



PHOTO: STAR

## Sapling sales booming in Rajbari amid Aman season

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajbari

The ongoing Aman paddy planting season across the nation has sparked a surge in paddy sapling sales at the Banibaha market in Rajbari's Sadar upazila, thanks to recent bouts of rain.

According to market management committee and dealers and buyers of paddy seedlings, the 50-year-old Banibaha market stands as one of Rajbari's largest and most prominent paddy sapling trading hubs.

Sellers and buyers of paddy seedlings, along with paddy growers and traders from various districts, convene at the market twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, from July to September.

Numerous varieties of Aman paddy saplings, such as BR-17, BR-75, BR-51, Dhanigol, Sorna, Binashail, and Latishail, are sold in the market.

During a visit yesterday, it was seen that paddy sapling growers from different regions gathered along the side of the Rajbari-Baliakandi road at Banibaha bazar. They displayed their saplings for eager buyers. Sellers were also seen negotiating with the sellers.

Md Taimuddin Sheikh, a 40-year-

old paddy sapling grower from Hogladangi village, said, "I spent Tk 40,000 to cultivate paddy saplings on my 66 decimal land. I've already earned Tk 50,000 by selling them and hope to earn another Tk 40,000 this year."

Hazrat Ail, 50, of the same area, said, "I have brought 17 loads of paddy saplings for sale [each load is sufficient for planting on 5 decimals of land]. I am asking Tk 800 per load, and have sold 14,000 taka worth of saplings last Monday."

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**MD TAIMUDDIN SHEIKH**  
Farmer from Rajbari's  
Hogladangi village

"I sowed paddy seed on 7 decimals of land for 3,200 taka. I have already planted paddy seedlings on 1.32 acres of land using a portion of those paddy saplings, and I sold 2,000 tk worth of saplings last Monday. I also brought paddy saplings today, which

I plan to sell for 800 taka," Fazlul Haque, a 62-year-old seedling seller of Banibaha village.

The bustling market draws buyers like Md Siraz Sheikh from Natuncahr village of Baliakandi upazila, who purchased Tk 10,000 worth of saplings for his 70 decimal land.

Saha Alam Mia, another sapling buyer from Madhukhali Upazila in Faridpur, said, "I purchased saplings here last year, which yielded good results. I've come again to buy saplings for my 80 decimal."

Moslem Dhali, a 50-year-old from Dutiakhanda village of Shibchar upazila in Madaripur, said, "I've been buying paddy saplings from this market and selling them in our area for the last 15 years. After meeting all kinds of expenses, I can generate a profit of Tk 4,000-5,000 every week from this market."

Md Moshedur Rahman, president of the Banibaha Bazar Management Committee, emphasised the market's regional significance. "People come to our Banibaha bazar for this paddy market from Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, and Kushtia. We always try our best to support all buyers and sellers if they face any problems. Paddy saplings worth more than one lakh taka are sold per day in this market," he said.

## Man killed

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the victims are residents of different areas in Narayanganj. Barguna's Amtali police station OC Amir Hossain confirmed the matter and said that a passenger named Islam Bepari was killed in a road accident and his relatives took his body. The bus was recovered and brought to the police station.

According to the police, 50 from Narayanganj got together and hired a bus named New Saint Martin and left for a picnic in Kuakata on Thursday night. When the bus reached Ghatkhali in Barguna's Amtali area at 6:00am on Friday, the driver lost control of the bus and fell into a ditch beside the road.

Fifteen of the seriously injured were given first aid at Amtali Upazila Health Complex and sent to Barishal and Patuakhali General Hospital for advanced treatment.

One of the victims Imran said we were going to Kuakata for a picnic. As it was early morning, most of us were asleep. Suddenly, the bus made a loud noise and fell into the ditch on the side of the road. When everyone in the bus started shouting at once, the local villagers came and rescued us and took us to the hospital.

Amtali Hospital emergency department doctor Dr Zayed Alam Iram said that 18 people were injured in the road accident and received treatment at Amtali Hospital. As their condition is serious, they have been sent to Patuakhali and Barishal Shebachim hospitals.

## 20 BNP, JCD

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The incident left five policemen seriously injured.

