

Bridge on Bangshai river demanded

Our Correspondent, Tangail

Several hundred villagers yesterday formed a human chain in Dariapur union of Sakhipur upazila, demanding a bridge on Bangshai river.

A good number of students and teachers from different educational institutions in Dariapur and its neighbouring villages took part in the two-hour-long programme in Boroitala Ghatpar area.

Urging authorities concerned to take immediate steps to construct a bridge on the river, speakers at the human chain said a bridge in Boroitala Ghatpar area is long overdue as thousands of villagers including students from around 12 villages of the union have been putting their lives in danger every day while crossing the river on boats.

Ansar Ali Asif, chairman of Dariapur Union Parishad; SM Saiful Islam Shamim, former chairman of the union parishad; and Abdul Aziz, headteacher of Shahab Uddin High School; also spoke among others during the programme.

2 get life term for murder

Our Correspondent, Faridpur

A Madaripur court yesterday sentenced two youths to life term imprisonment for killing a man in 2013.

The lifers are Alamin Mollah, 29, son of Salam Mollah of Jowdi village, and Alamin Hawlader, 28, son of Syed Hawlader of Tubiya village in Madaripur Sadar upazila. They were tried in absentia.

Nitai Chandra Saha, judge of the district Sessions and Judge's Court, also fined the duo Tk 20,000 each, in default, they are to suffer another three months in jail.

According to the prosecution, the convicts killed Tutul Sardar, son of Atul Sardar of Chilachar area in Sadar upazila, on December 11 in 2013.

The victim's father later filed a murder case with Sadar Police Station against the duo.

After examining witnesses and evidences, the judge found the two guilty and pronounced the verdict.



An onion field at Char Sindurna in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat. *Below*, freshly harvested leafy onion kept for sale at Haripur Char in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: STAR

Gaibandha farmers reap onion early as prices high

Cultivation falls in Lalmonirhat as prices were too low in previous years

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A good number of farmers in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha are harvesting their onion a bit early this season as the prices of the cooking item is too high amid the present crisis in the markets across the country.

Meanwhile, farmers in Lalmonirhat cultivated onion in much less areas of land this year, following bitter experiences due to low prices in previous years.

Onion growers of char land along Teesta river basin in Sundarganj upazila are getting unexpected profit from early variety of leafy onion taken as a vegetable, reports our Gaibandha Correspondent.

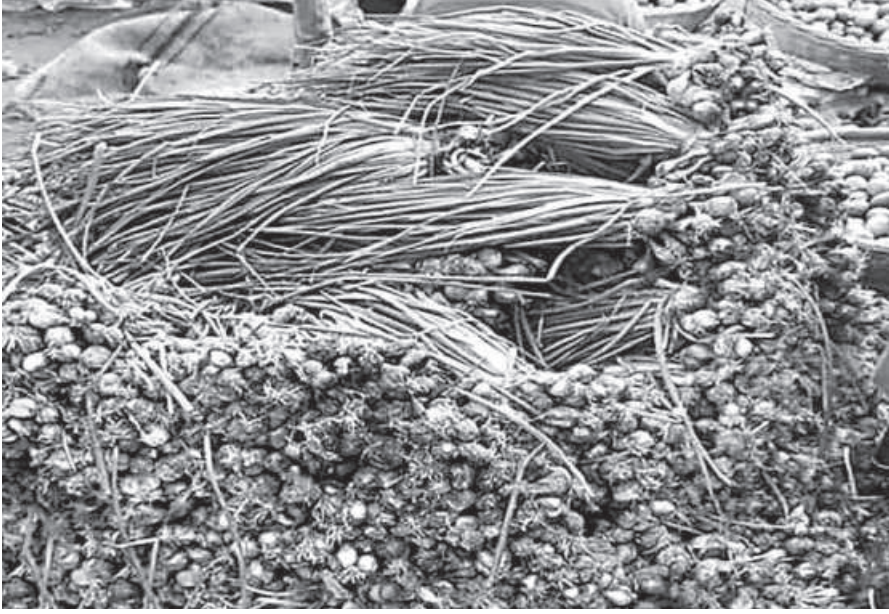
As the item is selling at Tk 120 per kg in the area, many farmers have started harvesting immature plants, said locals, adding that in last year, it was sold for a meagre Tk 15 to 20 per kg.

"This year I gained much profit from onion cultivation, which I could not even imagine earlier," said Wahed Ali, a farmer of Madaripara village in Haripur union, who cultivated onion by sowing seeds on three bighas of land.

Another farmer Rafiqul Mia said he grew leafy onion on half bigha of land, and sold 45 kg of plants at Tk 120 per kg.

Leafy onion plants were sold at Tk 140 to 150 per kg only a few days ago, while imported or quality onion, used as spice, sold at Tk 240 per kg, said Shamim Mia, a vegetable trader at Sundarganj market.

The prices started decreasing after leafy onion plants from char lands started reaching the market a week



ago, said traders.

According to upazila agriculture office, this season's target of onion cultivation area was 150 hectares of land, but farmers grew the item on more lands.

"Generally onion is cultivated in two ways -- sowing seeds and planting small onions. The latter yields better and can be preserved for long to be used as a spice. Lands in char areas are especially suitable for onion cultivation by sowing seeds and its plant with leaves are taken as a vegetable," said Sayed Reza-e-Mahmud, upazila agriculture officer of Sundarganj.

However, onion grown from sowing seeds has very little overall impact in the market as it cannot be preserved for long, he added.

Our Lalmonirhat Correspondent reports: Onion cultivation saw a serious fall, especially in char lands of Teesta river basin areas in Lalmonirhat this year as farmers got discouraged due to low prices of the item in previous years.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Lalmonirhat said onion has been cultivated on 350 acres of land in the district although it was 520

acres in last year and 720 acres in 2017.

Afzal Hossain, 58, a farmer of Char Sindurna on the Teesta river in Hatibandha upazila, said this year he has cultivated onion on only two bighas of land against four bighas last year as he did not get expected price that time.

"We get five to seven maunds of onion from each bigha of land and the production cost ranges from Tk 5,000 to Tk 6,000. We sold onion for Tk 1,000 to Tk 1200 per maund (a maund = 40 kg) in last year and earlier," said Nur Islam, 50, another farmer in the same area.

"But this year, I hope to get good prices from selling onion from my three bighas of char land. The harvest will start within a week," he said.

Sahidul Islam, 44, a vegetable trader in Lalmonirhat town's Goshala Bazar, the district's biggest kitchen market, said the onion prices have started decreasing in the local markets but it is not likely to come below Tk 100 per kg by next week.

This season framers are expecting good prices for onion whereas the item was sold for only Tk 25 to Tk 30 a kg in last year, he said.

Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner Abu Jafor said, "With the new harvest expected to start in a week, there will be abundant supply of local onion in the markets and demand for imported onion will fall."

Farmers will increase onion cultivation if they get good prices, said Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Enamul Haque.

TRAWLER CAPSIZE

PEC examinee missing

Our Correspondent, Pirojpur

A Primary Education Completion (PEC) examinee went missing after a passenger trawler capsized in the Sandha river yesterday.

The victim, Tumpa, 11, daughter of Gias Uddin Fakir, is a resident of Asowa village under Kawkhali upazila of the district.

Afzal Hossain, member of Ward No 2 under Amrajhuri union, said after attending her PEC examination at a centre in the upazila headquarters yesterday, Tumpa was returning home with some of her classmates boarding on a trawler around 1.30pm.

While crossing the river, the trawler with around 30 passengers on board suddenly capsized in the river due to heavy load.

Although all the passengers managed to swim ashore, Tumpa went missing.

Kawkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khaleda Khatun said, being informed, three firefighting units from Barishal, Jhalakathi and Kawkhali upazila headquarters were conducting search operations to rescue the girl till filing of this report at 7:00pm yesterday.

Fire destroys 125 shops

Our Correspondent, Gaibandha

At least 125 shops were burned down after a huge fire broke out at Nakaihat market in Gobindaganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

Motior Rahman, station officer of Gobindaganj fire station, said after two hours' effort, they doused the fire in the evening.

They so far counted 125 shops that were completely destroyed and they were yet to ascertain the total assessment of damage, he added.

Fire service units from Gobindaganj, Gaibandha Sadar and Saghata upazila took part in the effort.

By the time the fire engines reached the scene, the fire swiftly engulfed adjoining areas and most shops at the market were reduced to ashes, said locals.

Monwar Hossain Chowdhury, member of parliament from Gobindaganj-4, and Abdul Matin, deputy commissioner of Gaibandha, visited the spot.

Three jailed for selling salt at unusual prices

Our Correspondent, Lalmonirhat

A mobile court here on Tuesday night sentenced a wholesale trader and his two managers to one year's imprisonment each for selling salt for unreasonable prices.

The convicts are salt dealer Hazi Gofran Ali, owner of Sonargaon Store, and his managers Lutfar Rahman and Yakub Ali in the town. Sonargaon Store is one of the biggest wholesale salt centres in the district.

On information, a special team, jointly led by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abu Jafor and Superintendent of Police (SP) SM Rashidul Haque,

raided Sonargaon Store in the town and found the convicts selling salt at higher prices by creating artificial crisis.

They were selling a sack of salt containing 50 kg at Tk 800 against Tk 500 to the retailers, said the SP.

The three were arrested and later produced before the court, led by Upazila Nirbahi Officer Joyoshree Rani Roy, which pronounced the verdict, said the police official.

Nazrul Islam, a salt retailer of Barabari Haat in Lalmonirhat Sadar, alleged that he purchased one sack of salt containing 50 kg at Tk 500 from Gofran Ali on Monday but it was sold at Tk 800 on Tuesday.

"As we purchased salt at a high rate from the dealer, we sold it at higher prices in the retail market," said Nazrul.

Taking the advantage of rumours on the price hike of salt, Gofran was making bucks by creating artificial crisis, said another retailer Saheb Ali of Mahendranagar Bazar in the upazila.

DC Abu Jafor said there is no crisis of salt. There is huge stock of salt, so salt would be sold at reasonable prices.

The local administration and police are very much active to take stern action against anyone spreading rumours about salt, said Jafor.



Litun Zira, a Primary Education Completion Examination candidate, poses for photograph with parents, teachers and officials of local administration and Jashore Disability Services and Relief Centre, after the organisation gave her a new wheelchair in front of Khanpur Government Primary School in Manirampur upazila of Jashore on Tuesday. The organisation made the arrangement after The Daily Star on the same day ran a report depicting the plight of the girl, born without hands and feet.

PHOTO: STAR



Trader Hazi Gofran Ali and his two managers were jailed for selling salt at higher prices in Lalmonirhat town on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

NGO employee found dead

'Missing' lawyer of Lalmonirhat still traceless

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A missing NGO worker was found dead in Tangail yesterday while a lawyer, who went 'missing' from Lalmonirhat on Tuesday, is still traceless, report our correspondents.

Police recovered the body of an NGO worker from Tangail's Mirzapur upazila yesterday, a day after his missing.

The law enforcers also arrested two siblings in connection with the incident.

The deceased was identified as Ranjit Kumar Paul, 30, an employee of Disha, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), and son of Atul Paul of Thakurgaon district.

Rawshan Alam, local branch manager of the NGO, said Ranjit's

cell phone was found switched off after he went to collect savings and installments of loans from the clients at Dulla Mansoor village in Mirzapur on Tuesday morning.

The other employees of the NGO later found Ranjit's bicycle and bag near a shop at the village in the afternoon, but he was missing.

Later, the NGO authority filed a general diary with Mirzapur Police Station in this regard in the evening.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from under a bridge yesterday morning.

Later, the body was sent to Tangail General Hospital for autopsy, said Saidur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mirzapur Police Station.

They also arrested Sanwar Hossain and Anwar Hossain, clients of the

NGO, and sons of Akbar Hossain of the area, said the OC.

Meanwhile, a lawyer of Lalmonirhat Judge Court is still missing after he went missing on Tuesday.

A missing diary was filed with Sadar Police Station in this regard, said OC Mahfuz Alam of the police station.

The victim is Hafizur Rahman Hafiz, 52, a resident of Saptana area in Lalmonirhat town.

The lawyer's son Sadman Sakib Snigdha said his father came out of the court on Tuesday noon and since then he went missing.

Meanwhile, the victim's wife suspects that her husband might have been kidnapped.

OC Mahfuz said they were trying their best to trace out the missing lawyer.