



A farmer shows ripe Aman paddy at a field of Char Parulia, a Teesta river basin sandy land in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat.

PHOTO: STAR

Bumper yield brings smile to farmers

Early Aman now cultivated in once barren char lands in Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Harvesting of Aman paddy is going on full swing in the chars of the district and farmers are very happy at getting good production this year.

Char farmers harvest Aman in early November, while harvesting will start in the last week of November in the mainland.

Azizar Rahman, 65, a farmer of Teesta river's Char Paruliya in Hatibandha upazila, said they cultivate Aman after the floodwater recedes and get good production if there is no unexpected flood. "We are happy at getting bumper production of Aman as there was no flood this year," he said, adding that he cultivated Aman on

four acres of land.

"It is profitable to cultivate Swarna variety of Aman in char lands as it gives high yield, and char farmers are familiar with this variety," said Nasar Baksh, 67, of the same char. "The yield of Aman per bigha in the chars last year was 10 maunds to 12 maunds, while it is 15 maunds to 16 maunds this year," he added.

Shamsul Islam, 55, of Teesta river's Dawabari char in the same upazila, said they have been farming paddy in the char lands for the last six years. Before that, the char lands were unused, and groundnut and some spices were grown sometimes, he said. "Aman farming in the char land gives

us food support round the year and we are dependent on this crop," he said.

"After harvesting Aman, we will prepare our char lands for farming maize in the current month," said Nur Islam, 45, of the same char, adding that they do not grow Boro paddy in the char lands due to irrigation water shortage. "If we can find a way to arrange sufficient irrigation water, we will try to cultivate Boro paddy in future," he said.

Delwar Hossain, 68, of Teesta river's Char Sholmari in Kaliganj upazila, said most char farmers are cultivating Aman paddy in their lands as the production cost is low. "Some years ago, we used to believe that paddy farming in the char

lands was impossible, but that has changed and char farmers prepare their lands better for farming paddy. We will get bumper production of Aman this year due to good seed and favourable weather," he said, adding that char farmers will cultivate Aman paddy on a large scale next year.

Lalmonirhat Department of Agriculture Extension Deputy Director Bidhubhushon Roy told this correspondent that cultivating paddy in the char lands provides additional food support for the farmers. Char farmers do not keep their lands idle now, and use them for farming crops, especially paddy and maize, he said.

Hill Tracts not safe yet

Santu Larma says at the 35th death anniversary of MN Larma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Safety and security of hill people are yet to be ensured even after two decades of the signing of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord.

Nobody is safe in the CHT, Jyotirindro Bodhipriyo Larma alias Santu Larma said at the 35th death anniversary of MN Larma in the town yesterday.

Santu Larma, president of Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), was present as the chief guest.

People cannot move in the CHT region safely. Many false cases were filed against many PCJSS leaders, activists and also ordinary indigenous people, he said.

They were put into jail. Someone is hatching a conspiracy to eliminate indigenous people in CHT and destroy CHT peace accord. This is never desirable for CHT people, said Santu Larma.

PCJSS observed its founder Manobendra Narayan Larma's 35th death anniversary in three hill districts through various programmes.

The programmes included wearing black badge, rallies and processions and memorial meeting at Silpakala Academy in Rangamati town and different places of other hill districts.

Speakers at the programme said, MN Larma was a leading proponent of the rights of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. He wanted to make a discrimination-free society. In CHT, people lost an honest, competent, progressive and noble man.

They also urged CHT people to follow Larma's ideology.

'Punish madrasa principal for sexual harassment'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Students of Jalalia Dakhil Madrasa in Kulaura upazila formed a human chain yesterday demanding punishment of the principal of the institution for his alleged sexual harassment of a female student.

The students at the programme alleged that Principal Maulana Md Abdul Shahid of the madrasa sexually harassed some students at different times.

A Class IX female student of the madrasa stopped attending her classes for over a week after allegedly being sexually harassed by the principal in the classroom, said the victim's family members, adding that the girl stopped going out due to shame.

Refuting the allegation, Principal Abdul Shahid said it is an evil attempt to malign his image.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Abu Layes said they received the complaint from the victim's family.

The allegation against the principal is under investigation, said the UNO.

A probe committee of the upazila authorities, led by assistant commissioner of land, has been formed to investigate the incident.