Later, police filed a case against Jewel, Habib and 48 others with Ramna Police Station. After an investigation, the law enforcers submitted a charge sheet against 21 people – including Jewel and Habib – on June of 2015.

## BANGLADESH MISSION

# E-passport programme inaugurated in Belgium

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan inaugurated the e-passport program at the Bangladesh Embassy in Belgium's Brussels yesterday.

Marking it as the 31st foreign mission of Bangladesh to introduce this technology, the inauguration event, held at the premises of the Bangladesh Embassy, saw the presence of dignitaries, officials, and members of the Bangladeshi community residing in Belgium.

During the inauguration proceedings, the minister said, "In accordance with

the commitment made by the prime minister, Bangladesh accomplished a significant milestone in 2020 by becoming the pioneer in South Asia to launch the e-passport system."

"The Prime Minister said at that time that the e-passport stands as the Mujib Year's gift to the people of Bangladesh," he said.

"The drive behind the introduction of the Bangladesh e-passport was to fortify the nation's position and stature in alignment with contemporary needs and the standards of developed countries," he went on.

## Fear grips AL

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started at 4:00pm.

Roads and alleys stretching from the Dayaganj intersection to the Sayedabad Bridge intersection were crowded with BNP activists, halting traffic in the area. By noon, the ever-expanding procession crowd spilled over onto nearby roads.

The participant leaders and activists chanted various anti-government slogans, as they carried banners, festoons, placards, and portraits of the party's top leaders.

"One point, one demand – the resignation of Sheikh Hasina," one placard read.

Mirza Fakhru and other senior leaders joined the procession by pick-up van. Around 5:30pm, the procession of BNP South reached the final destination Khilgaon Raigate area marching several thoroughfares.

Addressing the Dayaganj rally, Fakhru said the country has been turned into a prison and hundreds of opposition people were arrested and kept in jail out of fear.

Meanwhile, a large number of police and members of other law enforcement agencies have been deployed in both north and south zones

to avert any untoward situation.

Another procession brought out by BNP started from DNCC Market in Gulshan-1 and ended at Mohakhali Bus Terminal.

BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas, who led the Gulshan procession, said people no longer want the Awami League government due to its oppressive rule.

The BNP leaders demanded the immediate release of their Chairperson Khaleda Zia from "house arrest" so that she can go abroad for treatment.

Abbas said, "Every time we advocate for voting rights and democracy, and take to the streets, they respond with gunfire, tear gas, and the forced disappearance of our people. This time, they won't be able to stop our movement," he asserted.

Meanwhile, other like-minded political parties also separately organised the procession and rally.

Besides, BNP will hold a road march today from 3:00pm in front of their central office at Nayapalton to Shantinagar, Malibag, and Moghbazar intersections demanding the release and proper medical treatment of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

## Man arrested

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to light, Kausar fled his home. The next day, the victim's father filed a case at Nachol Police Station, he said.

Based on the FIR and media information, a Rab-5 team launched a shadow investigation into the incident. The location of the accused was identified through its own intelligence surveillance, the official said during the briefing.

Rab-1 Major Mohammad Masud Haider and Rab-5 Chapinawabganj camp commander Lt Commander Ruh-f-i-Tahmin Tauqir led the operation.

The accused Kawsar's transfer to Nachol Police Station in Chapinawabganj is under process, said Lt Col Riaz.

## 600 treated

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DMC; and Dr Abu Hasnat Amit, orthopaedic specialist at Lab Aid, participated at the camp, among others.

Many patients from Dinajpur and surrounding districts, including Rangpur's Badarganj upazila, Thakurgaon, and Panchagarh, flocked to the camp to receive treatment, returning home with satisfactory treatment. A similar health camp was held in the upazila last year.

## No 'back to school' for slum

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Though Karail is home to around 50,000 residents, only 31 centres have been functional in this area after the pandemic, said Shirin Sultana, a teacher with 17 years of experience in NGO-run schools and now working at BNFE learning centre in the slum.

"Managing students in these centres is challenging as almost half of the children dropped out during the pandemic. These students are now uninterested in returning to classrooms since they are already earning," she said.

