



Price fall frustrates hog plum growers

Direct marketing facilities would ensure profit for growers

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Good yield of amra (hog plum) fails to make the growers happy as the prices have fallen during the peak harvesting season.

The vitamin-rich sweet and sour fruit grows well in different districts of Barisal division.

Barishal, Pirojpur and Jhalakathi produced a total of 20,387 tonnes of amra last year and the cultivation areas in the three districts were 353, 465 and 650 hectares of land respectively, said sources at the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Barishal division.

This year saw higher yield from the same areas of land, they said.

Flowers appear in trees in the Bangla months of Magh and Falgun (mid-January to mid-March) and the fruit is plucked from Ashar to Ashwin (mid-June to mid-September).

There is better yield of the fruit this season although plucking started a bit late, said farmers.

Several growers said they have to sell the fruit at Tk 700 to Tk 800 per maund (40 kg) to the local wholesalers

whereas last year's prices ranged from Tk 900 to Tk 1000.

Visiting Nabagram village in Jhalakathi Sadar, this correspondent found labourers busy plucking amra while wholesalers were engaged in packaging the fruit.

"Despite high yield of the fruit this year, we are not happy due to its lower prices," said Fazlur Rahman, an amra grower in the area.

Several wholesalers said they would not be able to make expected profit due to the price fall this season.

"I bought the seasonal yield of an amra orchard covering one hectare of land for Tk 3 lakh with hope to make a profit of Tk 2 lakh, after spending for the maintenance and marketing. Now it seems that the expectation won't be met," said Niranjan Adhikari, a trader of Atghar area in Swarupkathi upazila of Pirojpur.

Abu Hena Md Abu Zafar, deputy director of DAE in Pirojpur, said they are planning to set up a market where hog plum growers would be able to sell directly to the buyers and get good profit.



A man loads hog plum in a boat for sending the popular citrus fruit for sale and inset, a worker plucks the fruit from a tree during the ongoing peak harvesting season. The photos were taken from Jhalakathi Sadar upazila. PHOTO: TITU DAS

3 drown in Karotoa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Three members of a family, including two minor children, drowned in the Karotoa river yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Chandan Kumar, 35, son of Bijan Kumar of Chandijaan village in Sherpur upazila, his daughter Kiran Mala, 5, and nephew Arup Kumar, 6.

Quoting locals and deceased's family members, Officer in Charge (OC) of Sherpur Police Station Humayan Kabir said the incident occurred when Chandan, a fisherman, along with his daughter and nephew were catching fish in nearby Karotoa river around 1:30pm.

Being informed by the villagers, police and fire fighters went to the spot and recovered the bodies of Chandan and Kiran and took them to Sherpur Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors declared them dead around 3:00pm.

However, Arup's body could not be traced as of filing of this report around 8:00pm, the OC said.

COLLEGE GIRL'S DEATH AFTER RAPE

Teachers, fellows demand punishment of perpetrators

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Students and teachers of Abu Abbas Degree College on Wednesday formed a human chain in front of the college at Banuapara in Netrakona town demanding capital punishment for rape of their fellow Yeasmin Akter.

Yeasmin, 24, of Khamarhati village in Netrakona's Purbadhala upazila, who was allegedly raped by her cousin and classmate Alamgir Hossain on August 21, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Sunday.

Her mother lodged a case with Purbadhala Police Station, accusing Alamgir, 24, and three other unknown persons on Sunday night.

Police arrested Alamgir from his house in Sripurballi village of Netrakona Sadar upazila early Monday. He was produced before a Netrakona court the same day and the court sent him to jail.

"Alamgir took the girl to his workplace in Mymensingh's Tarakanda upazila for a visit on Wednesday. There he raped her. The following morning, Alamgir talked to the girl's parents over phone and said Yeasmin was sick," Purbadhala Police Station OC Tauhidur Rahman said, citing the case statement.

"The victim's mother on Thursday went to Shyamganj Railway Station area in Purbadhala where Alamgir handed over the girl to her and fled," he added.

The mother admitted her to Netrakona General Hospital and she was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital the same day.

As her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to ICU of the hospital where she died on Sunday morning.

"The body bore signs of struggles. During primary interrogation, Alamgir confessed to raping the girl," the OC said.

FAMILY FEUD

Youth kills uncle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A man, who was stabbed allegedly by his nephew over a family feud in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila on Tuesday, died at a hospital yesterday.

The victim, Aminul Islam alias Sona Mia, 42, was son of late Monir Uddin of Kakuria Machim village in the upazila.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said there had been a family feud between Sona and his nephew Masum, 20, for long.

The due locked in an altercation over grazing cow in a field near their house on Tuesday and at one stage, Masum stabbed Sona indiscriminately with a knife, leaving him injured.

Critically injured Sona was first taken to Netrakona General Hospital and later shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH), where he succumbed to his injuries yesterday morning, Officer in Charge of Kalmakanda Police Station Mazharul Karim said.



Labourers lift sand from a local water body with diesel-run shallow machine illegally in Tafalbari Bazar area in Sharankhola upazila of Bagerhat. PHOTO: STAR

ILLEGAL SAND LIFTING

Homesteads, roads under threat of collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Homesteads, roads and various establishments in Sharankhola upazila are under threat of collapse due to illegal sand lifting with locally made dredgers from local ponds and water bodies.

A section of influential dredger owners and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) contractors have been running the illegal sand trade for long by managing the local administration, alleged local people.

Mud-mixed sand lifting from local ponds, canals and beels is being used in building roads, culverts and bridges in the area, they said, adding that the contractors are using this sand in construction work due to low price of the sand.

Due to use of the low-quality sand, such establishments may collapse anytime, said locals.

Upazila Engineer Chandan Kumar Chakraborty refuted the allegation of using low quality sand in the construction works of LGED.

Despite repeated pleas, local administration and public representatives are yet to take any action in this regard, said locals.

Obaidul Khan of Hoyalpati village and Sarwar Khan and Abul Farazi of Amragachhia area, Suman Sharif and Delwar Hossain of Badhal village and Emdul Gharami of Uttar Tafalbari and Bachchu Boyati of Bangla Bazar area in the upazila have at least 12 illegal dredger machines.

Traders using the dredger machines continue lifting sand from local ponds, canals and beels in the areas.

Recently, a few roads in the areas caved in, said villagers.

Md Sohrab Shikdar of Pashchim Baniakhali village in the upazila said a few days ago, to make a bridge on Pashchim Baniakhali canal, some labourers engaged by a contractor lifted sand from the canal behind his house with diesel-run shallow machine.

Due to the illegal sand lifting from the canal, large cracks develop in some of the nearby residences,

including his house, said Sohrab.

Protesting the incident, the contractor concerned and owner of the dredger Delwar Hossain threatened to implicate him in a false case, said Sohrab.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Delwar Hossain.

Over a year ago, due to sand lifting from the canal in front of Mollabari of Lakurtala on Signboard-Sharankhola highway, 100-metre-long from Raenda to Tafalbari at the road caved in.

A number of cracks developed in the houses of late freedom fighters Abdu Haq Hawlader, Shahidul Sharif and Quader Gazi due to indiscriminate sand lifting from the canal.

Assistant Deputy Commissioner Md Kamrul Islam said if the upazila nirbahi officer is failed to take action in this regard, they will depute a magistrate there to bring the culprits to book.

"Indeed, to Allah (SWT) we belong and to Him we shall return"



The Management, staff and workers of Newage Group of Industries are deeply saddened at the sudden passing away of Zarif Mahfuz, son of our Group Director Mr. A.S.M Mahfuz. All of us in the Newage Family pray for the salvation of his departed soul. We request you to kindly attend a doa mahfil which be held today, Friday, 30th August, after Asr prayers in Gulshan Azad Masjid, 3, Road 36, Gulshan, Dhaka 1212.



A makeshift fence with corrugated iron sheets and bamboo was made on Tuesday after a 60-foot stretch of boundary wall along the western side of Saidpur airport in Nilphamari collapsed on August 25. The security of the airport is now under threat and the authorities will have to spend more money to reconstruct the wall as the remainder of the wall has also tilted. Locals alleged that substandard material was used when the wall was built five to six years ago. PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN