



Grower Somoyon Chakma and one of his neighbours sort out harvested rambutan in Lumbini area of Rangamati town.

PHOTO: STAR

Rambutan gaining popularity in Rangamati

Somoyon earns Tk 6 lakh by selling its fruits, seedlings for the first time

ANVIL CHAKMA, Rangamati

In 2008, Somoyon Chakma's brother brought two seeds of rambutan, a tropical fruit closely related to the litchi, from Thailand. He then grew a rambutan plant in the courtyard of his house from the seeds. After five long years, the tree finally bore fruits in 2013.

The 40-year-old from Lumbini area of Rangamati town has already earned Tk 6 lakh by selling rambutan fruits and seedlings.

Rambutan is one of the well-known fruits of Southeast Asia. The fruit is also widely cultivated in many other places including Africa, the Caribbean Islands, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, while Thailand remains its largest producer.

Papan Kumar Chakma, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in the district, said although the

fruit is still not commercially cultivated in Rangamati, some rambutan trees can be seen in courtyards around houses. The fruit has begun gaining popularity amongst the locals in Rangamati.

Its flower blooms at the end of April and the fruit begins to ripen from the first week of July.

"I earned Tk 6 lakh from the rambutan tree by selling the fruits and seedlings in the last two years," said Somoyon.

"I'm expecting to get Tk 4 lakh by selling the fruits and seedlings," he said.

"Each fruit is sold for Tk 5 to Tk 8 and seedling for Tk 150 to Tk 250. It already has a high demand in the market," said Somoyon, adding that people are now coming to house to buy the seedlings.

Inspired by his success, many people have started planting rambutan trees.

Sonamoni Chakma of Khagrachhari said he

has already collected 200 seedlings of rambutan from Somoyon.

Somoyon said it will be beneficial to plant the trees in hilly areas as the weather is very favourable.

DAE officials of the district said they have no information yet about the growing of rambutan fruits.

However, agriculturalists in the district have recently started seeing the possibility of fruit gardens in the hilly areas which would be suitable for rambutan cultivation, he said.

DAE official Papan Kumar said Rambutan trees are being seen in some of the houses in Rangamati. The yield is also visible.

Even though it is not yet being commercially grown, the fruit has good potential to support cultivators' incomes, if proper agricultural practices are followed, he said.

Thunderbolts kill six in 2 dists

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Thunderbolts killed six people and two cows in separate incidents in Thakurgaon and Dinajpur on Monday and yesterday.

In Thakurgaon's Baliadangi upazila yesterday, two people were killed and 10 others injured as lightning and thunder crashed on them around 4:00pm when they were collecting mango at an orchard in Badambari village, reports our correspondent in Thakurgaon.

The deceased were identified as Rafiqul Islam and Nurul Islam from Jagdal Mahatbosti village, said Mosabberul Haque, officer-in-charge of Baliadangi Police Station.

Out of the injured, two were admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital while eight others received treatment at Baliadangi Upazila Health Complex.

In a separate incident at Dalalbosti village of the upazila the same day, farmer Abdul Jabbar died on the spot while he was ploughing aman field near his house.

In Ranishankoil upazila, a 13-year-old boy, Abu Sayed, died after he was struck by a thunderbolt around 2:30pm in Alsia village. He was son of Monsur Ali in the village.

The boy was herding ducks back from a field near his home. Yesterday around 5:00pm, a woman died after she was hit by a thunderstroke near Chirirbandar railway station, our Dinajpur correspondent reports.

Wife of Ranjit Kumar Roy from Jharuarpar village of Chirirbandar upazila, Hirobala Roy, 30, was herding cows when the incident took place. Two cows also died during the thundershower, said police.

On Monday around 7:00pm, Bakhtiar Islam, 8, son of Saidur Rahman, was killed by a thunderstroke on way to his home in Singra Sotopur village under Nawabganj upazila.

Man gets life term for rape, murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing an indigenous girl after rape in Barlekha upazila in 2015.

Moulvibazar District and Sessions Judge Sheikh Mohammad Abu Taher delivered the verdict in presence of the convict Azizur Rahman, 28, son of Yusuf Ali of Dakkhin Shabbajpur area, in the afternoon. The court also fined him Tk 50,000.

According to the prosecution, Azizur killed the 23-year-old victim after raping her, when she went a punjee nearby her house around 8:00 on January 30, 2015.

Later, following a case filed by the victim's elder brother with Barlekha Police Station, police detained Azizur, who gave his confessional statement under Section 164 before a court, Public Prosecutor ASM Azadur Rahman said.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT 'BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER'

Girl stops attending classes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A tenth grader female student Kanihati High School in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar stopped attending her classes a week ago, following sexual harassment and threat allegedly by a member of the school managing committee (SMC).

Demanding immediate action, the victim's father filed complaints to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and the upazila education officer on July 16, against the accused, Majharul Islam Mamun.

According to the written complaint, Mamun, who tutored the tenth grader female student, gave illicit proposal to her and harassed her in different ways.

The girl informed her mother and the latter informed the school's headmaster about the matter on July 10.

The same day, Mamun made failed attempt to obstruct the victim on her way to school.

Mamun also went to the school that day, summoned the girl to the office room and humiliated her in front of her teachers, making a false statement about her.

The next day, Mamun again waylaid her on way to school, told her to withdraw the petition against him and threatened that otherwise she would not be allowed to sit

for the SSC test exams, the complaint adds.

The girl stopped going to school in fear of further humiliation by the SMC member after her father filed the complaint to the UNO on July 16.