Shirin teaches 60 students alone, in two shifts from 10:00am to 5:00pm, for a monthly salary of Tk 10,000. She spends time teaching and convincing parents and children to return to school.

She also mentioned that several NGO-run schools that reopened after the

pandemic were forced to shut down due to funding issues.

Mirpur Chalantika slum's 2,000 families face a similar crisis as there aren't enough schools for their children. Many schools in their area also closed during the pandemic and did not reopen.

Brac, which operates 950 learning centres in Dhaka in collaboration with BNFE and 29 partner NGOs, also acknowledged that the number of schools in Dhaka's slums reduced after the pandemic, due to factors like internal migration, funding shortages for small NGOs, and evictions.

According to Brac, delay in receiving bills from BNFE often leads to uncertainty about its partner NGOs' teachers' salaries and school rents, demotivating teachers and disrupting school activities. This ultimately affects the children.

According to Unicef, which also operates 317 such learning centres in Dhaka slums through Jagarani Chakra Foundation and Surovi, the

demand for such centres is much higher.

Iqbal Hossain, education manager of Unicef's education and skill for adolescents and out-of-school children programme, said it is unfortunate that government does not assess the need for schools in slums, considering them as temporary settlements, despite the reality that slums are not disappearing.

"NGO projects drive slum education, but the operations end with the project timeline. A coordinated database of needs with NGOs could help address this gap," he said.

Dr Md Abul Kalam Azad, director general of BNFE, however, said the number of schools before and after the pandemic remained the same, based on the information provided by his officials.

Dr Azad said each school has an enrolment of 30 students, despite claims from teachers and local residents about student dropouts and their involvement in child labour.

## People suffer as bridge

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Mizanur Rahman Shamim, a local.

They have to change vehicles and spend extra money after crossing the wobbly bamboo bridge, taking risk of accidents, he said, adding that movement of cars and heavy vehicles on the road has been stopped, making it difficult for people to carry their goods.

"We urge the authorities to take necessary measures and complete the works as soon as possible," he added.

"Every day 10-15 accidents happen when people cross the bamboo bridge, which is both vulnerable and slippery," said Rezaul Karim, a resident of adjacent Haripur.

Rezaul blamed negligence of the contractor as well as the authorities concerned for not completing the physical works on schedule.

Md Aminul Islam, Kalihati upazila engineer (LGED), said the works are underway but could not be completed in time due to contractors' negligence.

"The contractors are dilly-dallying with the

work, citing hike in prices of materials. The deadline to complete the construction has been extended to April, 2024," he said.

"Boats have been arranged for people to cross the river when water level rises," he added.

The officials from the construction firms could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

## Bangladesh

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departed souls," Momen said in the letter.

He said the tragic incident of Maui reminds us of the extent of devastation induced by climate change and the importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction during such calamities.

"We, the government and the people of Bangladesh, stand by you and the people of America in support and solidarity in this challenging time," the foreign minister added.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Muhammad Imran handed over the letter to US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu at the State Department on August 16, said the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington.

## Barishal

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However, the river fishers are worried as they are being unable to cope up with the fuel expenses, said Nasir Uddin Howlader, additional director of fisheries department in Barishal.

"Hopefully, hilsa will return to rivers within a few days. Around 53,000 tonnes of sea hilsa arrived at various landing stations in July. The number will be triple this month," he added.

**নীটিং ফ্যাক্টরি ভাড়া**  
গাজীপুর কাশিমপুরের লডিংপুর্বে  
৫০,০০০ ব.ফ., ১৩ টি নীট সার্কুলার  
১৫০ টি সুইং মেশিনসহ নীটিং  
কমপ্লেক্স ফ্যাক্টরি ভাড়া দেয়া হবে।  
যোগাযোগ : ০১৭১২০২১০৭২

## UDTCL renamed to JT International Bangladesh Limited for Global Alignment

The name of United Dhaka Tobacco Company Limited (UDTCL) has been changed to JT International Bangladesh Limited, pursuant to the due provision of the Companies Act, 1994 with effect from 5 April 2023.

JTI – Japan Tobacco International – is a subsidiary of JT Inc. and a leading international tobacco and vaping company, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. JTI began 23 years ago when Japan Tobacco acquired the non-US operations of RJ Reynolds. Since then, the international workforce of about 48,000 employees has driven two decades of growth.

In 2018, JTI acquired the Akij Group's tobacco business for approximately USD 1.5 billion (BDT 12,750 crores), making it the single largest foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Bangladesh private sector. In the first three years of the acquisition, they have contributed an estimated BDT 14,303 crores in different taxes and duties to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) making them a top revenue generator for the National Exchequer.

In addition, they have invested approximately BDT 1,740 crores since the acquisition in infrastructure, technology, people development, and several deserving causes in the local communities. JT International Bangladesh Limited is one of the largest private sector employers in Bangladesh operating in 3 factories and working with 15,200 farmers to grow tobacco leaves in the country fostering rural economic development.

The recent change of the company's registered name from UDTCL to JT International Bangladesh Limited synchronizes the affiliation with its international business. By strengthening the affiliation, they aim to continue serving its stakeholders according to the global standards and compliance. JT International Bangladesh is committed to driving sustainable growth in Bangladesh through continued contribution in the economy, people, and organization development, as well as and in the wider community through impactful CSR.

**WFP World Food Programme**  
বিশ্ব খাদ্য কর্মসূচী

SAVING LIVES CHANGING LIVES

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
For prequalification of NGOs for  
"WFP's 2024 Partnership cycle (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024)  
To implement the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Bangladesh  
to Enhance Food Security and Nutrition"  
Ref. # WFP-BGD-EOI-NGO-27-07-2023

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites experienced and potential local/national/international NGOs to submit an Expression of Interest for the implementation of "Humanitarian assistance programs to enhance food security and nutrition."

**About the Programme:**  
Under the Country Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026), WFP will support Bangladesh on its path to ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030 through four strategic outcomes (SO):

- SO1: Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises.
- SO2: The nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- SO3: Vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- SO4: Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises.

WFP, through its partners, currently provides humanitarian assistance to approximately 1,040,000 people in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), other UN agencies, and NGOs, WFP is also working in various sectors namely Food Security, Nutrition, Emergency response and Common Services. In the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities and the camps, WFP will continue to: i) provide humanitarian food assistance to the Rohingya population every month through E-vouchers; ii) build the resilience of refugees and local communities through skills development, livelihoods, market linkages, food assistance for assets and volunteer services iii) support schools and learning centres with school feeding and capacity building for relevant national institutions; iv) implementation of an integrated package of malnutrition prevention and treatment interventions and nutrition services targeting children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women; v) Implement SafetyNet programmes vi) Implement disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security of vulnerable population vii) Implement Food and Nutrition Security Programme in Urban areas viii) Provide lifesaving food assistance during Emergency Response to any disaster in any geographical location in Bangladesh (Create a standby partner roster to be deployed as and when needed).

**Conditions for entry:**  
The organization must have:

- Legal status (valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau)
- Physical presence and experience in the area for which it applies
- Past experience in implementing food, nutrition, education (specifically school feeding), cash-based transfers and/or market-based interventions.
- Past experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
- Past experience in emergency preparedness and response
- Organization's strategic objectives that are aligned with WFP's strategic priorities, SO1 to SO4 mentioned above.
- Adequate resource capacity (financial human resources and procurement)
- Relevant sector experience (Food, Nutrition, common services)
- Strong project management experience
- Adequate financial strength to conduct the required activities supported by an audited financial statement
- Strong relationships with local administration and relevant local and regional institutions.

**Prequalification Application Process:**  
All the interested local/national/international NGOs with a valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau are requested to submit their profile (as per the prescribed format) through UN Partner Portal (<https://www.unpartnerportal.org/dashboard>) by 26 August 2023. Interested applicants must ensure that the Organizational Profile in the Portal is updated with all the latest information and documents. The detailed guideline for creating an organizational profile in UN Partner Portal is available at (<https://tinyurl.com/23dj9wte>)  
In case, the interested NGO's encounter any technical difficulties, please contact [bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org](mailto:bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org), email address: [bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org](mailto:bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org)