

Tears of Chalan Beel farmers

Crop fields in the beel areas of Pabna, Natore and Sirajganj still under floodwater

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPLU, Pabna

Johurul Islam was in happy mood when he started harvesting paddy in April, but the early flooding of the year made the happy mood turn to darkness.

Like him, thousands of farmers in the Chalan Beel areas of Pabna, Natore and Sirajganj who depend on agriculture for their livelihood have been affected severely due to this year's prolonged floods.

This time the marginal farmers in the water body areas are becoming poorer as they are yet to start cultivation.

The affected farmers said crop fields in the beel areas remain under rainwater from May to August every year. With water receding, they usually start cultivation from September but this year, they are yet to start cultivation as crop fields in Chalan Beel areas are still under floodwater.

Johurul, a marginal farmer of Beel-Biaspur in Natore's Gurudaspur upazila, said he cultivated IRR1 dhan on two bighas of land at the beginning of the year but he could not harvest the paddy properly due to early flooding in Chalan Beel in April. His fields are still submerged in floodwater.

Johurul added that he could not cultivate paddy during the Aman season in June this year due to the second phase of flood. Now he is waiting for garlic or mustard cultivation before



A crop field in Chalan Beel area of Sirajganj's Tarash upazila is submerged in floodwater, much to the worry of farmers.

PHOTO: STAR

Another grower Md Shahdat Hossain of Bin-Sara village in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila said this year's devastating flood has brought unlimited sorrows for farmers in the Chalan Beel areas as the crop fields are still under floodwater here.

"This year I have cultivated (Ropa) Aman paddy on five bighas of land spending Tk 12000 to Tk 15000 but the floodwater damaged the field extensively," he added.

Like Johurul and Shahdat, most of the farmers in Chalana Beel, the largest part of crop cultivating region in northern districts, have been badly affected due to this year's prolonged floods, according to the officials of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Farmers of the flood-hit areas in northern region failed to get success in crop cultivation in the last Kharip-1 and Kharip-2 seasons this year due to longstanding waterlogging in the fields, said a Rajshahi divisional agriculture officer.

KM Rafikul Islam, sub-divisional engineer of Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB), said the flood has come very early of April this

year and it continued hitting four times in the last six months.

He added that the floodwater is receding very slowly in the areas. It will take another one month for water of Chalan Beel to recede.

Flood hit 13 northern districts out of 16 districts this year, he said, adding that of them, 10 districts in both Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions have been badly affected.

More than one lakh hectares of crop fields in 13 northern districts including eight districts of Rajshahi and five districts in Rangpur division have been submerged in floodwater this year, according to the agricultural departments of the two divisions.

Chalan Beel farmers have been affected badly by this year's prolonged floods, said Sudhendranath Roy, additional director of DAE in Rajshahi division.

They are taking preparation to support the flood-hit farmers, he said, adding that the affected growers may get compensation before the next crop season.

Fodder crisis hits cattle farming hard

Hay is being sold at high prices in flood-hit Lalmonirhat and Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Hay collected from the harvest of paddy is being sold at high prices in the local markets of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram as this year's prolonged floods have damaged grass fields extensively in the districts.

The flood-affected victims said one kilogram of hay is being sold for Tk 50 to Tk 55 while the market price of paddy is Tk 25 to Tk 27 per kg. Due to acute fodder crisis, cattle farmers in the areas are forced to buy hay at high prices to feed their cows.

According to the Department of Livestock (DLS), there are about 27 lakh cows in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram. About four lakh agricultural families in the districts earn their livelihood by rearing cows. Grass fields and haystacks have been severely damaged by this year's prolonged floods, much to the worry of cattle farmers.

Kurigram Livestock Officer Dr Abdul Hai Sarkar said grass fields would be available from next month after harvesting Aman paddy. So, farmers in the areas have to buy cow feed hay at high prices during the time.

