

Three CHT districts losing soil fertility very fast

Excessive use of chemical fertiliser blamed

UNB, Rangamati

The three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts are rapidly losing fertility of the soil due to excessive use of chemical fertiliser instead of compost one by the cultivators.

Not only that the soil in the hill districts is also facing shortage of sulphur and zinc, two important ingredients, and thus depriving the farmers of having a good harvest.

Fertility of the soil on hundreds of acres of arable land in 25 upazilas of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts has decreased alarmingly due to lack of necessary sulphur and zinc, experts said.

As a result, production of various crops, including jute, paddy, wheat and potato has been reduced awfully this year compared to the previous years.

The ignorant farmers of these districts gradually become uninterested to use compost fertiliser on their lands as they get supply of chemical fertilisers easily.

Now there is virtually no use of compost fertiliser, as almost all the farmers of the hill districts are totally ignorant of usefulness of this natural

In addition, acreage arable land is being reduced day by day due to rapid population growth forcing the farmers to grow crops on same land again and again.

On the other hand, most of the poor farmers of these districts are now not in a position to apply fertiliser on their lands due to financial hardships.

Department of Agriculture Extension sources said the ratio of sulphur and zinc in the soil has remarkably decreased due to excessive use of various chemical fertilisers and cultivating the same crops on same lands every season.

Besides, the lands on which high yielding variety of paddy is being cultivated under irrigation network of deep and shallow tubewells are also facing shortage of zinc.

Fertility of the soil as well as production has also declined due to ignorance of the farmers about sulphur and zinc and lack of systems to test the soil.

The agriculture experts have underscored the need for cultivating jute-like fibrous plants in the region in large scale to overcome the shortage of sulphur and zinc in arablelands.

353 murders in 10 S-W dists last year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

At least 353 murders were committed in 10 south-western districts last year. Of them, highest 58 murders were committed in Jessore district.

According to district-wise break-up, 50 people were murdered in Jhenidah, 20 in Magura, 24 in Narail, 39 in Khulna, 42 in Bagerhat, 26 in Satkhira, 47 in Kushtia, 35 in Chuadanga and 12 in Meherpur during the period.

The figure is quite 'shocking' as two combing operations were launched in the region in the year in a bid to contain violence, local people said.

In 1999, a total of 525 murders were committed in the region while 550 people were murdered in 1998.

Besides, 745 incidents of repression on women were recorded in the region during the period.

According to district-wise break-up, 147 cases were recorded in Kushtia, 115 in Bagerhat, 98 in Magura, 28 in Khulna, 70 in Satkhira, 63 in Jhenidah, 48 in Narail, 65 in Jessore, 40 in Chuadanga and 71 in Meherpur.

Moreover, a total of 52 incidents of robbery and 85 incidents of mugging were reported in the region during the period, besides 300 cases of arms, 43 cases of explosives and 469 cases of smuggling.

Mustard cultivation programme on 5.10 lakh hectares of land

64 dists divided into 9 zones

UNB, Kishoreganj

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has taken up a countrywide programme to cultivate mustard on 5.10 lakh hectares land with an output target of 4.59 lakh mts in the current Rabi season.

Under the programme, 64 districts of the country have been

divided into nine agricultural zones. These are Dhaka, Mymensingh, Comilla, Chittagong, Rangamati, Barisal, Rajshahi, Jessore and Rangpur, officials said here.

DAE has taken up some necessary measures to supply seeds, fertilisers and other agri-inputs at fair prices to the growers for suc-

cessful implementation of the programme.

Officials said farmers are expecting bumper production of the mustard seeds this year due to favourable weather condition.

Zone-wise breakup of mustard cultivation and production is: 90,000 hectares will be cultivated for producing 81,000 mts of mustard in Dhaka, 34,500 hectares for producing 31,050 mts in Mymensingh, 65,500 hectares for producing 58,950 mts in Comilla, 16,500 hectares for producing 14,850 mts in Chittagong Zone.

Besides, 8,100 hectares of land will be cultivated for producing 7,290 mts of mustard in Rangamati, 78,500 hectares for producing 70,650 mts in Barisal, 96,100 hectares for producing 86,490 mts in Rajshahi, 68,300 hectares for producing 61,470 mts in Jessore and 52,500 hectares for producing 47,250 mts in Rangpur Zone.

Another report from Netrakona adds: AED has brought 1,895 hectares of land under mustard cultivation in nine upazilas of the district with an output target of 1,640 tons in the current season.

According to officials, of the total, 265 hectares will be brought under the cultivation in Sadar, 240 hectares in Barhatta, 165 hectares in Mohanganj, 230 hectares in Madan, 315 hectares in Kendua, 225 hectares in Kalmakanda, 165 hectares in Durgapur and 145 hectares each in Atpara and Khaliajury upazilas.

DAE sources said Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADCO) has supplied seeds at fair prices among the farmers to make the programme a success.

Besides, Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) distributed necessary loans among the farmers through its 20 branches.

Piracy in Bay on rise

UNB, Bagerhat

Piracy in the Bay of Bengal and coastal areas of the country are on alarming rise.

