



Workers unloading a sack of paddy at Durakuti Haat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Lalmonirhat farmers see bleak future in rice farming

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

With frustration in his eyes, rice grower Raziur Rahman was seen selling paddy reluctantly to a buyer at Durakuti Haat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila last Tuesday.

He had nothing to be excited about as the price he had to settle for was way below his expectations. But he has mouths to feed and the market was not getting any better.

"I feel like I was cursed with growing rice. We bring paddy in the local market, but do not get any buyer. Having to sell below the production cost now," Raziur said gloomily.

The elderly man from Durakuti village said this season he harvested 530 maunds (each maund equivalent to 40kg) of paddy from 40 bighas of land. Although he received an 'agriculture card', distributed to farmers under a list made by the government, he was not given the chance to sell even a single maund of his paddy to the government.

"None of the 200 listed farmers in my village got the chance to sell paddy to the government... The government's procurement of paddy apparently has no impact on the market as the market rate now is even lower than that before the Eid," Raziur said, adding that so far he only sold 65 maunds of paddy at the local market.

Echoing Raziur's comments, Mukul Chandra Barmon, from Doljor village in Aditmari upazila, said out of 300 listed farmers including himself in his village, not a single person could sell paddy to the government this time around. "However, mill owners are selling paddy to the government."

"I've lost my interest in growing rice the next time. I already decided that I will grow rice on 30 percent of my land and vegetables and other crops on the remainder," he said.

Abdul Karim, another farmer from Lalmonirhat Sadar's Karnapur village, claimed

that genuine farmers are being deprived as mostly affluent businesspeople or people with political affiliation or influence are getting the chance to sell paddy to the government.

Saying that he too has lost interest in growing rice next season, Karim said he harvested 360 maunds of paddy this season and sold 75 maunds of it at the ongoing low rate at local market. "I planned that rather than selling the rest, I will preserve it at home."

Rice mill owner Haider Ali, from Durakuti village, said unlike many other millers, he was buying paddy from growers.

Each maund of paddy is being purchased at Tk 460 to Tk 500 at the market now and it is unlikely that the price will rise soon, he also said.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Food Controller Ayub Ali said paddy procurement of the government is going on and so far, they procured 753 tonnes of paddy, against the total target of 1,493 tonnes, from farmers.

Birds poisoned to death for meat

The callous act harms birds, poses health hazard for consumers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Poachers have poisoned to death dozens of birds for its meat at Angaria village in Rajapur upazila.

Villagers blamed a group of unscrupulous people, allegedly led by one Monir Hossain, 50, of the area, for the heinous act.

The matter came to light recently when some pigeons and doves were found dead in a bush beside the cropland of Monir.

Different bird species live in the greenish village beside the Jangalia river, said college student Papu Mridha in the area.

Kaiyum, a resident of the village, said his 50 pigeons went missing in the last three months.

Local youth Foysal said he has been rearing pigeons for long but a few pigeons went missing a week ago.

Later, some pigeons and doves were found poisoned to death in a bush beside the cropland of Monir, he said, adding that the dead pigeons were then sent to the upazila veterinary hospital for medical test.

The poachers mixed poison with wheat and rice and spread it on the

farmlands and the birds like doves, herons, pigeons and waterhens died after eating the poisonous fodder, said Foysal, adding that later the dead birds were slaughtered for meat.

Contacted, Monir said it is time to prepare paddy seedbeds but birds eat the seeds.

"My 12-year-old son mixed the poison with wheat and rice to protect the seedbed," Monir said, adding that he will give compensation to the farmers of dead pigeons.

Sarwar Hossain, assistant sub-divisional officer of the Upazila Livestock Office, said the village is very popular place for birds.

He has already informed the higher authorities about the matter, said Sarwar.

Action will be taken in this regard after getting the report from the veterinarian, said Md Jahid Hossain, officer-in-charge of Rajapur Police Station.

Eating meat of such dead birds are very harmful and it can damage all organs, said Dr Md Solaiman Kabir of Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.



Pigeons lie dead allegedly after taking rice and wheat mixed with poison at Angaria village in Rajapur upazila of Jhalakathi. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

Bullet-hit body found at border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

The bullet-hit body of a youth was found at bordering village of Shingnagar in Shibganj upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was Manarul Islam, 27, son of Nuhu Monna of Tarapur village in the upazila.

Locals said Manarul along with some people was going to India through Shingnagar border for collecting goods around 3:00am.

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on them, leaving Manarul dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said Shikdar Moshir Rahman, officer-in-charge of Shibganj Police Station.

Lt Col Sajjad Sarwar, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 53 Battalion, said Manarul was a smuggler.

