

National

No proper system to extract white clay in Netrakona

From Jahangir Alam

NETRAKONA, Dec 10: The largest white clay mine of Bangladesh is situated at the bordering upazila of Durgapur.

The mine is situated at Bijoypur, 6-km away from Durgapur sadar.

The mine is situated at the foot of the Garo hills. There are many hillocks where white clay is found in abundance. But the invaluable natural wealth of Bangladesh is being wasted.

There is no proper system of extracting white clay. Companies are extracting it by digging deep spots. As a result the hillocks of white clay are threatened. Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) do not look into the matter.

On the other hand massive pilferage of white clay by dishonest government employees is being reported widely.

Not only that after its lifting it is kept in haphazard manner. But BCIC is indifferent regarding the matter.

In dry season, white clay is being extracted and piled up while in the rainy season it is sent to different places. But much of it washed away due to rains.

At present 10 to 12 private companies are extracting white clay from

this mine in an improper manner. There is none to supervise the extracting work. Even there is no office of BCIC in Durgapur. Only a guard of BCIC stays here.

The mine was discovered in the year 1953. It is 26 kms long and several hundred metres broad.

Four lakh 65 thousands metric tons of white clay have been accumulated here.

At first Kohinoor Aluminium Works started extracting white clay.

In 1973 the mine was handed over to Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

Another sad tale for Netrakona is that no ceramic industry has been established here as yet though the largest white clay mine of the country is situated here. White clay of Netrakona is being sent to different ceramic industries of the country.

Local elites have urged the government to look into the matter and take necessary steps.

Moreover, pilferage and other irregularities should also be stopped in the greater interest of the country.

White clay is usually extracted by digging the foot of small hills in an improper manner. As a result, the hillocks are threatened like the picture at left. Photo at right shows piled up clay under the open sky, large quantity of which is washed away during the rainy season. But there seems to be none to preserve the valuable national wealth from massive wastage.

—Star photo



Bumper production of Aman likely in 16 districts

KURIGRAM, Dec 10: The farmers of 16 northern districts have started harvesting transplanted Aman crop in full-swing, reports BSS.

Production of the crop is excellent this year, which predicts a bumper yield of the main crop of the region. Festivals of newly harvested crop are on at the houses of affluent farmers everywhere. The farmers seemed to be very happy with the bumper production, but are also worried about the price. The farmers requested the government to procure more Aman paddy and rice during this season to provide them with fair prices.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources in the region, the production of transplanted Aman crop will be excellent during this season though there were insufficient rainfalls before blooming of

the plants. Incidents of pest attack were below the normal limit and the farmers successfully irrigated their fields of transplanted Aman crop when necessary. As a result, the production has become almost bumper everywhere in 16 northern districts.

Sources in the DAE informed that a target of producing 19,99,432 tons of T-Aman rice from 10,08,400 hectares in eight districts of Rangpur Agriculture Zone was fixed this year. But the farmers of these eight districts have brought a total of 10,29,900 hectares under T-Aman cultivation this year which is higher by 21,500 hectares than the target, which will produce about half of a lakh tons of rice more in the area. On the other hand, the farmers of eight districts of Rajshahi Agriculture Zone cultivated T-Aman crop on more than 6,40,000 hectares against the target of 6,03,000 hectares to produce

12,29,400 tons of rice this year. The fields of whole northern region have now turned yellow in colour as the ripe Aman paddy plants are lying on the soil and harvesting is progressing.

Agro experts of the region told that the cultivation of Aman crop was not hampered by low rainfall this year as the farmers provided water where necessary through irrigation. The harvesting is expected to be completed by the current month, they said.

A number of farmers of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Nilphamari and Gaibandha districts requested the government to procure more T-Aman paddy and rice through easing the procurement process. "We want to sell paddy or rice directly to the government purchasing centres to get fair prices," they commented.

1,580 homeless families in Rangpur rehabilitated

RANGPUR, Dec 10: A total of 158 barrack-like houses have been constructed in two upazilas under 10 Asrayan projects, providing shelter to some 1,580 homeless families, reports BSS.

Of the homeless families, 130 were given shelter in 13 barracks under Chotorupai extension, 250 in 25 barracks under Bagdohara and Chilakhal projects, 240 in 24 barracks under Bagdohara extension, Chilakhal and Easli Asrayan projects in Gangachar upazila.

Besides, 70 families were given shelter in seven barracks under Lalchandpur Asrayan Project and 40 families in four barracks under Kadirabad Asrayan Project in Pirganj upazila.

According to officials, the families were also given Tk 82 lakh so that they could start life anew by undertaking small but income-generating programmes.

Of the total, Tk 13 lakh was distributed among the families under Chotorupai Asrayan Project, Tk 12 lakh under Chotorupai extension, Tk 25 lakh under Bagdohara and Chilakhal projects and Tk 7 lakh under Lalchandpur Asrayan Project.

Besides, community centres have been set up in the 10 Asrayan projects each at a cost of Tk 25 lakh while Tk 7 lakh spent

on their training and Tk 5 lakh on afforestation.

Apart from the 10 projects, works on two new Asrayan projects are progressing at Morneya and Char Eshore Kul in Gangachar upazila.

The earthworks on 32 barrack houses, spending 500 MTs of wheat, are in progress. Some 32 landless families will be rehabilitated under the two new projects.

Besides, district administration has planned to implement nine more Asrayan projects for 680 landless families in four upazilas.

Work on these new projects are likely to start soon, depending on the approval of the department concerned.

BSS from Satkhira reports:

The construction of Kalabari Asrayan Project was inaugurated at a function held at Burigoloini village under Shymnagar Upazila.

Recently.

The project is being constructed on 5 acres of land. A total of 100 tons of wheat has been sanctioned for the project.

Deputy Commissioner, Satkhira, Abdul Matin Chowdhury inaugurated the construction of Kalabari Asrayan Project.

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