

Barshali paddy a bonus crop

Gaibandha farmers happy as production cost of the crop between Boro and Aman is low

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Farmers of Sundarganj upazila are happy cultivating Barshali paddy (a variety of Aus) as the third crop in the year between Boro and Aman as the production cost is low and output is good.

Cultivation of the paddy, locally known as Barshali paddy, is now spreading to other places, as farmers are getting bonus crop at low input cost. Growers planted Aus seedlings just after harvesting Boro crop, and harvesting ended prior to plantation of Aman seedlings.

This year, farmers of the upazila are expecting bumper production due to favourable weather for cultivation of Aus crop.

Farmers said they are now aware about cultivation of paddy using modern techniques for getting high production, adding that Barshali Aus paddy is now considered as the third crop in the year.

"This season, I cultivated Barshali paddy on two bighas of land and got 28 maunds (1

maund = 40 kg) of paddy. Last year, I got 26 maunds on the same plot," said Anju Mia, a farmer in Santiram union.

Five years back, farmers gave up Aus farming due to low production as they got only four to five maunds of paddy per bigha, whereas production has increased to 14 maunds to 15 maunds per bigha now, said Arifuddin, an elderly farmer of Santiram.

It needs Tk 3,500 per bigha for seedlings, fertilizer and light irrigation for getting higher yield, said farmer Amjad Hossain.

Upazila Agriculture Officer Rashedul Islam said the agriculture department introduced high yielding variety Aus crops like BRRI-28, BRRI-48 and BRRI-50 for cultivation between Boro and Aman paddies for getting an additional crop.

Aus farming is gaining popularity in this area for its low input cost and high production, and farmers are able to harvest the paddy before plantation of Aman seedlings, he added.



Barshali (a variety of Aus) ready to be harvested at a field in Santiram union under Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: STAR



Abandoned newborn

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Another newborn found abandoned

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A newborn baby was found abandoned in a Hindu temple in the district town yesterday after another baby was rescued from near a bridge here 22 days ago.

The newborn baby girl aged about one day was recovered from the staircase of Durga Mandir in Krishnanagar area of the town.

Sabita Rani, who serves at the temple and lives in a nearby house, said she went to the temple around 3:00am hearing cry of a baby and found the newborn in a shopping bag on the staircase of the temple. With the help of the

locals she informed Pirojpur Sadar Police Station of the matter.

Later, the police arranged treatment of the newborn at Pirojpur Sadar Hospital.

"We have arranged treatment and food for the baby with the help of the hospital and Social Service Department," said Dr Nani Gopal Roy, a resident medical officer (RMO) at Pirojpur Sadar Hospital. He said the physical condition of the baby is now good.

Earlier, an abandoned newborn baby boy was recovered from near Baleswar Bridge in the town on July 5.

Man strangled in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man, aged about 40, from Brahmandanga village in Jessore's Monirampur upazila yesterday afternoon.

On Saturday, locals found the body in a date palm field and informed police.

The law enforcers then rushed to the spot and recovered the body and sent it to Jessore General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Criminals strangled the man and dumped the body in the area, said Tobarak Ali, officer-in-charge of Monirampur Police Station.

10 gamblers arrested in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police arrested 10 people when they were gambling in Chowdhury More area of Kaliganj upazila on Friday night.

The arrested gamblers were produced before the Judicial Magistrate's Court and the court sent them to jail, said Maqbul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station.

On information, a police team raided an abandoned room in the area and arrested the 10 people when they were gambling, said the OC.

They shine against all odds

16 visually impaired boys achieve brilliant result in HSC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Sixteen visually impaired students of Pabna passed this year's HSC examinations with brilliant results, thanks to the initiative of Manob Kollan Shangshtha, a humanitarian organization of the district.

They are Monirul Islam of Pabna (score GPA 5), Sihab Uddin Bhuiya (GPA 4.83), Abdullah Al Amin (GPA 4.08), Ikhteyar Mridha (4.08), Golap Mallik (GPA 4.67), Shahdat Hossain (3.92), Rokon Uzzaman (3.50), Md Abdul Aziz (4.25), Imran Hossain, 3.50, Md Moniruzzaman (4.17), Abul Kalam Azad (4.17), Mozammel Hossain (4.42), Md Abdullah (4.08),

Mohammed Ali (4.83), Monirul Islam (GPA-4.83) and Humayun Kabir (GPA-4.25).

The HSC results were published on Thursday.

"The students earlier left study due to poverty and visual impairment. Later Manob Kollan Trust arranged their schooling with residential facilities for a nominal charge. They got education in Braille method and gained success due to their indomitable will," said Prof Abul Hossain, chairman of the trust.

With special permission from the education board, they appeared in the HSC examinations with the help of scribes (writing help) under a special

arrangement, he said.

"Being disappointed due to my physical disability, I left school and became a burden to my family. Later the organisation gave me the opportunity to go ahead with study and I have passed the HSC with GPA-5," said Monirul Islam.

"Now I have a dream to get higher education and prepare for BCS examinations," he added.

As many as 72 visually impaired students are continuing their study through the Braille method under the supervision of Pabna Manob Kollan Trust.

Established in 1994, the organisation has continued working for education of students with challenges.



Sixteen visually impaired youths, coming out successful with brilliant results in the HSC examinations, pose for photograph on the premises of Manob Kollan Shangshtha at Singa in Pabna town a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

Shortage of docs ails health service

141 out of 224 posts of doctors lying vacant in Patuakhali hospitals for long

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Health services in the district are being greatly hampered as 141 out of 224 doctors' posts have been lying vacant for long.

Administrative work is also hampered as three out of four posts of medical officer (MO) are lying vacant in Patuakhali civil surgeon's office. Moreover, the only MO has to do additional duty in the police hospital and jail hospital, said Civil Surgeon Dr Shah Md Mojahedul Islam.

In Sadar upazila, six out of 12 posts of doctor in each union Family Welfare Centre (FWC) are vacant and the available six are working in the 250-bed Patuakhali General Hospital.

Four out of seven posts of doctors in Dumki upazila, 15 out of 21 posts in Mirzaganj upazila, including all six posts in Kathalali 20-bed hospital, 17 out of 24 posts in Baufal, 23 out of 36 posts in Kalapara and 24 out of 39 posts in Galachipa are also lying vacant.

Excluding Patuakhali General Hospital, 105 out of 165 posts in all seven upazila health complexes and in union level FWC are lying vacant.

Seven posts each of junior consultant (medicine and anaesthetics), six out of seven posts (gynaecology), two posts each (child and eye), one post (cardiology), one post (ear, nose and throat) and one post (skin and sex) are lying vacant at upazila level. Ten out of 30 posts of medical officer and 33 out of 56 posts of assistant surgeon are lying vacant at union level.

In the 250-bed Patuakhali General Hospital, 35 out of 58 posts of doctor have been lying vacant for long. Six out of 10 senior consultant post, two out of 11 junior consultant, six out of 10 medical officer, nine out of 11 assistant registrar, all three of resident medical officer, all three of



The 250-bed Patuakhali General Hospital and other health care facilities in the district have been facing acute shortage of manpower for long.

PHOTO: STAR

anesthesiologist, resident surgeon, resident physician, resident medical officer, and one out of three posts of anesthesiologist, pathologist and radiologist are lying vacant, said Superintendent Dr Abdur Rahim of the 250-bed hospital.

Four sub-assistant medical officers have been brought here from the civil surgeon's office to run the outdoor department, he added.

Over 500 patients from indoor, 600 to 700 patients from outdoor and 100 to 150 from emergency departments take treatment from this hospital daily, the superintendent added.

The civil surgeon said they have sent several letters about the matter to the higher authorities, including the director general of health, in Dhaka. They assured him that some doctors will be sent here, he added.

Two found dead

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two men were found dead in Jamalpur and Pirojpur yesterday, report our correspondents.

Farmer Sabdul Molla, 40, of Jamalpur's Madarganj upazila, went out of his home around 12:30am and since then he did not return.

In the morning, police, informed by locals, recovered his hanging body from a tree at a jute field in the area.

In Pirojpur, police recovered the hanging body of a cloth trader from Pirojpur Sadar upazila.

The deceased was Nazrul Islam Sheikh, 45, son of Abdur Gani Sheikh of Uttar Tona village.

The victim's son Md Kamrul Hasan said Nazrul had a cloth trade in Dhaka and he took huge loans from others.

On Friday night, he came to his village home from Dhaka and went to visit a relative's house at Ekpai Jujkhola village. Since then he did not return home.

In the morning, police recovered the hanging body from a roadside tree in the area.

Kamrul claimed that his father committed suicide.

ELDERLY ALLOWANCE

Living beneficiary shown dead!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

It was a bolt from the blue to 84-year-old Jabanuddin, a beneficiary of the government's elderly allowance, when he heard from officials of the branch concerned of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank that he was dead.

Jabanuddin, now 84, of Hazarihatpara village under Kashiram Belpukur union in Saidpur upazila, was enjoying the allowance since the social welfare department enrolled him in 1999.

He went to Hazarihat branch of the bank early this month to receive the allowance for April, May and June.

As he was told that the man against the name had already died, he requested the bank manager to match his photograph stuck on the allowance account book with his face.

But the bank manager said they give the allowance according to the statement of social welfare department and the latest statement mentioned him as dead.

Failing to get solution at the upazila social welfare office, Jabanuddin met the upazila parishad chairman, also head of elderly allowance beneficiary selection committee, who directed the officer concerned to investigate the matter.

"I have two married sons but they are too poor to look after me and my wife," said the old man, facing trouble after being deprived of monthly allowance of Tk 500.

Sukanto Sarker, upazila social welfare officer, said, "A couple of months ago, we sent message to Jabanuddin a number of times through Kashiram Belpukur union parishad (UP) to appear before us with his national ID card number as it was needed for making online database of the beneficiaries of different social safety net programmes under management information system. But he did not. A few UIP office bearers verbally told us that he was dead and finally we sent statement to the bank concerned to stop the payment."

Moksedul Momin, upazila chairman of Saidpur, said process is on to issue a new elderly allowance card for him."