

National

Under BMDA project area

Satisfactory paddy harvest expected despite various set-backs

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 5: Standing crops on about 13,000 acres of land in seven thanas of two northern districts were inundated by the swelling river water of Barai, official sources said today, reports UNB.

Following last two days' heavy downpour, the flood control embankment developed breach at Bautra point and the river water entered into the low lying areas.

Local people said the embankment breached again this year which was last year repaired by the Water Development Board at a cost of Tk 20 lakh.

According to Agricultural Extension Department, the affected thanas are: Shahjadpur, Ullahpara, Raygan and Taras of the district and Chatmohar, Bhangura and Faridpur of Purnia district. Chalan beel areas were worst affected.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 2.63 cr seized

RAJSHAHI, May 5: Bangladesh Rifles seized smuggled goods worth about Tk 2.63 crore from border areas of the district during last three months, reports UNB.

During the period, they arrested some 106 people on charge of smuggling.

The smuggled goods included Indian sarees worth Tk 46.29 lakh, spare parts of clock worth Tk 18.9 lakh, Chinese silk thread worth Tk 17.24 lakh, 7073 bottles of phenisidyl, heroin worth Tk 7.90 lakh, gold ornaments worth Tk 2.80 lakh, wig worth Tk 1.36 lakh, cattlehead worth Tk 9.36 lakh, brass valued at Tk 6.6 lakh, Tortoise worth Tk 7.20 lakh, different parts of drilling machine worth Tk 6.57 lakh and injections valued at Tk 1.59 lakh.

BDR sources said goods worth about Tk 1.67 crore were smuggled into Bangladesh while goods worth Tk 96.4 lakh smuggled out to India during the period.

Training course on leadership ends

COMILLA, May 5: A week-long training course on leadership training concluded at the local office of Proshika on April 27, reports UNB.

Some 40 rural women took part in the training course, organised by Proshika, an NGO, which was sponsored by the Women Affairs Ministry to make the rural women self-reliant.

President of Comilla Press Club Jahisul Haq Dulal attended the inaugural function as chief guest on April 21 which was presided over by chief of district unit Proshika Khalilur Rahman.



RAJSHAHI: Farmers harvesting paddy in a field in Tanore thanha recently. — Star photo

Washed away sluice gate needs replacement in Gaibandha
Untimely flood causes heavy loss of property each year

From K M Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, May 5: People of Gaibandha district have been facing devastating floods, since last one decade. Every year the flood water causes maximum damages to the life and properties.

Consecutive floods caused havoc in the district since 1986. Last year in Gaibandha pourashava alone the loss due to flood was estimated at Tk 90 crore. Experiencing bitter result of flood, Gaibandha people plunged into anxiety before the advent of every rainy season that causes much suffering to the people in general as well as cattleheads and poultry birds.

Last year, Gaibandha town dwellers recorded level of flood water in their houses nine inches higher than that of the level of previous year which is gradually increasing. Besides, flood water occasionally hits different location of the district and causes loss of life and properties. Last year sudden onrush of water from upper catchment flooded Palashbari, Gaibandha sadar and Gobindganj thanas cutting off national highway at different points within the period of only 24 hours. Surging flood water damaged two highway bridges and eroded away 500 feet areas on both the sides of the highway. During the period road communication with the northern region and capital city remained suspended for as long as a fortnight. Army was deployed to restore road communication partially using motor boats and other equipment.

The main tragedy of Gaibandha people is that once the flood water enters into the town it gets trapped and take maximum time to recede after a small pace.

The river Ghagot is flowing across the pourashava of Gaibandha which joins river Brahmaputra at Raxsoplup where a sluice gate was built during Pakistan regime to control overflowing water of river Brahmaputra as well as to flush out the excess water of river Ghagot. As such flood water never got stagnant earlier around the localities. But in July 23, 1993 flood water and widespread erosion of river Brahmaputra washed away the sluice gate as well as its surrounding areas in larger portion. Since then with the raising of water level in Brahmaputra basin the river Ghagot automatically fed back by onrush of water and entered the town overflowing its banks.

Last year Gaibandha town and Gobindganj thana headquarters went into 4 to 6 feet deep water which was the highest level recorded during the last 50 years. Every year flood hits the areas thrice or more.

According to official sources last year flood destroyed 53 kilometres of roads and embankments, 3,161 kilometres bridge culverts wall and drainage, 220 government and non-government institutes, 1,225 godowns and shops, 15 kilometres of highway and 8,000 dwelling houses.

Unplanned construction of embankments and roads also contribute to one of the main reasons of welcoming flood water in town and surrounding areas. Innumerable roads and embankments are being constructed without any proper planning or ascertaining future reactions, it is alleged. These projects prepared under food for works programme are being implemented to consume the allocated food within the stipulated time. It was also alleged. So the authority involved in these programmes never consider the prospective

results as such they implemented work almost haphazardly.

The unplanned construction of roads and embankments created adverse reaction. The rain water gets trapped at different points and inundate crops on vast tract. Moreover, onrush of flood water worsening the situation as those roads and embankments do not possess any outlet arrangement.

On the other hand, erosion of river Ghagot continued to threaten Gaibandha pourashava areas. During the last few years many dwelling houses and structures have already been devoured by the surging water during rainy seasons. Gaibandha-Sunderganj road was threatened by the erosion at Kholahati that might be snapped in the present rainy season. It is feared. About 15 unions under Gaibandha sadar and Sunderganj Thana will be cut off from Gaibandha headquarters if precautionary measures are not taken.

Local Water Development Board (WDB) could not work under Gaibandha town protection scheme for acute fund constraint. Demanding checking of widespread erosion of river Ghagot occasional movements like procession, gherao and meetings by the members of public are going on but the higher authority reportedly do not pay heed to the matter. According to WDB source, in 1993-94 authority allocated a fund of Tk 1,000 lakh 98 thousand for the emergency work under Gaibandha town protection scheme which was completely inadequate to the requirement. However, WDB constructed nine bamboo pilings at different points to divert the water flow that could not produce any fruitful result.

A total of 12 government officials are participating in the course, inaugurated by BPATC Rector AZM Shamsul Alam.

Deputy director Syed Nakib Muslim and Senior Research Officer AKM Mahbubuzzaman is conducting the course as director and coordinator respectively.

Another report says: The employees of BPATC celebrated Eid reunion here on Saturday.

Syed Nakib Muslim, AKM Mahbubuzzaman, Golam Mustakim, Rafiqul Islam Bhuiyan, Mahbub Talukder, Nilufar Begum and Rector AZM Shamsul Alam attended the function.



JHENIDAH: (From right) Mijanur Rahman, deputy commissioner, Abdul Haque, outgoing deputy commissioner, Jhenidah and Nalinee Ranjan Basak, TNO, Sylhet, speaking at the farewell reception to the outgoing deputy commissioner on April 23. — Star photo

RAJSHAHI, May 5: Despite some trouble a notable amount of IRRI-Boro paddy will be produced this year in the Barendra region. Frequent loadshedding and low voltage of electricity has already affected output target of the grains.

According to official sources, 3.75 lakh acres of land have been brought under IRRI-Boro paddy cultivation during the current season in the command area of Barendra Bahumukhi Unnayan Kartiakhy (Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority — BMDA) comprising of 25 thanas of Rajshahi, Champaibang and Naogaon districts.

An estimated amount of 4.65 lakh metric tons of paddy will be produced from the total area, it is expected.

He, however, admitted that BMDA could not provide necessary amount of fertilisers as the BCIC could not supply its demand. For that reason, somewhere farmers were either to make late use of the second dose of fertilisers in their paddy fields by two to four days or face troubles to collect fertilisers from other sources like buying from open market at a relatively higher price.

Another measure taken by BMDA was introduction of card

tillers in its own and rented godowns in different places of the command area.

Mohammad Asaduzzaman, Executive Director of BMDA said, "we kept a considerable amount of fertilisers ready in hands to meet any probable crisis like that of the last year. We have sold these to the farmers at retail price."

He said that their attempts had saved the crop when a temporary crisis of fertilisers had been allegedly created for about a week due to non-cooperation movement of the main opposition parties. During that time, selling of fertilisers at retail price by the BMDA also helped to keep the private market price within limit," he said.

Despite it, farmers and BMDA sources acknowledged that, loadshedding and low voltage of electricity had hindered irrigation causing some damage to crops. Otherwise, a bumper production of Boro paddy could be achieved this year in the Barendra region.

During the same period eight motor engines and 18 starters of deep tubewells, three transformers and three electric meters have been fused for fluctuation of voltage.

Hayat Mohammad Firoj, Assistant Engineer of BMDA, Porsha thana office said that they cultivated 9,173 acres of land under 176 deep tubewells of BMDA and about 3500 acres under private-owned six deep tubewells and 304 shallow tubewells. BMDA has sold 16,250 kg of fertilisers during the season in this thana.

Whereas in Mohadevpur thana, 23,925 acres of land have been brought under Boro cultivation under 440 deep tubewells of BMDA but here 567.75 metric tons of fertilisers have been sold.

Meanwhile, ripening of IRRI-Boro paddy has started in Barendra region. Production per unit area of land already recorded has proved satisfactory.

Abul Hossain, a farmer from Dhantrior village of Tanore thana said that he cut ripe paddy of one and a half bigha.

The harvest exceeded previous recorded by 31 maunds.

Salek Ahmed of Neetpur under Porsha thana said that he has harvested 18.22 maunds of paddy per bigha in his three plots. The rate of production is very satisfactory. BMDA sources said.

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