



With very little flow, Sangdia-Bakultala canal in Badhal union of Bagerhat's Kachua upazila hardly serves the irrigation purpose for local farmers. *Right*, young plants at a Boro field in Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar are drying due to lack of irrigation.



PHOTO: STAR

Water crisis hampers Boro farming in Moulvibazar, Bagerhat's Kachua

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Scanty irrigation due to lack of water in canals worries Boro farmers in different areas including Moulvibazar district and Kachua upazila of Bagerhat.

The problem in Moulvibazar has arisen due to lack of dredging in several areas under the Manu River Irrigation Project while scanty rain aggravates the situation, reports our correspondent.

"I fear huge loss as water did not reach my land near the end of the canal. In some places water level saw a drastic fall," said Kader Mia, a Boro farmer of Ekatuna area under Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

There is much less rainfall this year compared to last year's, said Chandra Biswas, a farmer of Dildarpur area in Kulaura upazila.

"The Boro planting season usually ends in January. But due to the water crisis, I could not start planting it on my lands. If there is further delay in planting, I would get much less than expected yield," said ATM Alamgir Hossain, a

farmer of Raisree area.

Saber Mia, a power tiller operator at Dakkhinbaligaon village in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila, said, "Due to lack of irrigation, we have to plough through the rough soil, for which engines consume more fuel."

Several farmers said they have to use more fertilizer as the dryness of soil makes it less fertile.

Solvent farmers are buying small machines for irrigation but poor and marginal ones cannot afford it, they said.

Rat infestation adds to the problem in some places.

Rakib Chowdhury, president of Moulvibazar Seed Farmers Association, said, "There is shortage of water at many places including Shamra Bazar, Ekatuna and Raipur areas, especially at the end of the irrigation canals. Most of the village canals have turned into grasslands. Six out of my 20 acres of land has remained uncultivated due to the irrigation crisis."

"We need a sustainable water reservoir to solve the problem," he said.

Kazi Lutful Bari, deputy director of Moulvibazar Department of Agricultural Extension, said, "To get a good yield of Boro rice, the farmers need to have a steady supply of water throughout the process from sowing to harvesting. Otherwise, the crop suffers from disease, malnutrition and pest attack."

"We need a long-term sustainable plan and its implementation to solve this problem," said Advocate Bazlul Majid Chowdhury, president of Haor Bachao, Sunamganj Bachao Andolon.

Ranendra Shankar Chakraborty, executive engineer of Water development Board, Moulvibazar said they have done repair work in some areas to raise the level of the embankment.

"This year Tk 50 lakh has been allocated for the project of 105 km dam and allocated. It is not possible to do everything with such a small allocation. Manu rehabilitation project

is being taken. Through this project, everything including canals, dam will be fixed," he said.

Our Bagerhat Correspondent reports: The farmers' of Badhal union in Kachua upazila of Bagerhat are facing severe water crisis to irrigate their Boro lands and fish cultivation as canals that earlier carried freshwater are drying up.

The canals in several villages including Sangdia, Afra, Kalmibuniya, Mosni and Bilkul of the union are in dying condition, locals said, adding that if the situation continues, freshwater of the ponds will dry, causing drinking water crisis.

"We are not getting water for irrigation of Boro paddy lands and fish farming. We need urgent dredging of the canals here," said Liton Sheikh, a farmer of Kalmibuniya village.

Kamrul Paik, another farmer of the village, said, "People throw waste materials into the canals and some people made wooden bridge in Sangdia-Bakultala canal, blocking two sides of the waterbody."

"The farmers and the owners of fish enclosures are in a great crisis as the canals of Kanderkhal, Kalmibuniya, Sangdia-Bokultala, Bilkul and Atarogati areas are dying. The Biskhali River, which supplies freshwater into the canals, is also silted up," said Nakib Foysal Ohid, chairman of Badhal union parishad.

"We urged the authorities to dredge the river and the canals as early as possible," he added.

Kachua Upazila Agriculture Extension officer Lovely Khanam said, "Boro paddy has been cultivated on 6700 hectares of land in Kachua upazila and 1050 hectares of it is in Badhal union. We have informed the district water management committee about the water crisis in the area."

Contacted, Executive Engineer of Water Development Board Nahiduzzaman Khan said, "We have a plan to conduct dredging work in the Biskhali river as well as some canals in Badhal union as early as possible, as it is badly needed for irrigation."

'Curbs on movement'

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a mosque with the man who had succumbed to Covid-19 on Saturday.

Meanwhile, a UK-returnee, who was put in isolation at a Sylhet hospital with coronavirus symptoms, died early yesterday.

The woman, aged around 61, breathed her last in Sylhet Shaheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital around 3:30am, said Civil Surgeon of Sylhet, Premananda Mandal.

She returned from London on March 4 and was suffering from fever, cough and breathing problems for the past 10 days, the civil surgeon said.

On March 20, she was admitted to the hospital and was put in isolation as her condition deteriorated, he said.

A team of IEDCR collected her sample

around 11:30am and would examine it to confirm whether she was a Covid-19 patient, said Debapada Ray, director of health at Sylhet division's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) office.

The body of the woman was buried at a graveyard near Manik Peer Mazar in Sylhet city around 2:00pm under the district administration's supervision.

Officials of health services were present during the burial, and all protocols for an infected patient was maintained as per the instructions of the government, Debapada said.

The family members of the woman were kept in home quarantine and an executive magistrate was tasked to ensure it until the test report of the woman was ready, said Md Abul Kalam, additional deputy commissioner (general) of Sylhet.

Coronavirus patient's doctor

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after which he was transferred to Kurmitola General Hospital and put on a ventilator.

He had been running a fever and was taken to hospital after experiencing some breathing difficulties, according to hospital sources.

More forestland freed from grabbers

Tangail forest department recovered a total of 51 acres of land in Madhupur upazila

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Forest department yesterday recovered eight acres of forestlands from illegal occupiers and demolished fruit orchards under Dokhala forest area in Madhupur upazila.

The local foresters led by Jamal Hossain Talukder, assistant forest conservator (ACF North) in Tangail, conducted the drive.

With this recent recovery, the department has freed a total 51 acres of forestland under different forest in the upazila during special drives that started on March 8.

Abdul Ahad, range officer of Dokhala forest, said people from neighbouring areas had been cultivating banana occupying vast land inside the Sal forest for long.

ACF Jamal said they recovered 23 acres of forestlands in Gachhabari, Chawra Baid, Shukonpocha and



PHOTO: STAR

Community forest workers felled down banana trees raised on grabbed forestland in Dokhala area under Madhupur upazila in Tangail.

Chitakhola area during drives March 18.

Trees like Jarul, Hijol and Rain of forestland in Digorbaid area on Tree and different varieties of

other trees will be planted on the recovered forestland, he said.

Tangail Divisional Forest Officer Dr Jahirul Haque said they will continue such drive to free the grabbed forestlands. He also sought supports from all concerned in this regard.

Mentionable, the traditional Sal forest in Madhupur is shrinking very fast due to nonstop tree felling and illegal encroachment.

Over 20,000 acres out of a total of 45,565 acres of forestland in the upazila are currently under illegal occupiers. Many locals and influential outsiders raised different fruits and vegetables orchards on the grabbed forestland, according to sources at the forest department.

Forest officials said their department has been struggling to recover the grabbed forestland due to shortage of manpower and interference of powerful quarter.

Shortage of medical supplies

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and shutting down all production facilities except those providing essential goods and services.

"We are facing the most serious crisis that the country has experienced since World War II," Conte told Italians during a live broadcast.

He cautioned citizens to be calm and patient, insisting there was "no alternative" than to impose further restrictions. Scientists have argued that avoiding even one infection means scores more are prevented down the line.

The Mediterranean nation of 60 million is now the epicentre of the disease, which first emerged in central China late last year before marching out to the rest of the world.

Across the Atlantic, more than a third of Americans were adjusting to life in various phases of lockdown, including in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Other parts of the United States are expected to ramp up restrictions as well.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said the government is "literally scouring the globe looking for medical supplies." Health care workers from Oklahoma City to Minneapolis sought donations of protective equipment. Staff at a Detroit hospital began creating homemade face masks for workers.

His comment came after United States appealed for donations of respirator masks to combat a shortage of the lifesaving equipment. European countries, which have better health care than most of the world, also suffering from acute shortage of medical equipment, specially ventilators.

Ventilators, running in the thousands of dollars per unit, are used to help people with respiratory

difficulties to breathe. Worldwide, the devices have become shorthand for the rapid advance of the disease -- and the desperation of officials who fear their stocks are inadequate.