Talking to this correspondent, the girl's father said, "I went to the UNO as no action was taken against school management committee member after my complaining to Kanihati High School authorities about the incident."

"I have stopped going to school in fear of humiliation," the girl said.

Seeking anonymity, a classmate of the girl said the SMC member sexually harassed her in different ways.

Contacted, SMC member Majharul Islam Mamun refuted the allegation against him and claimed that it was an attempt to tarnish his image.

Fazal Uddin, headmaster of Kanihati High School, said, "I settled the matter and assured the girl that no unwanted thing will happen again. I don't know if anything has happened outside the school."

Abu Layes, UNO of Kulaura, said he has received the complaint from the girl's family and the allegation against the school managing committee member is under investigation.

Brahmaputra continues devouring houses, land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Erosion by the Brahmaputra river has taken a serious turn recently and continued devouring homesteads and croplands in different areas in Sadar upazila.

Due to the situation, hundreds of families in different food affected areas have been passing their days in fear of losing their homesteads, croplands and other belongings to the river.

As a result, around 200 families in Japarkanda, Rehai Tarapur, Senerchar and Astadhar areas in Sadar upazila have already shifted their houses to other places, locals said.

On Sunday, hundreds of flood affected victims, living in different areas for years, formed a human chain along the river bank, demanding immediate steps by the authorities concerned to save their homesteads

and croplands.

Former chairman of Astadhar union parishad (UP) Abdul Kader, Freedom Fighter Ishraq Ali Ansari and AL leader Mohammad Saifuddin spoke on the occasion.

Speaker at the rally said although their homesteads and farmlands are being devoured by the river every day, no proper step has been taken yet.

Astadhar UP member Bablu Mia said the Brahmaputra river devoured over 200 acres of croplands at Japarkanda village since 2015 till last year.

Besides, many educational institutions also went into the river womb during this period, ex-UP chairman Kader said.

"I have lost three acres of land in the river and cow rearing is my only means to survival now," Bablu said, adding that his cattle farm also might eroded anytime.

Astadhar UP Chairman Tareq Hasan Mukta said some 300 families have moved to other places in last two years due to river erosion.

If steps are not taken immediately, rest of the locality might devour soon, lamented the chairman.

Executive Engineer of Mymensingh Water Development Board (WDB) Mohammad Zahurul Islam said separate project proposals of Tk 900 crore have already been sent to the ministry concerned for approval.

The situation can take a serious turn as on rush of water from the hills across the border started entering the areas in recent days, the engineer said.

In a bid to tackle the ongoing erosion, WDB has been dumping sand bags on an emergency basis at Japarkanda in Sadar upazila and Moricharchar in Ishwarganj upazila, added the engineer.



People at Senerchar in Astadhar union of Mymensingh Sadar upazila shift their belongings as they move to a safer place amid continued erosion and flooding by the Brahmaputra river in a vast area.

PHOTO: STAR



Pest-eating bird cattle egrets fly in a cropland. The photo was taken from Kalupur area in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila on Monday.

PHOTO: ROBIUL HASAN DOLLAR

Malaria spreads in Rangamati's Jurachari

Medical teams sent to the remote area as poor roads hamper shifting of patients to medical facilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Different areas of Dumdumme union under Jurachari upazila in Rangamati see increasing cases of malaria over the last few months.

Dumdumme Para, Champai Para and Bogahali Para in the union are some of the worst affected villages, said health officials of Jurachari upazila.

"In June last year, we recorded 94 malaria patients, whereas this year the number reached 204," said Bivas Khisa, health and family planning officer of Jurachari upazila.

"Three medical teams from Jurachari Upazila Health Complex were sent to different remote areas in Dumdumme union for diagnosis and treatment of malaria patients," he added.

Locals including public representatives have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for proper treatment of the patients and checking spread of the disease.

The government should take immediate measures as the cases of malaria is on the rise in the remote area, said Shanti Raj Chakma, chairman of Dumdumme union parishad.

Roads in the union are in poor conditions and so, the patients find it difficult to reach upazila health complex for treatment, he added. Shahid Talukder, civil surgeon of

Rangamati, said they are closely monitoring the situation.

"Chattogram Hill Tracts is a malaria prone area and many people are infected by the disease amid lack of awareness. The health officials at all upazilas in Rangamati have been alerted and asked to send reports on malaria situation on a regular basis.

"We have arranged awareness meetings with health and family planning officers in ten upazilas of the district and sent them instructions in this regard. The health department is spraying larvicides on mosquito breeding grounds," he said.

He also suggested the authorities of upazila health complexes and clinics to send malaria patients to Rangamati Sadar Hospital and other health facilities in the district headquarters for better treatment.

Muhammad Mahfuzur Rahman, Jurachari upazila nirbahi officer, said he has asked the upazila health and family planning officer to take necessary steps to address the situation.

Earlier, Sajek union of Baghaichari upazila in Rangamati also saw an outbreak of the disease, where the upazila health office recorded 120 malaria patients in June.

Youth found dead in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police recovered the hanging body of a youth from a tree at an orchard at Bongram village in Salta upazila on Monday.

The deceased is farmer Zahangir Matabbar, 35, son of late Salam Matabbar of Boroluxkhandia village in the upazila.

The victim's aunt Bhanu Begum said Zahangir went out of home on Sunday afternoon and he did not return home since then.

On information, police recovered the hanging body from the tree at Bongram village in the morning.

Ashim Kumar, sub-inspector of Salta Police Station, said the body was sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

An unnatural death case was filed in this connection.