It is not clear yet whether Manarul was killed by BSF or not, said the BGB official, adding that they are investigating the matter.



Ignoring the risk of fatal accident, a country boat crammed with around 140 people starts for a 15-kilometre journey on the mighty Jamuna in Sariakandi upazila of Bogura. The photo, taken a few days ago at Kalihata, gives a typical picture of communication for over 10 thousand people in remote char areas of the upazila as they have hardly any alternative mode of transport.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Rivalry in AL claims one life, injures 25

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Rivalry between two Awami League (AL) leaders turned deadly yesterday, leaving one dead and 25 others injured, as armed loyalists of both the leaders clashed over a disputed relationship between a boy and a girl in Kumarkhali upazila.

Ali Azam Munshi, 50, follower of former Kushtia-4 lawmaker Abdur Rouf, died on the spot during the clash that lasted about an hour at Bansgram village market, said AKM Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kumarkhali Police Station.

Around 8:30am, loyalists of Rouf and Abdul Mannan Khan, chairman of Kumarkhali Upazila Parishad and president of AL's Kumarkhali upazila unit, locked in an altercation over the boy and girl's romance.

The boy's father belongs to Rouf group, while the girl's father to Mannan group.

The arguments soon turned violent when both groups attacked each other with firearms and sharp weapons. Several gunshots were heard during the clash, the OC also said.

The injured were admitted to different medical facilities in Kushtia town and the body of the deceased was sent to Kushtia General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

When contacted, Abdul Mannan Khan blamed his adversary former lawmaker Rouf for the incident. "After failing to get nomination from the party in the last parliamentary election, he [Rouf] is now taking revenge on AL activists," he said.

Abdur Rouf could not be reached for his comments as his cellphone was found turned off.

Police remain at guard in the area to avert any further untoward situation, the OC said.

Abducted triplets rescued, 6 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Abducted triplets have been rescued from Sherpur.

Police also arrested six people in this connection, said Shah Kamal Akanda, officer-in-charge of Detective Branch of Police in Mymensingh.

The triplets, aged about 15, are daughters of a rice trader of Phulpur upazila in Mymensingh. They are students of Class IX at a local school.

The trio were abducted from their house on June 15. Later, a general diary was filed with Phulpur Police Station in this connection.

Police in a drive rescued one of the victims from Sherpur on June 17. On Wednesday, two other sisters were rescued from the same district.

The arrestees are Momen Mia, 25, his wife Suraiya Raha, 18, Sultan Mahmud Sabuj, 30, Masud Rana, 19, Munna Mia, 19, and Jewel Mia, 26, of Sherpur.

The victims' father filed a case, accusing nine people including the arrestees, said the OC.

FF FARUK MURDER CASE

Next hearing of witnesses July 4

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A court yesterday set July 4 for the next hearing of the witnesses in freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed murder case.

Rashed Kabir, judge of First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in Tangail, passed the order.

Seven out of 14 accused in the case, including main accused Amanur Rahman Khan Rana, former Awami League (AL) lawmaker from Tangail-3 (Ghatail) constituency, were in the dock at the time, said Tanvir Ahmed, court inspector in Tangail.

Earlier, two more prosecution witness of the case -- Md Ashraf Ali, the then resident medical officer of Tangail General Hospital, and Abdul Awal, a shopkeeper in the town, gave their statements to the court, he said.

Later, the defense lawyers, including the lawyer of Rana, conducted their cross examination.

With them, sixteen out of a total 23 prosecution witnesses of the case gave their statements to the court so far, the court

inspector added.

After hearing, the accused, including Rana, was taken to Tangail District Jail.

Earlier, Rana was produced before the court at 11:30am.

He was taken to Tangail District Jail from Kasimpur Central Jail on Wednesday, sources said.

The bullet-hit body of Faruk, also a district AL leader, was found near his College Para house in the town on January 18, 2013.

After three days, Faruk's wife Nahar Ahmed filed a case with Sadar Police Station accusing unidentified criminals.

Police initially investigated the case, which was later shifted to the Detective Branch in Tangail.

A charge sheet in the case was submitted on February 3 in 2016. Charges were framed against the accused in September the same year.

Four of the 14 accused, including Rana, are in jail while three are on bail. Seven others, including three younger brothers of Rana, are still on the run.



Consumers of West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd demonstrate, blocking Khulna-Pirojpur-Barishal road near Baleshwar Bridge in Pirojpur Sadar upazila yesterday, to press for their demand to revoke digital prepaid meter system for paying electricity bills. The agitators alleged cheating and realisation of undue bills under the system.

PHOTO: COLLECTED