



Children collect remains of newly harvested Aman paddy at a field of Joychondi village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

They collect fallen paddy to celebrate Nabanno

The pick by poor children during harvest helps the families to enjoy the festival

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

The sweet smell of fresh Aman paddy fills the air in northern districts during the ongoing harvesting season while womenfolk are preparing to arrange 'Nabanno Utsab', the country's traditional festival marking the winter harvest.

Enjoying various delicacies including home-made cakes features the occasion but how could poor, landless and floating people arrange such celebration?

Enthusiastic children of those marginal families help their parents to arrange the festival by collecting scattered paddy from fields.

Nabanno Utsab is an integral part of

Bangalee heritage and people from all classes celebrate it, said Ahsan Rahim Manjil, convener of Nilphamari culture and heritage parishad.

Aman paddy was cultivated this year on 1.13 lakh hectares of land with a target to produce 4.75 lakh tonnes and by this time 80% of harvesting has been completed, said Sanarul Islam, sub assistant agriculture officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Nilphamari.

During a recent visit to different areas, this correspondent saw farmers harvesting various kinds of Aman paddy like Swarna, Paizam, Nenia, Kalojira, Kataribhog, Nazirshail etc.

When paddy bundles are carried from fields on shoulder or oxcart, some of the crop falls off and remain scattered on ground.

Small boys and girls with bags and baskets go there to collect the crop while some of them use brooms for the purpose.

"We can collect 20kg to 40 kg of paddy during the harvesting period. For arranging Nabanno, we sell a part of it to buy edible oil, molasses, milk and other things to make cakes," said Rabbani, 11, of Monthna village in Kishoreganj upazila.

Eight-year-old Beauty and seven-year-old Nazmul echoed the same.

"Some 4% of harvested paddy lie fallen

on the field. Poor children collect a part of it and the rest is eaten by rats and insects," said Md Kamrul Hasan, Sadar upazila agriculture officer.

Ramjan Ali, 45, and Maneka Begum, 36, in Dimla upazila said their children become so enthusiastic to collect scattered paddy for festival that they even miss school.

"There are four lakh school going children in the district. Usually the schools see 98% attendance but during paddy harvesting season, the attendance rate in rural areas reduces to 50% to 60%," said Tareque Hasan, monitoring officer of district primary education office.

Venue for Victory Day programme ransacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Unidentified criminals vandalised the venue arranged for celebrating the country's 49th victory day in the district town yesterday morning.

The group entered the venue around 9:00am and vandalised the chairs and tore down the banners and posters.

A CCTV footage shows, a group of some 12 to 15 unidentified youths, covering their faces with cloths, carried out the attack at the Zila Parishad premises and left the spot soon after the vandalism.

Chairman of Brahmanbaria District Council Shafiqul Alam said, the programme, organised by the district council, was held at the same venue one and a half hours later.

He, however, alleged that local ruling party men were behind the attack.

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Anisur Rahman said they will take necessary action after investigation.

V-DAY EVENTS

30 hurt in BCL infighting

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Around 20 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) over holding Bijoy rally in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila while two factions of BCL clashed, leaving 10 people injured in Moulvibazar yesterday, report our correspondents.

A clash erupted between former Ishwardi BCL president Jubayer Biswas, a follower of the mayor of Ishwardi municipality, and incumbent Ishwardi BCL president Rakibul Hasan Rony, a follower of Shirhan Sherif Tomal, son of the local lawmaker, said locals.

Jubayer said they brought out a procession on the occasion of the victory day around 10:00am.

When they reached Ishwardi Mohila College area, the men of Rony swooped on them, triggering a clash.

At least 20 people including freedom fighter Atiar Rahman, local Jubo League leader Abdul Matin and BCL leader Abu Sayeed sustained injuries in the clash.

Refuting the allegation, Rony said the men of mayor Abul Kalam Azad Mintu attacked them.

Officer-in-Charge of Ishwardi Police Station Md Bahauddin Faruki said additional police have been deployed in the area to avert any further trouble.

Meanwhile, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between two factions of BCL over paying tribute to the Juri Sishupark Shaheed Minar in Moulvibazar yesterday afternoon.

Locals said Moulvibazar BCL vice president Humayun Rashid and his men chanted slogan while paying tribute to the Juri Sishupark Shaheed Minar around 2:00pm.

At the time, another group, led by Juri upazila BCL president Shahab Uddin, brought out a procession. They later paid tribute to the Shaheed Minar.

During the time, the rival groups engaged in an altercation with lethal weapons, leaving at least 10 people from both sides injured.

A chase and counter chase also took place between the two feuding groups.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said OC Jahangir Hossain of Juri Police Station.

Kuakata abuzz with fish drying

Nearly 10,000 people from different char areas in Patuakhali and Barguna are engaged in the process

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Kuakata beach is now buzzing with activities of fishermen as six-month-long fish drying season has started on November 1.

Fishermen are engaged in drying fish after catching them from the sea as they face ban on netting jatka during the period.

During the time, around 10,000 people from different areas in two coastal districts are engaged in sea fish drying.

The areas include Kuakata, Sonar Char, Rupar Char, Char Montaz, Moudubi, Fatar Char and Char Gongamoti in Patuakhali and Nishanbaria, Taltali, Asar Char and Pathorghata in Barguna.

Meanwhile, tourists are

showing keen interest in buying the chemical-free fresh shutki (dried fish).

Fishermen keep different species of sea fish like laitta, churi, maitta, kaisha and bhetki on bamboo or wooden platforms for drying in the sun.

It takes three to four days to dry the fish, said fishermen.

Traders from Dhaka, Chattogram and other parts of the country come here to buy the dry fish.

Many people cook the dry fish to make their favourite curry.

Besides, poultry feed and fish feed are made from the dry fish, said Md Nazrul Islam, a dry fish trader at Kuakata in Kalapara upazila.

Abul Hossain from Faridpur said

he used to buy the chemical-free dry fish while visiting the beach.

Nazrul Islam Dafadar, a dry fish trader, said he buys fresh fish from local fishermen as they do not use chemical to dry it.

Due to this, traders and tourists are showing keen interest to buy the dry fish, he added.

As day labourers some underaged boys were also seen drying fish in the beach.

Fourth grader Sarwar Hossain, 9, said "I work here six to eight hours a day for Tk 100 to Tk 150 to earn some extra money for my family."

More and more fishermen are getting engaged in fish drying as it brings good profit, said Shah Alam, a dry fish trader of the area.



Sea fish kept for drying in the sun at Kuakata beach in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

V-DAY IN DISTRICTS



Members of Bangladesh National Cadet Core take part in a march-past at Dinajpur Gor-e-Shaheed Moidan, 2) students enact Liberation War scenes on Gafargaon Islamia High School ground in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh, 3) at a field of Nagarpur upazila in Tangail, and 4) Dr AAM Mesbahul Haque Bachchu Stadium in Chapainawabganj, 5) former students of Selim Nazir High School in Pabna, many of them belonging to opponent political parties like Awami League and BNP, join a Victory Day procession in the town as the nation celebrates the 49th Victory Day yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR