

Late onion planting worries farmers

Rain earlier damaged most seedbeds in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Farmers in the district are worried over fall in onion production due to late planting of seeds this year, but at the same time they are happy with high prices in the markets.

Onion cultivation is usually completed within December every year but it began early January this year due to the excessive rain. Rain damaged most of the seedbeds in the district, farmers and agriculture officials said.

"We could not plant seeds in December due to damage to seedbeds caused by excessive rain in November and December. I planted seedlings on 30 bighas of land this month and will harvest the crop in April, which is later than normal harvesting time," said onion farmer Md Idris Ali at Satbaria village in Sujanagar upazila.

"Last year, onion was sold at Tk 600 to Tk 800 per maund, while it is Tk 1,200 to Tk 1,300 this year. Good onion price inspired

me to cultivate on more land this year but the production may fall due to late cultivation, so I might not get expected profit," said farmer Md Abul Hannan at Satbaria village.

The district Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director (DD) Bibhuti Bhushan Sarkar said around 44,000 hectares of land were brought under onion cultivation in nine upazilas of the district this year with a target of production of six lakh tonnes, although the production target was fixed at 4.76 lakh tonnes from 34,000 hectares.

More than 20,000 hectares of land were brought under onion cultivation in Sujanagar upazila, the highest onion farming upazila in the country, he added.

"Pabna is the highest onion producing district in the country, but farmers could not plant it on time, so they are worried that production might fall. Still we are hopeful that we will get expected production if there is no major natural crisis," Bibhuti said.



Farmers are busy planting onion. The picture was taken in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR



Drivers of rental motorcycles wait for passengers at Rajapur By-pass More in Jhalakathi. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Cold makes rental bike drivers' life difficult

About 12,000 earn livelihood by driving motorbikes in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

About 12,000 drivers of rental motorcycles in six districts under Barisal division are passing their days in hardship as people do not want to travel by bike due to the ongoing bitter cold.

Driving rental bikes is the only means of livelihood for them.

Motorbike is one of the best vehicles for road communication in rural areas of the districts, but passengers are showing reluctance to ride on bikes as the cold is felt more on bikes.

"I did not earn a single taka for the last two days as there was no passenger due to the cold. And so, I have not been able to buy food for my five-member family," said motorbike driver Manir in Jhalakathi Sadar.

"I used to earn Tk 500 daily before the cold spell, but now my income is about Tk

100 to Tk 200 a day. I have to pay Tk 200 per day as rent for the bike," said driver Barkat at Rupatoli Bus Stand in Barisal.

"I took a small loan from a co-operative society at high interest for buying food and medicine for my sick elderly mother," said Saidul Isalm, a motorcycle driver in Jhalakathi College More area.

"I never felt such cold in my life and I cannot drive my bike due to that," a bike rider of the same area said, adding that he does not have enough warm clothes to protect himself from the cold while driving the bike.

"We have to pay Tk 6,000 as rent monthly to owner of the bike, whether we drive the bike or not," said Saidul.

"I always ride on rental bike, but I have not done so this winter due to the bitter cold," said Nur Alam Akon, a union parishad member in Nalchity.

Woman hacked by husband, dies at hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A housewife, who was hacked by her husband in Sakhipur upazila on Saturday night, succumbed to her injuries yesterday morning while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The deceased was Aklima Akter, daughter of Ataf Hossain of Kachua Beparipara village.

Family sources said Aklima's husband, Dubai expatriate Jewel Rana, son of Abdul Latif of Kaliapara village in the upazila, hacked her with a machete during a family quarrel at her father's house, leaving her seriously injured.

Hearing the screams, neighbours rescued Aklima and took her to Sakhipur Upazila Health Complex. As her condition deteriorated, she was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same night.

Aklima's grandmother Sahera Begum said the couple used to quarrel often.

After Saturday's incident, Aklima's family members kept Jewel confined in the house, but a union parishad member of a neighbouring area with the help of a local union parishad member released him, she added.

'Harassed' rly female official hospitalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A female official of Bangladesh Railway's (BR) estate department in Pakshey divisional office landed in Pakshey Railway Hospital on Sunday, following alleged mental and physical torture at the office by her bosses.

The BR authorities have formed an inquiry committee to investigate the matter.

The 35-year-old victim of Bhodra area of Rajshahi is a draftsman of Pakshey estate office of BR.

Talking with this correspondent at the hospital yesterday, the victim said, "Shortly after I joined the office one year ago, my boss Divisional Estate Officer (DEO) Md Eunus Ali sir gave me an illicit proposal. As I rejected it, he started misbehaving with me."

"My immediate boss Circle Estate Officer (CEO) Md Rafiul Islam also harassed me often in the name of official work.

"On Sunday, the CEO uttered rude words to me at the end of the office time. At one stage he forcibly took me to the DEO sir's room where I fainted in fear. Later my office colleagues took me to Pakshey Railway Hospital," she said.

Contacted, DEO Eunus Ali said, "The female staff is mentally and physically weak due to a miscarriage around four months ago and she often fails to perform duty properly."

"If superiors guide her, she takes it as an insult and often creates chaos in the office. Recently I have recommended for her transfer from the office," he said.

Pakshey Divisional Railway Manager Ashim Kumar said a three-member inquiry committee headed by the divisional estate officer was formed yesterday, with instructions to investigate the incident within three working days.

BCL men block road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Mirzaganj upazila unit in the district blocked Barguna-Barisal via Mirzaganj road for several hours yesterday, demanding withdrawal of cancellation order of the upazila unit.

They also brought out a procession in the upazila headquarters to realise the demand. Upazila BCL unit President Jahirul Islam Jewel and General Secretary Md Rakib Mridha led the programme.

Passengers suffered a lot during traffic jam created by the five-hour blockade that started around 9:00am, said local people.

Central BCL President Md Saifur Rahman Sohag and General Secretary SM Zakir Hossain in a press release on Sunday night cancelled Mirzaganj upazila unit for its leaders' alleged involvement in violating discipline. The central body also cancelled all six union units of the upazila in the same order.

After getting the order, upazila BCL men brought out a procession in the upazila headquarters around 9:00am and paraded the main streets.

At one stage, they blocked the road for hours, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control around 2:00pm, said Additional Superintendent of Police Md Mahfuzur Rahman.

The upazila BCL men also gave a 24-hour ultimatum to the central BCL to withdraw the order, otherwise they will go for tougher programme.

Upazila BCL president Jewel and secretary Rakib said the central body suspended them illegally without any reasonable cause.



Mirzaganj upazila BCL men block Barguna-Barisal via Mirzaganj road in Patuakhali for hours yesterday, demanding withdrawal of cancellation order of the upazila unit.

PHOTO: STAR

BB seeks to curb excessive lending

FROM PAGE 1

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, a forum of CEOs, welcomed the central bank's move to raise the private sector credit growth target, but he feared that slashing the loan-deposit ratio would make lending costlier and fuel inflation as well.

In the new monetary policy, the central bank has kept unchanged the domestic credit growth target at 15.8 percent for the second half of the fiscal year, which according to the governor, would help achieve 7.4 percent GDP target and 6 percent inflation.

Repo and reverse repo policy interest rates have been left unchanged at 6.75 and 4.75 percent but it could be for the time being only.

The governor said, "The new credit growth target will focus on containing the inflationary target while it will also avoid the contraction of domestic credit growth. The new policy will keep giving importance to

easing the ongoing pressure of foreign exchange transaction on the economy."

Fazle said the banks have to face punitive measures in line with the Banking Company Act 1991 if they acted against the interest of depositors and common people.

The import of capital machineries and industrial raw materials registered a significant growth during the first half of this fiscal year while the global economy boosted growth which was in a stagnant situation, the Bangladesh Bank governor said.

He, however, said the sudden increase of import payments has registered a 2.5 percent depreciation of taka against the dollar in the first half of this fiscal year.

The current account deficit also widened, which has been dealt with in the latest monetary policy, Fazle said.

Under the circumstances, the private sector credit growth stood at 18.13 percent -- way past the target set

for the period, he said.

Such momentum was positive for achieving 7.4 percent GDP growth for the fiscal year, but at the same time it has largely increased the short-term risk over inflationary pressure and foreign exchange zone, he said.

In the questions-answers session, the governor said he would bring down the loan-deposit ratio with a view to ensure quality of credit.

Asked whether the central bank would give licences to the new banks in line with the government's proposals, he said new banks would be allowed considering the volume of the country's private sector and the existing trend of employment generation.

The board of directors of the central bank would decide in this regard, he said.

Responding to a question, the governor termed the monetary policy "employment focused growth with stability".

Zahid Hussain, lead economist of the World

Bank's Dhaka office, said the overall policy stance remains accommodative to the expected nominal growth in the economy.

The mid-course corrections to the policy laid out in July last sent somewhat mixed signals with an unspecified "new directive requiring banks to rationalise their Advance-Deposit Ratios" and the private credit growth target increased to 16.8 percent from 16.3 percent.

"The MPS [monetary policy stance] is way short on concrete measures to stop the spread of non-performing loans in private banks," he said.

Zahid said the economy was facing three downsides risks worth serious reckoning -- inflation, external imbalance and financial instability.

The MPS has attempted to address the inflation risk through a monetary programme that allows inflation to be as high as 6 percent.

"Overall, this MPS appears rather vague on how the monetary authority would handle at least two

out of the three key risks looming large in the near term," said the economist.

Other economists and experts said the initiative to bring down the loan-deposit ratio would protect the interest of the depositors, but it would raise lending rates.

"The rate of interest on lending may slightly increase due to the lower loan-deposit ratio. But, it will not be logical that the banks will increase the rates massively accusing the ratio," said Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of the central bank.

Ibrahim Khaled, a former Bangladesh Bank deputy governor, said the commercial banks would adopt a go-slow policy to sanction and disburse large loans ahead of the national elections.

The entrepreneurs would also take the same stance thinking the election year as an "uncertainty period", so the lower loan-deposit ratio would not create any problems in managing the assets and liabilities of banks, he said.

'Super blood blue moon' on Jan 31

FROM PAGE 16

"It's an astronomical trifecta," said Kelly Beatty, a senior editor at Sky and Telescope magazine.

A blue moon refers to the second full moon in a month. Typically, a blue moon happens every two years and eight months.

This full moon is also the third in a series of "supermoons," which happen when the moon is closest to Earth in its orbit.

This point, called the perigee, makes the moon appear 14 percent larger and

30 percent brighter.

During the eclipse, the moon will glide into Earth's shadow, gradually turning the white disk of light to orange or red.

"That red light you see is sunlight that has skimmed and bent through Earth's atmosphere and continued on through space to the moon," said Alan MacRobert of Sky and Telescope magazine.

"In other words, it's from all the sunrises and sunsets that ring the world at the

moment."

The alignment of the sun, moon and Earth will last one hour and 16 minutes, visible before dawn across the western United States and Canada.

Those in the Middle East, Asia, eastern Russia, Australia and New Zealand should look for it in the evening, as the moon rises.

Unlike a solar eclipse, this lunar eclipse can be safely viewed without protective eyewear.

"We've had a lot of supermoons and we've had

lunar eclipses, but it's rare that it also happens to be a blue moon," said Jason Aufdenberg, associate professor of physics and astronomy at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's campus in Daytona Beach, Florida.

"All three of these cycles lining up is what makes this unusual," he added. "It's just a wonder to behold."

According to Sky and Telescope magazine, "the last time a complete lunar cover-up took place on the second full moon of the month was December 30,

1982, at least as reckoned by local time in Europe, Africa, and western Asia -- locations where the event could be seen."

That event also occurred at the moon's orbital perigee, making it an extra bright supermoon.

Aufdenberg said that by his calculations, the last time a supermoon, blue moon and total lunar eclipse all together were visible from the eastern United States was on May 31, 1844.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
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Barisal

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উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Dated: 28-01-2018

e-Tender Notice-164/2017-18

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

e-Tender No.	Package No.	Name of work	Last receiving date & time
164/2017-18	CRRIP/Building/17-18/BARI-01	Vertical Extension of 4th & 5th Floor on 4-storied building with 10-storied Foundation at Executive Engineer's Office, LGED, Barisal e-ID No-152391	28-02-2018 Time: 12:00

National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

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The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17.00 on previous day of receiving tender.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Executive Engineer

LGED, Barisal

GD-268