Kid found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The body of a five-year-old girl was recovered from Panchgaon village in Bhaluka upazila on Friday night.

The victim was Farjana Akhter, daughter of Fazlul Haque of the village.

Farjana went missing from her house on Friday morning and her family members made futile attempts to find her, Bhaluka Police Station OC Md Firoz Talukder quoted locals and family members as saying.

Seeing her body in a bamboo cluster of the village at night, a few locals informed police who sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy, he said.

The body bore injury marks on the face, head and eyes, the OC said.

ASSAULTING TRUCKER AFTER FAILED EXTORTION SI suspended as road blocked in protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A sub-inspector (SI) of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station was suspended after transport workers blocked the road on the eastern side of Bangabandhu Bridge for three hours yesterday, alleging that the SI assaulted a truck driver for refusing to give him extortion money.

The temporarily suspended policeman is Noor Alam, said Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) (North) Shariful Haque.

As per demand of the transport workers, police will also have to bear the treatment cost of the injured truck driver, the ASP said after holding a meeting with the agitating transport workers.

President of the district unit of Truck Drivers' Association Bala Miah alleged that the SI beat up Bakul Miah, the driver of a Bogra-bound truck, in Golchokkor area at the eastern end of the Bangabandhu Bridge

at around 6:00am as the driver refused to give him extortion money.

The driver suffered injury in one eye, he said.

Protesting the assault, the transport workers brought out a procession and later blocked the road, demanding punishment of the police officer, he said.

The blockade caused tailbacks for miles as hundreds of vehicles on both sides of the bridge got stuck in Tangail and Sirajganj, according to Traffic Control Room of the bridge.

"Our bus was stuck in the tailback at the western end of the bridge at 7:00am and was stranded for three and a half hours," said Mahbubur Rahman, a passenger of a Dhaka-bound bus from Sirajganj.

Traffic returned to normal at around 9:30am when the transport workers withdrew the blockade following the immediate action against the SI.



Transport workers block the road on the eastern side of Bangabandhu Bridge yesterday protesting beating of a truck driver by a sub-inspector allegedly for the trucker's refusal to pay extortion. The agitators withdrew their blockade after suspension of the accused policeman. Inset, injured truck driver Bakul Miah.

PHOTO: STAR



Enthusiastic locals throng Thakurgaon railway station as their long cherished dream for running of intercity train Drutajan Express from Panchagarh to Dhaka via Thakurgaon saw fulfillment yesterday. The route saw inauguration at Panchagarh earlier in the day.

PHOTO: STAR

Procession, rally banned at PUST

Authorities took the decision for the sake of maintaining order

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The authorities of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST), at a meeting of the Board of Regents, banned meetings, processions and rallies on the university campus to keep the law and order situation under control.

Earlier on November 6, the authorities closed the university for an indefinite period against the backdrop of the students' longstanding movement.

Assistant Director of public relations department of the university Faruk Hossain Chowdhury issued a press release yesterday, announcing the decision of the authorities.

According to the decision taken by the Regent Board at a meeting on November 5, meetings, processions and rallies on the campus have been banned temporarily to keep law and order situation under control, the press release said.

PUST students started agitation from early July this year with a seven-point demand, including removal of semester drop system and extra fee from year drop students, and addition of some academic facilities.

The situation turned violent on November 5 when agitating students assaulted the vice-chancellor and teachers and besieged the administrative building.

Afterwards, PUST authorities suspended 10 agitating students and closed the university for an indefinite period.

Criticising the authorities' sudden decision, secretary of PUST unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League Faridul Islam Babu said, "It is not fair to stop meetings and processions in the university. Students are demonstrating for their rights."

Two 'robbers' arrested with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Police arrested two members of an inter-district robber gang at Chesrirampur village in Kathalia upazila yesterday.

The arrestees are Jilil, 40, of Betagi upazila of Barguna, and Shahid Mir, 55, of Fultola in Khulna, police said.

The gang, comprising eight to ten people, committed robbery at Habib Howlader's house in the village around 3:00am and then went to the adjacent house.

As the residents started screaming for help, villagers rushed in, caught the two robbers and handed them over to police, locals said.

There are robbery cases against them with different police stations, said Kathalia Police Station OC Enamul Haque.

Police recovered two cocktails, some money and sharp weapons from their possession, he added.