UK health minister Matt Hancock has acknowledged the existing stock of 5,000 ventilators is inadequate. Germany's Draegerwerk last week got a government order for 10,000, equal to a typical year's production.

Last week, Hamilton Medical shipped 400 ventilators to Italy, whose intensive care units have been overwhelmed by cases. About 50% of those with coronavirus in Italy accepted into intensive care units are dying, compared with typical mortality rates of 12% to 16% in such units.

In Britain, where yesterday was Mother's Day, the government had a stark message for millions: Visiting your mother could kill her. Prime Minister Boris Johnson implored Britons to forego traditional family visits, parties and Sunday lunches.

"If your mother is elderly or vulnerable, then I am afraid all the statistics show that she is much more likely to die from coronavirus," Johnson said. "This time the best thing is to ring her, video call her, Skype her, but to avoid any unnecessary physical contact or proximity."

In Spain, Europe's hardest-hit country behind Italy, intensive care units in some areas were close to their limits even before yesterday's new tally of 28,603 infections and 1,756 deaths. The army was building a field hospital with 5,500 beds in a convention center in Madrid, where hotels are also being turned into wards for virus patients without serious breathing problems.

China reported its first local infection in four days yesterday. While the number of cases in the mainland

has slumped dramatically since the crisis began, there are fears in Asia of "imported" cases from other hotspots like Europe.

Thailand reported its highest daily rise in cases, taking its total to nearly 600, while Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia have also reported a spike in cases after numbers had plateaued earlier.

Millions of people in India were confined to their homes yesterday as the country went into lockdown with a one-day nationwide "self-imposed curfew".

Normally bustling streets in the capital New Delhi and the financial hub of Mumbai were mostly deserted and most shops shuttered.

India, which has reported close to 350 infections and 7 deaths, also imposed a transportation ban yesterday suspending all railway, metro and interstate bus services till March 31.

Tighter restrictions are now in place elsewhere in Asia, with Australia shutting its borders to foreigners and non-residents and Pakistan suspending international flights.

After recording its first two deaths, Singapore said it will fully shut its borders beginning tomorrow. All short-term visitors will be barred while returning locals will face a 14-day quarantine. Sri Lanka blocked all passenger flights and ships from entering and Pakistan banned all international flights.

The coronavirus has infected more than 1,100 across Africa too, where healthcare systems are limited and social distancing measures are difficult in crowded cities.

The Middle East also remains on high alert, where Iran -- which suffered a major outbreak -- reported 129 deaths on Sunday.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়	
সদর, শরীয়তপুর	
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স্মারক নং- উপঃ স্বঃ ও পঃ পঃ অঃ/সদর(শরীঃ)/প্রশা/এমএসআর/দরপত্র/২০১৯-২০/২৭৭	
তারিখঃ ২১/৩/২০২০ইং	
এমএসআর দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)	
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, সদর, শরীয়তপুরের আওতাধীন ০৪টি উপ-স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রের ২০১৯-২০২০ইং অর্থ বছরের এমএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত গণখাতে সংগ্রহ আইন/বিধিমালা ২০০৩, ২০০৬, ২০০৮ ও ২০০৯ এবং তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধিত বিধিবিধান অনুযায়ী নিম্নোক্ত "ছক" মোতাবেক ফ্রপ ভিত্তিক পৃথকভাবে সীলগালায়ুক্ত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে।	
০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ
০২	এজেন্সি
০৩	সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থা/প্রতিষ্ঠান
০৪	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি
০৫	বাজেট/তহবিলের উৎস
০৬	দরপত্র আহবানের সূত্র ও তারিখ
০৭	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম/দরপত্রের ধরণ
০৮	দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা
০৯	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান
১০	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়
১১	দরপত্র তফসিল (সিডিউল) প্রাপ্তি এর মূল্য/নিয়ম
১২	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান
১৩	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়
১৪	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
১৫	দরপত্র জামানতের (বায়নার) টাকার পরিমাণ
১৬	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম ও ঠিকানা
১৭	বিল পরিশোধ সংক্রান্ত নির্দেশিকা
১৮	সরবরাহের সময়সীমা
১৯	বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা
ডাঃ আবদুস সোবহান কোড নং-৪২৮৫১ উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা, সদর, শরীয়তপুর	