



BINA Dhan-25 shows hope

Farmers get higher yield from newly developed rice variety

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, back from Magura

Mannan Joaddar cultivated BINA Dhan-25, a newly developed variety of paddy, on one bigha of land in Moghi village of Magura 93 days ago.

The 55-year-old farmer is now over the moon. He had not seen such thin and long grain in his 20 years of farming.

"I am hoping to get around 30 maunds of crop, which would be more than any other variety I have grown so far. It looks more like Basmati rice," Mannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

In the last season, he grew BRRI Dhan-63 on the same land and had about 22 maunds of paddy. He spent Tk 10,000 to produce the paddy.

This time he is expecting to get more paddy spending the same amount of money.

"BRRI Dhan-63 has a life cycle of over 120 days whereas BINA Dhan-25 can be harvested in less than 100 days," the farmer said.

BINA Dhan-25 was cultivated in 396 upazilas of 22 districts during this Boro season with an average yield of 7.50 tonnes per hectare.



Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) developed the new variety and supplied it to the farmers of 396 upazilas of 22 districts last year. This variety was developed from BRRI Dhan 29, officials said.

BINA officials recently visited two villages in Magura to see the yield.

Around 20 farmers in Moghi of Magura Sadar upazila and Bhaturia Danga of Mohammadpur upazila cultivated this variety.

Yasir Uddin, a farmer of Bhaturia Danga village, has also grown the variety on his 1.5 acres.

He is expecting to sell the paddy for Tk 1,400 to Tk 1,500 a maund. Last year, he sold BRRI Dhan-63 for Tk 1,200 to Tk 1,250 per maund.

"I've cooked the rice and it tasted good," he said.

The new variety of paddy comes at a time when many millers cut and shape coarse rice into fine one using different methods. Nutrients such as zinc and iron are reduced in the process.

But BINA Dhan-25 needs not excessive processing as the rice is normally fine, said BINA officials.

Mirza Mofazzal Islam, director general of BINA, said any paddy usually contains 6.5 to 7.5 percent protein, but this has 9.1 percent protein.

"Due to its higher yield, dependence on imports could be reduced."

The cost for producing this variety on one bigha, including fertilizer, water, pesticide, and seed, is Tk 10,000, he said.

Sakina Khanam, BINA's principal scientific officer, who played a significant role in developing the BINA Dhan-25, said farmers could preserve its seed for a long time.



Police use teargas to disperse Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party activists and supporters of former Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan yesterday during a protest against the arrest of their leader in Islamabad.

PHOTO: AFP

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

BNP to warm up before big rally

To hold district-level rallies, demos, road marches as part of fresh anti-govt programmes

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP will announce a series of fresh anti-government programmes within the next few days. However, the party is not likely to go for tough agitation at the beginning of this phase of the movement.

The party wants to hold programmes like processions, demonstrations, and rallies for a few days to speed up the pace of the movement and mobilise public opinion and support from the local and international communities.

BNP sources said protests will be held at the district level initially. At the final stage of the movement, the party plans to bring leaders and activists to the capital from across the country to hold a massive rally.

The organisation is considering to stage programmes like road march towards Dhaka, long marches or "besiege Dhaka" after wrapping up the protests in districts.

Sources said that the fresh anti-government agitations will be announced soon and demonstrations like mass gatherings and sit-ins may be held.

The party did not fix the date for starting the final phase of the movement as it wants to see the momentum gained from the

district-level programmes.

The BNP standing committee met on Tuesday night at the party chairperson's Gulshan office to finalise the anti-government programmes. The party's highest policy-making body drafted an outline for the movement but did not fix the dates for the demonstrations.

BNP leaders said they decided to hold programmes at the district level to mobilise public opinion in favour of the movement. The party will hold demonstrations in 19 large districts.

"We can initially replicate the model of holding divisional rallies like we did from October 12 to December 10 last year," a senior BNP leader told The Daily Star wishing not to be named.

Sources said that the standing committee meeting discussed road marches towards different districts from Dhaka, but almost all the committee members opposed the idea.

The leaders observed that it will not be possible for the party to make such programmes successful without the participation of Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Also, it will be difficult for the other top party leaders to take fellow leaders

and activists from Dhaka to other major districts, they added.

The meeting also discussed fresh arrests of BNP men, cancellation of bail of its leaders and the joint declaration of the BNP and Gonotontro Moncho, an alliance of six political parties.

Sources said that the meeting discussed a 35-point draft outline on a joint declaration, put forward by the Gonotontro Moncho, about a simultaneous movement.

"If the Gonotontro Moncho agrees, the joint declaration will be made public," said a BNP leader, adding that no new demand and proposal will be included in the BNP's 10-point demand and state reform proposal.

Leaders said that public opinion has been mobilised in favour of the BNP's proposals as seminars were held across the country and a pamphlet was sent to different foreign missions in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, BNP acting chairman Tarique Raman had a meeting with the party's organising secretaries yesterday.

The meeting, held virtually, decided to stage rallies in 82 organisational districts of the party in phases, said sources.

Some ancestors of Native Americans came from China



AFP, Washington

The question of how and when people first came to the Americas has long intrigued scientists.

A new genetics study published Tuesday in Cell Reports finds that some of the first arrivals came from China during two distinct migrations: the first during the last ice age, and the second shortly after.

"Our findings indicate that besides the previously indicated ancestral sources of Native Americans in Siberia, the northern coastal China also served as a genetic reservoir contributing to the gene pool," Yu-Chun Li, one of the report authors, told AFP.

Li added that during the second migration, the same lineage of people settled in Japan, which could help explain similarities in prehistoric arrowheads and spears found in the Americas, China and Japan.

It was once believed that ancient Siberians, who crossed over a land bridge that existed in the Bering Strait linking modern Russia and Alaska, were the sole ancestors of Native Americans.

Sugar price hiked by Tk 16 a kg

Rising import cost shown as reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government on Monday approved the refiners' proposal for rising the retail price of sugar by Tk 16 a kg in accordance with the price hike in the international market.

From now on, loose sugar will be Tk 120 a kg, according to a circular of the commerce ministry.

The price of packaged sugar has been hiked to Tk 125 a kg from Tk 109 a kg.

After the refiners made the proposal, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission analysed sugar prices in the international market and the import cost.

For months, sugar price in the local market has been higher than the price fixed by the government on Monday.

The sweetener was selling for Tk 130-Tk 140 a kg at retail yesterday, according to price data compiled by the Trading

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



The iron rods of the ceiling can be seen in a room of Bil Pabla Line Government Primary School in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. The two small buildings of the school have not been renovated or restored since they were built in 1996. The loose plaster of the ceiling often falls off putting teachers and students at risk of injuries. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Biman should stay with Boeing

Says US plane maker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Boeing and Airbus are now in a battle over the aircraft market in Bangladesh.

After Biman Board of Directors on May 3 approved in principle to purchase 10 aircraft, including two freighters, from European plane maker Airbus, US aircraft manufacturing company Boeing held a press conference in Dhaka yesterday to say that Biman should keep its fleet and operations simple and costs down by using Boeing planes only.

A delegation of Boeing at the press conference in a hotel argued that including Airbus planes in Biman's fleet will increase the national flag carrier's expenses due to different types of spare parts, tooling, engine spares, spare engines, and pilot training requirements.

Head of the delegation, Boeing's managing director (commercial marketing) for Asia Pacific and India, David Schulte said Biman has a small fleet of 21 planes.

He said buying 10 Boeing 787s is the simple solution and buying five Boeing 787s and five Airbus A350s is the complex solution.

He said a complex fleet costs more.

Biman now has four Boeing 777-300 ERs, four Boeing 787-8s, two Boeing 787-9s, six Boeing 737-800s, and five De Havilland Canada Dash-8 Q400, which are short-haul turboprops.

Boeing predicted that driven by the country's growing population, expanding economy and the middle class, air travel will double in Bangladesh over the next decade.

The plane maker provided details about the increasing demand in its Commercial Market Outlook, a yearly forecast of global and regional plane demand.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3