

Productive purple paddy sees success

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Purple paddy on 25 decimals of a demonstration plot was harvested for the first time in Sundarganj upazila on Sunday in presence of agriculture officials, experts and farmers.

Twenty-five maunds of purple paddy can be produced on one bigha of land, while other BRRI varieties produce 18 to 20 maunds, raising interest among the farmers. Curious people thronged the demonstration plot to see the purple paddy, locally known as 'beguni dhan' for its violet colour, for the first time.

Agriculture experts and research officials from Dhaka visited the crop field and collected samples of the paddy to assess its nutritional value.

They also met the pioneer of purple paddy farming Dulali Begum of Bhabanipur village.

Widow Dulali Begum, member of local IPM Farmers Club, narrated the story of how she got the seeds.

In early 2017, Dulali visited a relative's house in Gazipur district, where she saw some violet coloured paddy. Simply from curiosity, she collected some paddy from

her relative and took it home. Her relative had picked up some spikes of the coloured paddy scattered in the Boro field the previous year.

"Last year, I planted seedlings of purple paddy on one decimal of land and preserved the paddy as seeds. This season, I planted the seedlings on 25 decimals of land as per instruction of Upazila Agriculture Officer (UAO) Rashedul Islam," Dulali said.

The purple paddy plants grow to about 90 centimetres long and have 20 to 28 spikes, each containing 200 to 313 corns, whereas HYV Boro crop has 180 to 190 corns in each spike, Rashedul said, adding that it needs 140 days for harvesting, and all the harvested paddy will be preserved as seed for farming in more areas next year.

Purple paddy contains anthocyanin, anti-oxidants, fibre and vitamin E, and there is more anti-oxidant in the paddy than in blueberry, Rashedul said.

It also helps resist aging and reduces the chance of heart disease, diabetics and cancer, the UAO said.

The paddy plants in the demonstration plot were hit by gusty winds and hail, otherwise the production would have been higher, he added.



Agriculture experts, researchers and farmers at pioneer Dulali Begum's purple paddy field in Bhabanipur village under Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: STAR

Teen dies from snakebite

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A teenage boy died from snakebite at Gopalpur village in Charbhadrasan upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was Farhad Mollah, 18, son of Lal Mollah of the village.

The victim's brother-in-law Badullah Matabbor said a venomous snake bit Farhad when he was feeding their cattle around 11:00am.

The family members took him to a village doctor. He later died around 4:00pm.

3 people electrocuted

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A worker of a motor garage was electrocuted in bus terminal area in Sadar upazila of Rajbari yesterday while two others were electrocuted when they came in contact with a live power line at Khamar Ballamjhar village in Sadar upazila on Monday.

The victim in Rajbari was Shahidul Pramanik, 30, son of Nazrul Pramanik of Gopinathia village under Sadar upazila, reports our Faridpur Correspondent. He used to work in a motor garage.

"Shahidul came in contact with an electric wire when he went under a bus for doing repair work. He was taken to Rajbari General Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him death," said Jahangir Hossain, owner of the garage.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: An electrical mechanic was repairing a fan at the house of Azizal Huq when neighbour Belal Hossain, 20, who was seeing the work, came in contact with a live power line and was electrocuted instantly.

When the house owner Azizal Huq, 45, tried to help Belal, he was also electrocuted, said Ballamjhar Union Parishad Chairman Jahidul Islam Jhantu.

They were rushed to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital, where the physician declared them dead.

'Tortured' by cops, youth fighting for life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A night guard, detained on charge of theft, is fighting for life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after law enforcers allegedly pushed him off the roof of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station.

The victim is Rasel Mia, 20, a guard of Shahjalal Islami Bank ATM booth at City Centre Shopping Complex in Brahmanbaria town, and son of Robi Mia of Maddhyapara Shantibag area.

Md Nabir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station, said a burglary took place at a fashion house named 'Swapnoloke' at City Centre Shopping Complex on Sunday night.

Following a complaint filed by the owner of the fashion house of theft of Tk 2 lakh, they detained Rasel and some salesmen for interrogation.

The detainees were taken to the second floor of the police station from where Rasel dodged a police constable and reached the rooftop. He later jumped from there and got injured, the OC claimed.

Meanwhile, Liton Mia, the elder brother of Rasel, alleged that on Monday afternoon police called Rasel to the PS and tortured him inhumanly.

At one stage, they pushed Rasel off the roof of the police station. Sadar police usually took the detainees to the rooftop of the police station for interrogation, said Liton.

Seriously injured Rasel was rushed to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital and then shifted to DMCH as his condition worsened, said Dr Nazmul of Sadar Hospital.

Rasel was then referred to National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital in the capital, said his brother in tears.

Meanwhile, local people formed a human chain in front of Brahmanbaria Press Club yesterday, protesting police torture on Rasel.

Contacted, Brahmanbaria Police Superintendent Md Anwar Hossain Khan said a three-member committee was formed to investigate the matter and necessary action would be taken in this regard soon.

BAGERHAT-3 BY-POLL

Ex-MP Habibun Nahar collects nomination paper

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Former lawmaker Habibun Nahar yesterday collected the nomination paper as Awami League's candidate in the by-election to Bagerhat-3 constituency.

Habibun Nahar is wife of Khulna City Corporation's newly elected Mayor Talukder Abdul Khalek.

This seat was vacated on April 10, when Talukder Abdul Khaleq took part in the election as Awami League candidate in Khulna City Corporation.

Govt primary school runs with seven students

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Believe it or not, a well furnished government primary school in Kalapara upazila under the district is running with three teachers and seven students.

Primary education department set up Banikanto Government Primary School, the lone one at Shantipur village of Chakamoia union in Kalapara, on 33 decimals of land in 2013, locals said.

The academic activities started with 18 students and the school was nationalised in 2015.

Md Delwar Hossain joined the school as acting headmaster on May 4 in 2015, and assistant teachers Abul Kalam Azad and Suporna Rani in 2016, upazila education office source said.

The three teachers together receive Tk 73,155 from the government every month.

This year, 17 students were shown as enrolled but only seven of them, including three students in pre-primary class, one in Class I, one in Class II and two in Class III attend classes.

The rest are virtually non-existent at the school while no students were admitted to classes IV and V this year, said Moni Lal

Sikder, Kalapara upazila primary education officer.

Although there are virtually seven students, the school receives high protein biscuits for 60 students regularly as Unicef made the arrangement for 160 schools in the upazila (excluding municipality areas) after super cyclone Sidr hit the area in 2007, he said.

In last year stipend was given to 12 students from the government fund but the headmaster failed to show list of stipend receivers.

The school authority failed to start Class IV and V in last four years but they receive 10 sets of books for each class from the upazila education office every year.

Delwar Hossain, the acting headmaster, said 17 students took books this year but only seven of them come to school regularly.

"We have shortage of students as there are several schools in nearby villages around. We are visiting door to door to increase the number of students," he said.

Moni Lal Sikder, Kalapara upazila primary education officer, said he asked the teachers to collect students from its catchment areas.

37 sued for burning Bagerhat houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least 37 people have been sued on charge of burning 25 homesteads at Dakkhin Badhal village in Sharonkhola upazila.

One of the victims Ibrahim Hawlader filed the case with Sharonkhola Police Station on Sunday night, said Officer-in-Charge Kabirul Islam.

Earlier on the day, an armed gang set 25 houses of landless people on fire, apparently to oust them from the land.

Police have started conducting raids in different areas to arrest the criminals, said the OC.

PREVIOUS ENMITY Six houses gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Six dwelling houses were gutted at Bhairabnagar village in Biddyakut union under Nabinagar upazila of the district early Monday.

Owner of the houses Nazir Mia said he had a dispute with his neighbours Alamgir, Obaidul and Dhan Mia for the last few months. Case and counter-case between the two groups were going on and his rival group might have caused this destruction, Nazir Mia said. Belongings in all the houses, including valuable furniture, were burnt in the incident, he added.

There were no casualties in the fire, and Nazir Mia claimed that properties and valuables worth Tk 50 lakh were destroyed in the fire.

Nabinagar Police Station OC Aslam Shikder said police visited the spot and legal action will be taken after investigation.



Substandard stones are being used for construction of cum-multipurpose hall in Bandarban's Thanchi.

PHOTO: STAR

CONSTRUCTION OF AUDITORIUM

Use of substandard stone worries locals

Locals worried about possible disaster in future

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A sub-contractor, who is a supporter of the ruling party, is allegedly using substandard stone, extracted from local water bodies, for the construction of an auditorium-cum-multipurpose hall in remote Thanchi upazila of the district.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is implementing the project at a cost of Tk 6.98 crore, Thanchi LGED Upazila Engineer Rabiul Hossain said, adding that he is monitoring the construction work properly and is satisfied with the work.

Local resident Nu Mong Prue said the contractor is constructing the auditorium using locally extracted stone as he is getting it easily from the natural water bodies.

"If the contractor had used quality stone as per the schedule, he would

have to spend a huge amount to purchase and transport the stone from Sylhet," he said, adding that although they formed a human chain recently, protesting the stone extraction from natural water bodies, the local administration didn't pay heed to their demand.

Ananta Bikash Tripura, owner of the construction firm, could not be contacted for his comment in this regard, despite repeated attempts over cell phone.

Bandarban LGED Executive Engineer Abu Taleb Chowdhury also said "The contractor is using locally available stones as it is very tough to carry the construction material from Sylhet to remote Thanchi.

Raju Barua, one of the ruling party supporters, is doing the work under sub-contract of another construction

firm M/S Ananta Bikash Tripura, the engineer said.

"Stone extraction from water bodies in the hills must be stopped immediately," Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land Rights Protection Movement (Bandarban chapter) President Zuamlian Amlai said, adding that stone extraction from hills, waterfalls and canals upsets the ecological balance and puts people at risk of landslide.

Thanchi Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Jahangir Alam said as the sub-contractor is a ruling party supporter they cannot take action under pressure.

But it is true that the hill environment is facing serious disaster due to the stone extraction from the natural water bodies in hills, he added.



All the seven students of Banikanto Government Primary School, the lone one at Shantipur village of Chakamoia union under Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali, pose in front of the institution a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR