

National

Prospect of IRRRI-Boro cultivation bleak as chronic loadshedding persists

From M A Ali Himu

NATORE, Feb 1: Uncertainty is looming over the prospects of IRRRI-Boro crop cultivation programme in Natore district and some neighbouring areas as severe power crisis has been prevailing over the region.



NATORE: Farmers planting IRRRI-Boro saplings at a field in Nenguin village at Shingra thana in the district. — Star photo

According to some local agriculture experts, the cultivation of IRRRI-Boro crops may be hampered this year in six thanas of Natore district and 4 other neighbouring thanas of Rajshahi district as shortage of power supply has rendered a large number of existing deep, shallow and other water pumps inoperative affecting irrigation.

IRRI-Boro is said to be very good. Many growers, due to want of water, can not even sow IRRRI-Boro saplings after collecting these from seed-beds as erratic supply of electricity and hours of load-shedding have rendered most of their power driven irrigation machines inoperative.

on electric supply. During the last fortnight, the electricity supply in the irrigation areas has been very irregular. In some areas, the power supply remained suspended for days together.

Generally, heavy rainfall during IRRRI-Boro cultivation meet up the demand of water, the experts said, adding, in case of less rainfall, the growers provide necessary water to their land through irrigation.

The other affected thanas are: Lalpur and Bagatpara of Natore district and Puthia, Bagmara, Charchat and Bagha thanas of Rajshahi district.

While talking to The Daily Star, Md. Abdul Matin, General Manager of NPBS-1 told that a total of seven megawatt electricity is required for their 33,405 consumers in Sadar, Shingra and Bagatpara thanas of Natore district and in Puthia and Bagmara thanas of Rajshahi districts every day while approximately five megawatt electricity supply is needed for their 2,187 irrigation consumers in the thanas daily.

According to growers, most of their power-driven water pump-machines have become inoperative. They can not run the machines smoothly, because of erratic power supply, they added.

There are several other deep tubewells which are operated under the care of BADC and PDB and other government organisations. All these deep and shallow tubewells and low lift pumps depend on electricity.

Instead, the GM added, only one or 1.50 megawatt of electricity is being supplied by Power Development Board (PDB) at present.

Such picture is very disappointing for a region like Natore in the northern region where, like every year, IRRRI-Boro is produced in surplus quantity, an agri-expert said.

Since the days of establishment of the two PBS in Natore during early '80s the deep and shallow tubewells and low lift pumps have been running with electricity for irrigation purposes.

As a result, GM of NPBS-1 said, they are forced to shed load for four hours including three hours during peak-load hour in a day.

Ensuring the local demand, a major quantity of the produced IRRRI-Boro paddy in the district was taken to other food deficit areas of the country where food shortage prevails.

But, this year, the IRRRI-Boro cultivation are being hampered greatly for want of water.

Shahidul Islam, a farmer of Hulhulia areas of Shingra thana told this correspondent that he wanted to cultivate IRRRI-Boro crops on his 55 'bighas' of land. But, the worriedly looking, over 50 years old farmer Shahidul said, they have to suffer 8 to 9 hours of load-shedding causing endless hardships in irrigation. When visiting Patkoi, Nenguin, Charmaita, Chokhoripur and Balupara villages of Shingra thana on Tuesday (January 28), this correspondent met two young men namely Bazar

Official sources said, about 80 per cent of the total supply of power is being cut at present. Samedays in last fortnight, power consumers of the district consumed only 6 per cent of the total daily demand.

A field officer of Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Natore told this correspondent that although some other shallow tubewells and low lift pumps (LLPs) are operated using diesel, most of the deep and shallow tubewells and LLPs of the district depend completely on electricity.

Both the officials of the two PBS also informed this correspondent that other samitees have witnessed only 0.5 megawatt of electricity supply from PDB in some days during last fortnight.

But instead, the GM of NPBS-2 said, only two megawatt of electricity is being supplied by PDB at present.

When contacted, the Residential Engineer of PDB, Natore, Md Hannan told The Daily Star that total 14 megawatt of power supply is needed for consumption in the district daily including 3.50 megawatt of power demand for the town dwellers, but instead only 2 or 3 megawatt is being supplied at

present. Talking to The Daily Star, Md Sohrab Ali, Deputy Director of AED, Natore said that there are about 2000 deep tubewells and more than 10,500 shallow tubewells in six thanas of the district and one-third of the tubewells are driven by electricity.

NATORE: Some fields under IRRRI-Boro cultivation programme situated at Patkoi village in Shingra thana of the district lying fallow for want of water. — Star photo

According to the Deputy Director of AED, Natore, if the power supply continues to remain disrupted, there will be a crop failure.

The farmers of the district fear that if the power supply condition could not be improved immediately, thousands of acres of land would remain fallow during this season of IRRRI-Boro cultivation.

NATORE: Farmers irrigating their fields in a traditional way. — Star photo

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Govt work order awarded without holding 'lottery'

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Feb 1: The illegal intervention by a section of armed gangsters engaged under cover of an influential political party, the authorities of different development agencies of the government, were allegedly being unable to freely call for tenders and hold 'lotteries' as per instructions issued by the higher authorities.

On January 26 again, when the tender box was going to be opened in the Pabna office of the LGED, a few youngsters forcibly entered into the office of the Executive Engineer and snatched away all the tender documents.

An official of government department in Pabna told on condition of anonymity, the officers of the concerned departments were helplessly distributing 'work order' to the contractor according to the dictation of the said armed gangsters and mastaans.

When asked by this correspondent, an official of the PBD, told The Daily Star that on a previous occasion, holding of lottery was attempted but a member of armed gangsters foiled the attempt by creating terror through hurling bombs around the office of the WDB at Bera. The programme of holding lottery was suspended on that day. Ultimately on a subsequent day, the works were distributed among certain contractor of a particular group without holding lottery with a view to avoid the trouble and get the work done. He, however, admitted that things were not 'properly done' but for them, it was unavoidable due to the intervention of the mastaans under the alleged cover of a powerful political group.

The source told that ultimately the development work would suffer and work as per specification would also not be done, it is being widely apprehended.

The tenders were invited against works of 22 groups under the ADP and accordingly the tenders were invited.

Meanwhile, 23 contractor of Water Development Board, Pabna, in a recent written allegation informed that in collusion with a particular group of contractor, the Executive Engineer, Water Development Board, Bera, distributed work under different schemes with financial allotment of Tk 3

Similar incident also occurred about three weeks back in the office of the Project Director, Water Development Board, Pabna and ultimately, without holding any 'lottery' as was to be done according to the rules and also to the notification, all the works were distributed against a few contractors of the choice of an armed group of young men, all belonging to a powerful political party, alleged a frustrated contractor of the WDB in Pabna.

7,000 applied for 70 posts!

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Feb 1: As many as 7,000 applications have been received by the District Primary Education Office, Pabna, for appointment as assistant teachers to the vacant posts of 70 only.

Hour-long battle with police leaves 3 pirates dead

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 1: Three pirates were killed and three others caught in an hour-long fierce gunfight between the police and the pirates at Harbaria of Chandpal range under Mongla police station on Wednesday morning. Police seized seven firearms from the pirates during the gunfight.

In an hour-long gunbattle police seized two pipeguns, fire home-made guns and eleven rounds of live gun cartridges. The arrested pirates are Nannu, 22, Habibur Rahman, 24, and Ibrahim, 24. Police said Habib is an absconder of a murder case.

This was gathered from the office of Pabna District Primary Education Officer. The source said that a notification inviting applications for appointment to those posts was issued by the Director General, Primary Education, through the national dailies recently. The district office so far received 7,164 application from intending candidates. Out of 7,164 candidates, 5,099 were female candidates and the remaining 2,065 were male candidates, it was further learnt.

Police rescued four *bawalis* found tied up. The rescued *bawalis* are Badsha, Nagen Talukdar, Moslem and Haroon. They are among one hundred *bawalis* held hostage by the pirates for ransom at the rate of Taka 5,000 per head.

Besides, the sources added, in some areas, officials can not take the reading of power consumption in fear of agitated farmers.

Police also counter attacked.

The officials also said that most of their subscribers are not paying off the bills on the plea of erratic power supply and frequent load-shedding.

According to AED sources, the department has taken a programme to bring 50,500 hectares of land under IRRRI-Boro cultivation in the district during this season. Production target of IRRRI-Boro at 1,59,125 metric tons of paddy.

সোনালী ব্যাংক জড়দ্বা ও মনিহারী বিভাগ প্রধান কার্যালয় ঢাকা।

কাঠের ও ষ্টীলের আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা খ্যাতিসম্পন্ন গুটু কাঠের ও ষ্টীলের আসবাবপত্র গুটুকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে অত্র ব্যাংক ১৯৯৭ইং সনে যাকতীয় কাঠের ও ষ্টীলের আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে। ব্যাংক অনুমোদিত ফরমে, যা অত্র বিভাগ হইতে সংগ্রহ করিতে হইবে, কাঠের ও ষ্টীলের জন্য আলাদা আলাদাভাবে আবেদন করিতে হইবে এবং আবেদনপত্রের সহিত সোনালী ব্যাংক প্রধান কার্যালয়ের অনুকূলে সোনালী ব্যাংকের যে কোন শাখা হইতে ক্রীত পুষ্ক প্রদান করা হইবে।

Metropolitan

Speaker calls for developing English language skills

Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury yesterday laid particular emphasis on learning and developing English language skills in view of the ever-increasing importance of the language in the present day world, reports BSS.

The importance of English cannot be denied — it is essential in all fields like promotion of scientific and technological skills on one hand and efficient conduct of international affairs and diplomacy on the other," he said while distributing certificates among participants of an English language course, organised by the Commonwealth English Language Institute.

Presided over by KMN Manjurul Haque, President of the Commonwealth Student and Youth Organisation (CSYO), the function was also addressed by Indian High Commissioner Deb Mukherjee and Sri Lankan High Commissioner S B Atugoda.

Eid Ananda Bazar

A six-day 'Eid Ananda Bazar' organised by Bangladesh Folk and Craft Arts Development Association, began at the Institute of Diploma Engineers premises at Kakrail in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

State Minister for Youth and Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader opened the fair as chief guest. There are some 40 stalls, displaying garments and handicraft at the Ananda Bazar.

Special trains for Eid-ul-Fitr

Bangladesh Railway will run special trains on February 6, 7 and 8 to facilitate journey of home bound Eid passengers, reports BSS.

On February 6, 7 and 8, one pair Eid special trains will run between Chittagong-Chandpur-Chittagong.

On February 6 and 7 Chandpur bound special train will leave from Chittagong at 3-40 pm while on February 8 one special for Chandpur will leave from Chittagong at 8-30 am.

The Chittagong bound special from Chandpur will start at 10-10 pm from Chandpur on February 7 and 8. On February 8 another special for Chittagong will start at 3 pm from Chandpur.

One pair of additional inter-city trains between Dhaka and Noakhali will run on February 7 and 8. This special inter-city will leave Dhaka at 9-00 am and Noakhali at 3-30 pm respectively.

Off days of all inter-city trains will be withdrawn from February 2 to 9 and February 12 to 19.

No inter-city train will run on Eid day. On the day following the Eid day a number of inter-city, mail and local trains will not run.

Besides special trains, all mail, express and local trains will be strengthened with additional coaches to avoid home bound rush.

Photo exhibition

A photo exhibition on police atrocity at Jaganmatt Hall was held at the IGC, Dhaka University yesterday, reports UNB.

HERE and THERE

DMP Dhaka Metropolitan Police hosted an iftar party yesterday on the occasion of its 22nd founding anniversary.

Among others, Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam, MPs Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, HBM Iqbal and Saber Hossain Chowdhury, VC Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, IG (Police) M Azizul Haq, Acting IG (Prisons) Liaquat Ali Khan and DMP Commissioner AK Al Mamun were present.

IUBAT An agreement of formal affiliation has been recently signed between International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) and University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Birmingham, Alabama USA. This agreement of formal affiliation

is for the purpose of carrying out programmes of faculty exchange, student exchange, joint research and any other programmes which may be deemed to be mutually beneficial.

ITI State Minister for Youth and Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader yesterday said that the present government was committed to breaking all shackles for the uplift of the women folk in the society under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a concluding session of a three day international seminar on 'Women in Theatre,' held at Hotel Purbani 'in the city.

Bangladesh Centre of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) organised the seminar, while UNESCO and Royal Norwegian Embassy sponsored it.

Weather

Mild cold wave likely A mild or moderate cold wave is likely to sweep across the country within sixty hours commencing 6 pm yesterday, reports UNB.

Met office forecast rain or thundershower at one or two places over Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today. Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country. Night temperature is likely to fall by 1-2 degree Celsius during the period throughout the country.

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In its outlook for subsequent two days weathermen predicted fall in night temperature while forecast little change in the following five days.

Meantime, Barisal experienced the highest 18 mm rain in the last 24 hours till 6 am yesterday. Khulna had 12 mm shower while Jessore 6 mm during the period.

Country's lowest temperature 9.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur and the highest 26.2 degrees at Khulna.

The sun sets today 5:46 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:39 am.

Body for reviewing losing textile, jute mills meets for 2nd time

The high-level committee for reviewing losing textile and jute industries in its second meeting yesterday discussed various aspects of the non-profitable mills and factories, reports UNB.

Chaired by Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, the meeting, after an elaborate review, decided to hold next meeting on February 15, says a handout.

State Minister for Labour and Manpower Abdul Mannan, State Minister for Jute and Textiles A K Faezul Huq, parliament members A B M A Kashem, Habibur Rahman Molah, Ahsan Ullah Master, Shahjahan Khan, Shamsul Huq and Monnujan Sufian participated in the discussion.

President of the Jatiya Sramik League Abdus Salam, Convener of Patkal Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad Abul Bashar, President of Bangladesh Patkal Sramik League and Adamjee Patkal Sramik Karmachari Union Rehan Uddin Rehman also spoke.

Fire at mills near Kaanchpur bridge

A fire engulfed the blow room of a cotton spinning mill beside the Kaanchpur bridge in Demra Friday Fire Brigade sources said, reports UNB.

The fire originated from electric short circuit at the Reliance Spinning Mills at about 3 pm. Fire fighters brought the blaze under control after 45 minutes.

নং ১৬/৩৯/৯৭ এ, বি, এম, মাহবুবুল হক ডি-১৪৪ উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক।

Bangladesh Bank Administration & Expenditure Department Head Office, Dhaka

Re-Tender for Purchase of Personal Computers

Bangladesh Bank invites tenders, technical and financial separately, from dealers and agents of computer companies for supply of one Server, one back up Server, UPS, Software etc.

2. Details of the tender can be had from the tender schedule. The tender schedule may be purchased at a cost of Tk 250/- (non-refundable) from the General Manager, Administration and Expenditure Department, Building Payment Division, 7th Floor of the 2nd Annexe Building of Bangladesh Bank's Head Office at Motijheel during banking hours, but up to 12 Noon on 19th February '97 at the latest. The tenders complete in all respects will be received up to 12 Noon on 25th February '97 and will be opened at 12-15 PM on the same day in presence of bidders, if available.

3. The tenderers will be required to deposit earnest money of Tk 50,000/- in the form of Pay Order/BD/SDR along with their offers. The successful tenderers will furnish performance bond equivalent to 5% of the quoted amount. Bangladesh Bank will retain 10% of the billed amount as deposit for one year as a security for satisfactory performance of the equipments.

PR & PB 48/97-140 dt-30/1/97 M Mohsenur Rahman General Manager