Manjurul Islam, a hay trader from Ramna area in Chilmari upazila of Kurigram, said he is buying hay from different places and

selling it to farmers. At present, one kg of hay is being sold for Tk 50 to Tk 55. Two weeks ago, kg of hay was sold at Tk 32 to Tk 35. At this time last year, he sold one kg of hay at Tk 20 to Tk 22.

"We are buying hay at a higher price and therefore it is being sold at a higher price," he said.

Sarwar Hossain, a wholesaler in Jatrapur area of Kurigram Sadar upazila, said he bought hay worth Tk 10 lakh and stocked it this year. About 70 percent of the stocked hay was sold a month ago. The remaining 30 percent hay is selling at a higher price.

The demand and price of hay has increased as the floods have damaged the fields of haystacks and grass extensively this year, he said.

Nazrul Islam, a farmer from Hatia village in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram, said this time he purchased four maunds of hay with the money he earned from selling eight maunds of paddy.

Afzal Hossain, another cattle farmer from Gobordhan area of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat, said he had to buy hay with the money borrowed from a local NGO.

They will have to bear the burden of rearing cows until start of Aman paddy harvest early November, he added.

Thousands of farmers, who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, of three districts in the Chalan Beel areas have been affected severely due to this year's prolonged floods.

planting paddy during Boro season which will start from December but he is now in utter despair as the floodwater is receding very slowly in the croplands.

"Every year we grow three crops amidst the flood but this time we have missed two out of three crops due to prolonged floods," he added.

PM condoles MCA

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Liberation War. The Pakistan army had destroyed all his properties. He had all through his life fought for economic and political emancipation of the people, says the prime minister.

TANNERY WORKERS CALL ON PM

Representatives of tannery workers and management meet Bangabandhu today at the Gono Bhaban. They assure the prime minister that the workers would resume their work tomorrow.

It may be mentioned that 20 persons were injured when a group of tannery workers clashed with the people of the management in the tannery in the industrial area of Hazaribagh yesterday.

BANGLADESH APPLIES FOR GATT MEMBERSHIP

Bangladesh's application for membership of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade is scheduled to come up for discussion at a meeting of the body's general council on October 25 when a decision on the question is expected to be made.

RIVER TRANSPORT FACES DEADLOCK

With more than 1,000 workers of the five major launch companies, who are on strike since October 18, 1972, about 50 launches went off the various routes seriously disrupting riverine communications in the country and causing hardship for passengers.

The workers have been observing a strike in protest of what they said was "the owners' apathy towards their demands". They are pressing the launch owners to fix the minimum wage of the workers at Tk 135 per month and to pay the prime minister's ad hoc relief, medical facilities and bonus to the workers.

SOURCES: October 22, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Europe, North America

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the body's top emergency expert, told a news conference on Monday.

Over recent months, authorities in Australia, China, Japan and South Korea had reduced the spread by detecting cases, isolating them and quarantining contacts, he said.

Their populations had shown "higher levels of trust" in their governments who had kept up measures longer.

HC grants anticipatory

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Nixon appeared before the HC bench for bail during the hearing. Lawyer Dr Shahdeen Malik argued for the MP's bail.

Talking to this newspaper, Deputy Attorney General Jannatul Ferdoushi Rupa said the Attorney General's Office was yet to decide on filing an appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC order.

The Election Commission filed the case with Charbhadrans Police Station on October 15 against Nixon for violating the electoral code of conduct during the October 10 by-polls for the post of Charbhadrans upazila chairman in Faridpur.

According to the case statement, Nixon, 42, called Atul Sarkar, deputy commissioner of Faridpur, over mobile phone around 8:00am on October 9 and expressed his displeasure over the appointment of magistrates.

On the election day, the assistant commissioner (land) of Bhanga upazila ordered the arrest of one of Nixon's followers for violating the electoral code of conduct. Nixon then used abusive language in a phone conversation with Charbhadrans Upazila Nirbahi Officer Jasmin Sultana.

Nixon also violated the electoral code of conduct by participating in a victory rally after the announcement of the by-polls results, said the case statement.

Cattle rearing takes

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buffaloes grazing on in the greenery of Bhasan Char now.

He arrived in that land for rearing around 100 buffaloes with a yearly wage of Tk 50,000, excluding expenses for food and accommodation.

Since then, Jamir has been rearing buffaloes in the island. He said he looks after 108 buffaloes and five of them are owned by him.

Like Jamir, there are around 100 herders in the island. "With money earned from rearing buffaloes here, I have bought 10 buffaloes," said Mohammad Amzad Hossain, another cattle farmer.

They said trawler comes to the island every day to transport people and collect milk.

Around 1,000 sheep are also reared in the island. They said two farms were doing the business there.

Mohammad Jifil, who hails from nearby Urir Char of Sandwip, rears around 100 sheep. "There are little opportunities for this in Jaijjar Char. But all the facilities are available here. The vast idle land here is a like gold," he said.

There are two designated places for bazaars and one is already in operation, the shepherds said, adding that all the commodities are sold at fixed prices there.

While the conversation was going on, around 20 more herders, curious about this unknown face, turned up. And when they were told the purpose of the visit, one of them said: The way development work took place in the island for the last two years, we hope the island will be vibrant once Rohingya start arriving.

The government has built a planned modern township with rows of white multi-storey buildings equipped with electricity, water supply, common kitchens and playgrounds in Bhasan Char to accommodate some one lakh Rohingyas.

The island is located around 39km away from Noakhali in an estuary of the Meghna river. The government spent Tk 3,000 crore to build the township.

As the sun was setting on the 6,000-acre island, the shepherds prepared to head home with their herd. In the mix, some of them were uttering Shabana, Babita, Raja, Cumilla, Noakhali and so on.

When the perplexed reporter inquired, the chief came up with a funny explanation.

"These are basically the names of the buffaloes. All the buffaloes have separate names and they respond whenever they were called by those names," said the chief with a big smile on his face.

Commodore AA Mamun Chowdhury, director of the Ashrayan-3 Project (official name of the Bhasan Char housing project), said the island is also suitable for farming of vegetables, fruits, fish, ducks, swans and chickens.

PCP man shot dead

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In a press release, Pratibhas Chakma, general secretary of PCP, a pro-PCJSS (MN Larma) student body, blamed the Parbattya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) for the murder. He also demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Denying his party's involvement, Tridib Chakma, organising secretary of Baghaichhari PCJSS, speculated that the murder could have been due to internal conflict of PCJSS (MN Larma).

Muhammad Ashraf Uddin, officer-in-charge of Baghaichhari Police Station, said they recovered the body and sent it to a hospital for autopsy.

No case was filed yet, he added.

Shikder brothers yet

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hearing on the petition seeking its permission to move a leave to appeal prayer before this court (Appellate Division) against the HC order.

The Appellate Division is yet to fix another date to resume the hearing, the lawyer said.

He also said he filed a leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division challenging the observations made by the HC about the siblings' lawyers in the judgement on their bail petition, adding the leave to appeal petition is also pending its hearing at the Appellate Division, he added.

On July 20, the HC fined Ron and Dipu for seeking anticipatory bail from abroad in a case filed against them on charges of abducting, torturing and threatening to shoot two top Exim Bank officials over loan permission.

Rejecting their bail petition, the HC ordered the two brothers, now in Thailand, to give 5,000 PPE each, 10,000 in total, as fine to the prime

minister's fund in two weeks.

The siblings were also asked to submit a report to the Supreme Court registrar general's office after providing the PPEs.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Friday, SC Registrar General Md Ali Akbar said he could not remember whether Ron and Dipu had submitted any compliance report to his office.

The two had jointly filed the petition on July 2 with the HC seeking anticipatory bail in the case. The HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal passed the order after virtually holding a hearing on the anticipatory bail petition.

The court also made some observations criticising the siblings' lawyers for supporting them in filing the bail petition from abroad.

Lt Col (ret'd) Sirajul Islam, director of Exim Bank, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on May 19 against the two brothers for allegedly torturing two top officials of the bank and threatening to shoot them over a

Tk 500-crore loan.

The accused reportedly left the country by air on May 25.

The two brothers on July 28 filed a petition with the Appellate Division through their lawyers seeking permission to challenge the HC order.

On July 29, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Nuruzzaman sent the petition to its full bench for hearing on August 9.

On August 9, a full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, adjourned the hearing on their petition four two weeks.

The apex court passed the adjournment order after the siblings' principal lawyer Ajmalul Hossain QC sought time from the apex court.

The lawyer on that day had told the Appellate Division that his clients would decide on moving the petition after examining the full text of the HC order which was released on the website on August 8.

Fauci a 'disaster'

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according to one tracker -- ahead of the November 3 election, as Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden race from one swing state to another to marshal support.

Nationwide, Biden leads Trump by 8.9 percentage points, according to a RealClearPolitics average of polls, and the Democrat has more modest leads in several battleground states.

The election is rapidly boiling down to whether voters see Trump as best placed to revive the battered economy hit by coronavirus, or they believe the president has exacerbated the pandemic and want Biden to fulfill his pledge to unify a divided country.

Trump and Fauci, a member of his coronavirus task force, have been at odds over how best to handle

a pandemic that has killed more than 219,000 people in the United States and weakened the Republican president's case for re-election.

Fauci, 79, who has served under Republican and Democratic presidents and is one of the most admired scientists in the United States, has urged that Covid-19 continue to be taken seriously. Trump has suggested the worst has passed.

"Fauci is a disaster. If I listened to him, we'd have 500,000 deaths," Trump said during the call, which the campaign allowed reporters to join.

Fauci has openly complained about being cited in a Trump re-election campaign advertisement that discussed the administration's pandemic response, and said in an interview broadcast on Sunday night

by CBS' "60 Minutes" that he was not surprised Trump himself contracted the virus.

Trump, speaking from his signature hotel in Las Vegas ahead of two rallies in Arizona, said Fauci bombed during TV interviews but that it would be "a bigger bomb if you fire him."

Trump said Americans were fed up with pandemic restrictions.

"People are saying: 'Whatever. Just leave us alone.' They're tired of it. People are tired of hearing Fauci and all these idiots," said Trump, whose rallies include many supporters not wearing masks and standing shoulder to shoulder, at odds with the guidance of Fauci and other public health experts.

"Fauci is a nice guy. He's been here for 500 years," Trump added.

Suspended constable held

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stated that Rayhan was tortured inside Bandarabazar Police Outpost for money.

Finding evidence of their involvement, Sylhet Metropolitan Police suspended four police personnel -- Akbar Hossain Bhuiyan, in-charge and sub-inspector of the police outpost, constables Harun-ur-Rashid, Titu Chandra Das and Towhid Miah.

They also withdrew assistant sub-inspectors Ashek Ali, Kutub Ali and constable Sajib Hossain from the outpost.

Following an SMP order to attach all seven to the police lines, SI Akbar, the prime accused, has been untraceable since Monday.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen visited Rayhan's house at Neharipara to express his condolences to the victim's family

yesterday afternoon.

After the visit, he said, "We believe that the prime suspect Akbar cannot run away from the country as the immigration posts were alerted. Even if he flew away, we'll bring him back like we brought the prime accused of Rajon's murder from Saudi Arabia."

He also handed over Tk 2 lakh to Rayhan's family, for Rayhan's child, on behalf of Momen Foundation.



On the occasion of the 57th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel, youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, ruling party lawmaker from Bhola-3 constituency Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon inaugurated a free eye camp in Lalmonirhat municipality yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED