



Cows reared at a farm in Tapat area of Rangpur city are ready for Eid-ul-Azha. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS AHEAD OF EID

Low price concern in Rangpur, Pabna farmers see good profit

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Low prices remain a concern for the farmers in Rangpur region although cattle markets are gaining momentum ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, while rearers and traders in Pabna are expecting good profit.

Rangpur Divisional Livestock Department Deputy Director Dr Sheikh Azizur Rahman said around 13.75 lakh sacrificial animals are ready in eight districts of the division. The number is two lakh more than the number sold last year.

There are 8,92,905 cows and buffaloes, 4,82,769 sheep and goats and 492 other animals, he said.

He said there are 54,021 private and commercial farms in Rangpur division. Of them, 8,449 farms are in Rangpur, 2,250 in Nilphamari, 10,882 in Kurigram, 11,532 in Dinajpur, 4,693 in Lalmonirhat, 8,684 in Gaibandha, 4,241 in Thakurgaon and 3,290 in Panchagarh.

Aminul Islam in Parbatipur upazila said he has been rearing 300 cows. He has already sold

40 cows at Ambari Haat. "Price is less than expected," he said, adding that if such low prices continue farmers will suffer a loss as the price of fodder and labour cost are higher than last year's.

"Prices will go down further if Indian cows become available in the markets," said Rafiqul Islam in Sadar upazila.

Mahmudul Hasnan Bappy in Kurigram municipality said he has been rearing 30 cows for the last six months targeting Eid-ul-Azha.

Meanwhile, the cost of rearing cattle has risen in Pabna due to the soaring price of cattle feed but farmers are eyeing good profit due to the adequate supply of local cattle this year, farmers said.

"I sold 24 cows in the last couple of weeks for Tk 23 lakh and I am expecting to sell 10 to 15 more before Eid," said Md Saiful Islam of Faridpur upazila.

"Usually we fix the price of a cow at Tk 16,000 to Tk 17,000 per maund, depending on the estimated weight of the meat, but we are selling it for Tk 17,000 to Tk 18,000 per maund

ahead of Eid," he said.

"Although the prices of cattle have gone up ahead of Eid, it is not enough for farmers to get expected profit due to increasing production cost. Cattle feed was sold at Tk 800 to Tk 850 per maund four months ago, but it is Tk 1,200 now," Saiful said.

Saiful said he earned Tk 1.5 lakh by selling 24 cows for Tk 23 lakh, and he is expecting to earn Tk 1 lakh more profit if he can sell the rest 15 cows at expected price before Eid.

Md Mamun Hossain in Sujanagar upazila said the supply of local cattle is adequate in the market, so farmers are expecting good profit if Indian cattle do not come.

"Cattle prices are soaring as Eid approaches, but we didn't get expected profit in the last few years as Indian cows flooded the market," he said.

District Livestock Officer Md Al Mamun said 2.07 lakh sacrificial animals, including 80,000 fattened cattle, are ready to be sold in Pabna.

Our Dinajpur and Pabna correspondents contributed to the report.

Stalkers' haven

A 3-kilometre road at Parbatipur has become a trap for schoolgirls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A three-kilometre road stretching from Ibrahimnagar to Jahanabad area in Parbatipur upazila has become too risky for many schoolgirls to use due to harassment by groups of stalkers.

Victims' and their parents alleged that the stalkers hurl abuses towards the schoolgirls going to and from their institutions and if anyone protests their heinous act the culprits assault them.

"It's nothing but a mental torture for us," an eighth grader at Muktiyoddha High School said, adding that there are five high schools at different points along the three-kilometre road.

Several guardians alleged that they complained to police on a number of occasions to take action against the culprits but they did not pay heed.

Shafiqul Islam of Chawkpura village, also father of a Class VII girl, said stalkers in small groups start gathering on the road at a particular time every day and tease the girls on their way to and from schools.

On Saturday, when some guardians tried to protest such an incident, around 25 stalkers, including Ashraf, Rezwana, Bappy and Milton, attacked them, leaving at least 15 people injured, he said.

Protesting the attack, teachers, students and their guardians formed a human chain at Parbatipur Shahid Minar premises on Tuesday, demanding prompt action against the stalkers and a solution to the problem.

During the rally, lawmaker Mostafizur Rahman, also minister for Primary and Mass Education, in his speech urged the law enforcement agencies to investigate the matter seriously.

Habibul Haque, officer-in-charge of Parbatipur Police Station, said none had informed him about it before.

'Thief' dies in mob beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A suspected thief was beaten to death by a mob at Dulatpur village in Gafargaon upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased, Sujon Mia, 40, was son of Mohammad Ali of neighbouring Atharodana village.

Quoting the local people, Officer-in-Charge of Gafargaon Police Station Abdul Ahad Khan said Sujon, who had been committing theft in the area for long, committed a theft at Dulatpur village couple of days ago.

Around 3:00am, when Sujon again entered the village in a bid to steal people's valuables villagers caught him and beat him mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot.

On information, police went to the spot in the morning, recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) for autopsy.

