of Interest for Selection of Chartered Accountants Firm (Audit firm) for Information Systems Audit of M/s Airtel Bangladesh Limited (Airtel) based on the chosen Operator(s). Only shortlisted firms will be issued Request for Proposal (RFP) for submission of Technical and Financial proposal within the specified date and time.
17.	For details about the EOI	www.btrc.gov.bd

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BTRC

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