

# Farmers happy with chickpea yield in Barind tract

**RAJSHAHI:** Farmers have become happy with the satisfactory yield of the recent past harvested chickpea commonly known as 'chhola' in the region, including its vast Barind tract, in the current season, reports BSS.

The Department of Agriculture Extension had set a target to produce 1,869 tonnes of chickpea from 1,563 hectares of land in eight districts under Rajshahi division this year.

Farmers were happy with the satisfactory yield of chickpea in the region this year. Mustafizur Rahman, a farmer of Pirijpur village under Godagari Upazila in the district, cultivated chickpea on one bigha of land and got a yield worth Taka 7,000 by spending only Taka 2,500.

Rahman said chickpea farming is very much cost-effective as it is one of the less-water consuming crops. Like him, many other farmers also harvested better yields generating a prediction of expanding the cash crop farming.

Like him, many other farmers had also gotten better yields, generating a prediction of expanding the cash crop farming in the years to come.

Various research and extension related government and non-government entities including Pulse Research Centre (PRC) and On Farm Research Division (OFRD) of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute are working here to promote chickpea farming in the region.

Dr Shakhawat Hossain, Senior Scientific Officer of OFRD (Barind Centre), said there are prospects of harvesting additional 10,000 tonnes of the pulse including chickpea in the high Barind tract comprising Rajshahi, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts.

"We are conducting programmes to motivate the farmers to cultivate chickpea on the targeted lands to meet the gradually increasing demands for pulse," he said referring to various salient features of the

cash crop. He said: "No additional cost for fertilizer, pesticide and irrigation is needed to cultivate this sort-term cash crop".

Dr Hossain viewed around 20,000 bighas of land remains fallow for more than three months after harvesting of transplanted Aman paddy every year.

"We are putting in our level best efforts to bring the huge lands under the farming of lentil, chickpea and grasspea," he added.

To make the farming popular and profitable at the growers' level, the OFRD and PRC has started conducting various programmes including farmers' motivation and training, field demonstration and supplying necessary inputs like seed, fertilizer and pesticide.

Muhammad Musha, former chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, mentioned that the chickpea farming could add at least 20-60 kilograms atmospheric nitrogen to per hectare of land supplementing flourish soil productivity to the subsequent crop.

Crop-diversification method should be promoted among the farmers as it has been adjudged as profit making, cost-effective and timesaving, he observed.

"We have no alternative to enhancing the farm-level yield to ensure food security," said Agriculturist Musha adding that wide-range development of the sector could be the means of bolstering the nation's agro-based economy.

Farming area should be enhanced to reduce the protein deficiency of the poor community side by side with regaining the lost productivity of the soil through enriched organic materials.

Under a project titled, 'Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)', around 994 volunteers are working in the Barind region to motivate farmers to promote water-saving crops like wheat, maize, pulses, spices and vegetables farming.