VGF RICE DISTRIBUTION

Boon for traders, bane of the ultra poor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rice meant for vulnerable group feeding (VGF) was illegally sold out to the local rice traders in Shatagram union of Birganj upazila.

Besides, those who got the VGF rice had to pay Tk 20 to Tk 50 for 20 kg of rice, said local people.

This incident took place at Shatagram Union Parishad (UP) complex from dawn to dusk on Tuesday.

Locals said Shatagram UP prepared a list of 1810 vulnerable poor people for distributing the VGF rice. The UP authorities drew 36.20 tonnes of rice for the poor.

It's a special programme of the government to distribute rice among the poor before Eid festival free of cost.

At least 1,810 poor people gathered at Shatagram UP complex with the token slips that they got from the UP chairman and members. But, half of the people got rice paying Tk 20 to Tk 50 while the rest returned home at the end of the day with empty hands.

Aleya Begum of Kashimpur village alleged that she went to the UP complex on Tuesday morning to get the rice. But, she returned home in the evening without any rice.

She alleged that the rice meant for the poor was sold to the rice traders before her eyes.

Like Aleya, a number of people faced the same experience at the UP complex. They saw labourers taking out the rice bags from the UP complex and loading those on hired rickshaw vans.

Locals alleged that the rice was sold to rice traders of different markets in the union.

Shahin Hawladar, tag officer of the UP, who was present during distribution, refuted the allegation of any misuse of the VGF rice.

He said the money was realised from the beneficiaries for adjusting the rice bag price. UP Chairman Kutub Uddin declined to make any comment over the allegation.

Two cousins drown in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Two cousins drowned in a ditch near their house in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased were identified as three-year-old Rifat, son of Nazim Uddin, and two-and-a-half-year-old Nihat, son of Miraj Uddin, of Narayanpur Madhyapara village in the upazila.

Quoting the deceased's family members, Inspector Abdul Latif, in-charge of Narayanpur Police Investigation Centre, said the two kids fell into a nearby ditch beside their house while playing at the courtyard in the morning.

After a frantic search, victims' family members and relatives found the duo's floating bodies in the ditch around 9:00am, the inspector said.

Market on railway land

The alleged grabbers are of ruling party

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An influential quarter belonging to the ruling Awami League (AL) has continued illegal construction of a market on leased Bangladesh Railway (BR) land near Satair Railway Station in Boalmari upazila of the district.

Ghospur Union Parishad (UP) Chairman SM Faruk Hossain, also treasurer of Boalmari upazila AL, in cooperation with Ghospur union AL President Robindranth Saha, Ghospur UP member Khalilur Rahman, Sukur Mollik and Billal Mia of the area have started constructing the market on 1.44 acres of BR land.

A resident of Pikehati village in the union Kazi Abdur Razzak took lease of 1.23 acres of land for agricultural use and another additional 21 decimals for fish farming beside Satair Bazar in the year 2000.

Razzak, however, transferred the lease documents in the name of the ruling party men on November 13, 2017, for the development of the area.

"The chairman asked me to hand over the land to him so that they can build a market over there for the development of the locality," Razzak said.

During a recent visit to the area this corre-

spondent found that the occupiers filled up the agricultural land and the water body and are erecting concrete structure of a market for commercial use without informing the BR authorities.

While talking to The Daily Star, one of the occupiers Robindranath Saha said, "The present government is working for the development of the country and we are only participating in that work."

Ghospur UP member Khalilur Rahman said, "Although, about 60 percent area of Satair Bazar is under Ghospur union, Satair Union Parishad alone takes the lease money every year. That is why we are building another market on the railway land."

Sidur Rahman, president of Satair Bazar managing committee, said, "The occupiers are constructing the market in a bid to grab the land."

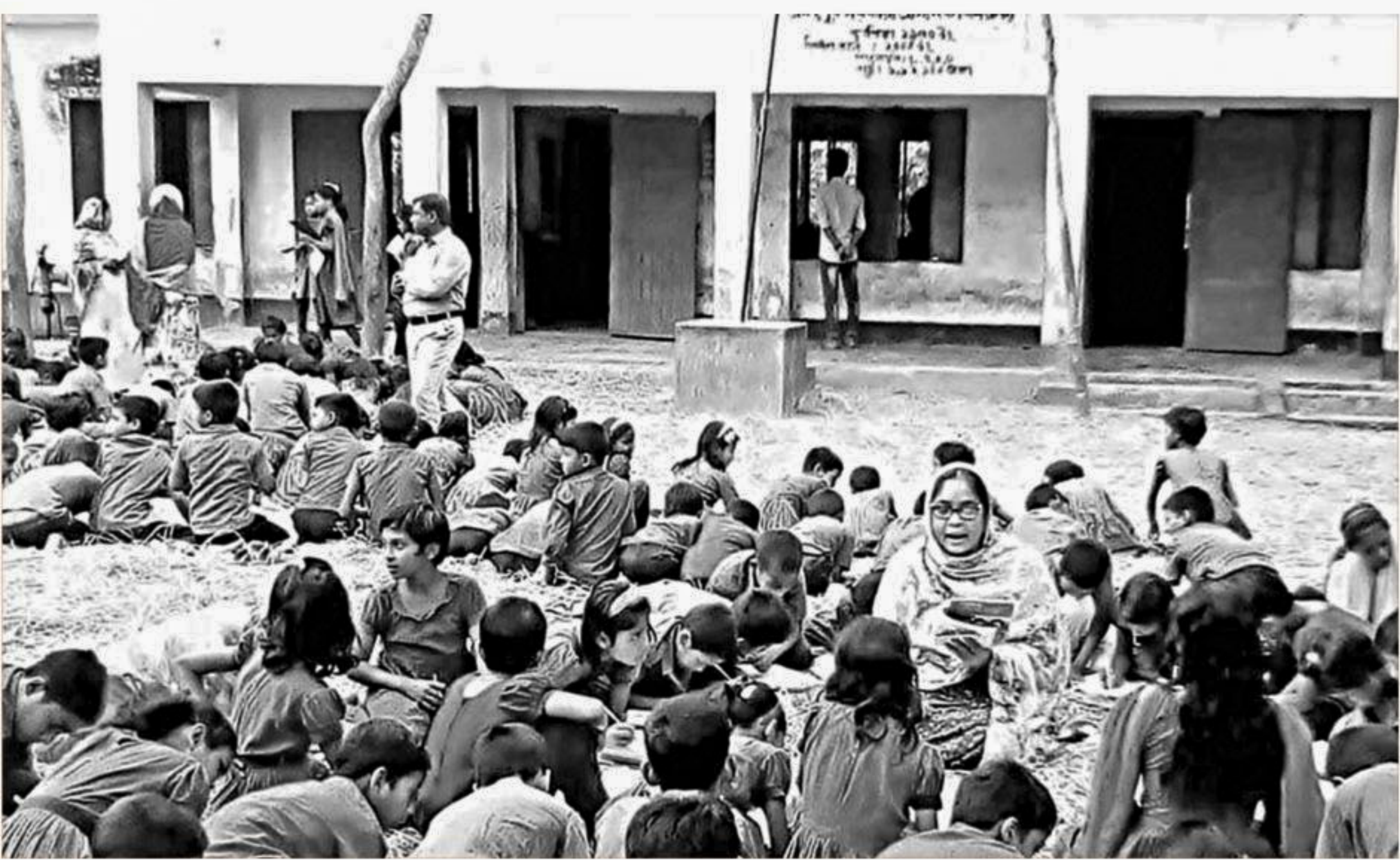
"I have applied to railway authorities seeking permission for using the land on commercial basis but I did not get the approval yet," Ghospur UP Chairman Faruk said, adding that he is doing this for greater interest of local people.

Younus Ali, divisional estate officer of BR in Pakshey, said, "There is no provision of changing the status of any railway land."



Some ruling party men continue construction of a market on this leased railway land near Satair Railway Station in Faridpur's Boalmari upazila. The photo was taken on August 3.

PHOTO: STAR



Students of Anantapur Government Primary School in Saghata upazila of Gaibandha attend classes on the school ground as the school building has become too dilapidated and risky.

PHOTO: STAR

Ramshackle schoolhouse

Students attend classes under open sky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Classes at a government primary school in Saghata upazila are being held on the school ground as students and teachers are afraid that the ramshackle schoolhouse might break down at any time.

Students and teachers of Anantapur Government Primary School have been suffering for the last two years as the authorities concerned have not taken any steps for renovation of the schoolhouse despite repeated appeals, local people complained.

Classes are held on the school ground and remain suspended during rain and hot weather.

Over the last five years, several large cracks have developed on the ceiling and the plaster is dropping off the ceiling and walls. All the three classrooms have become unusable.

The roof might collapse at any time, so fear stricken students do not want to attend classes in the risky schoolhouse, said

Shahidul Islam, a guardian of a student.

The school has over 500 students. The school building has turned risky and the school authorities have suspended classes in the building, said Headmaster Hosne Ara Begum.

"As we could not provide a safe schoolhouse, many students have shifted to other schools. If this situation continues, the school will suffer a student shortage," she added.

The managing committee of the school has decided to erect a temporary shed to hold classes in, said school managing committee President Shakhawat Hossain.

They are urging the authorities concerned to build a new schoolhouse as soon as possible, he said.

The school authority has already been asked to erect a shed temporarily to accommodate students so that education of the children is not hampered, while initiative is being taken to construct a schoolhouse soon, said Saghata Upazila Education Officer Azizul Islam.

2 held with Phensidyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Two drug peddlers were arrested yesterday with Phensidyl at Dariapur in the town.

The arrestees are Nurnabi Sheikh alias Mamun, 36, of Gopalganj Sadar upazila, and Mohammad Ripon, 19, of Monakasha village of the district.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-5 intercepted a Dhaka-bound mango-laden truck from Kansat on Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi highway in Dariapur area.

After searching the truck, the elite force recovered 2,086 bottles of Indian Phensidyl in 12 plastic crates and arrested Nurnabi and Ripon. They also seized the truck and 60 maunds of mangoes in 125 crates, Rab said.