Armed pirates abducted nine fishermen and four trawlers demanding Tk 14 lakh as ransom in last three days.

Meantime, the pirates also swooped on 10 other trawlers and looted valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh from the fishermen.

The pirates have formed a number of syndicates for looting fishing nets, fish and trawlers and for kidnapping fishermen to collect ransom.

Fishermen from the neighboring countries also enter into the coastal area of our country and

catch fish illegally. They also reportedly sell arms to the pirates.

On Tuesday, a gang of pirates numbering 50 looted valuables worth Tk 6 lakh from eight trawlers in the River Meghna near Patharghata and Mohishpura areas and abducted three fishermen Panna, 29, Dalim, 28, and Barkat, 31 with a trawler demanding ransom.

Some 25 pirates in separate raids swooped on three trawlers and looted valuables worth about Tk 5 lakh at Mandarbaria on Thursday.

Besides, they also abducted Kabir, 29, Hira, 26, Badal, 34, Yakub, 29, Jalil, 25, and Aiyub, 44, along with three trawlers and demand Tk 8 lakh as ransom on the same day. The local fishermen said the pirates looted over a hundred trawlers in last three months.

Dearth of teachers in Jamalpur school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Shortage of teachers is seriously hampering the academic activities in Nandina Model Academy under Sadar upazila in Jamalpur.

Established in 1984 at the initiative of local people, the school has also been facing acute accommodation problem.

Guardians said their wards are not getting proper education due to dearth of teachers, especially English teachers.

Besides, furniture and other educational tools are too inadequate in the school, which enjoys the government's monthly payment order (MPO) facility.

The condition of the school building is deplorable. There is no boundary wall of the school, which has nearly 500 students.

As there is no hostel of the school, the students from remote areas have been facing accommodation problem.

The playground of the school is in bad shape. After slight rain the playground goes under ankle-deep water, causing sufferings to students and teachers, who are bound to reach the school building crossing the ground.

Meanwhile, the school has also been facing some administrative problem these days after its chief patron and president of Management Council Major General (Rtd) M Khalilur Rahman quit. Now rift in the governing body has been widened, slowing down the development activities of the school, local people said.

NEWS SNAPS

AL leader killed

UNB, NARSINGDI

A local leader of Awami League was killed and 10 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups in Raipura upazila on Monday. Police said Shab Mia, 30, secretary of Sreenagar UP Awami League, died in the clash between Quddus group of Maydonagar and Nurul Islam group of Kalipur at about 8 am.

The rivals used countrymade weapons, sticks and iron rods during the two-hour clash that ended with police intervention. The injured were admitted to Raipura Health Complex. Three of them, Ibrahim, Idris Ali and Anesa, were shifted to sadar hospital in critical conditions. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Raipura thana in this connection.

Separate incidents kill 3

UNB, RANGPUR

Three people were killed in separate incidents in the district on Monday. Police and witnesses said Abdur Rashid, 50, a cloth merchant was run over by the inter-city Teesta express train while he was crossing the rail line at Badarganj rail station in Badarganj upazila.

Bicycle rider Fazal, 30, died on the spot when a speeding motor cycle knocked him down at Hakimpur in Mithapukur upazila on Rangpur-Bogra highway. In yet another incident, housewife Shamsunnahar Syma, 20, was beaten to death allegedly by her husband Raton for dowry at village Bhandbari in Pirganj upazila. Police arrested Raton. Separate cases were filed.

Widow killed over land dispute

UNB, JHALAKATI

A land dispute at a village in sadar upazila ended in the murder of a widow on Sunday. Jhalakati police said a gang of 8-10 miscreants attacked a house at Baukati village at dead of night and harassed its female inmates. They slaughtered Anita Rani Sarker, 50, after tying up the male members with ropes.

The assailants whisked away firing shots when the villagers rushed to the house. Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy. Manik Sarker, son of Anita, filed a case on Monday. Anita Rani, wife of late Shanti Ranjan Sarker, earlier had registered a case apprehending attack by the criminals. Police suspected that the attackers killed her for grabbing her land. Two assailants kill motorcyclist UNB, Bagerhat Two assailants killed a motorcyclist at Amorbonia village in Morelganj upazila in Bagerhat and fled away with his vehicle on Friday night.

Witnesses said the miscreants hired the motorcyclist of Nasir Mollah, 32, to go to Morelganj from Mongla and on reaching the village they strangled Nasir to death and fled away with the motorcycle. On information, pice rushed to the spot and recovered the body. A case was filed.

Female worker killed

UNB, NARAYANGANJ

A female worker of a cotton mill in Narayanganj was killed here Sunday when her cloth was rolled by the belt of a machine. The dead was identified as Rashida Akther, 32, worker of Rafiq Enterprise at Lakhkanghola in the town.

She met the tragic end of her life while sweeping the machine. A case was filed.

Acid attack on young woman

UNB, BOGRA

A young woman suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly by her ex-husband in a remote village of Bogra district Sunday night. According to a delayed report, Fahima Akhter Bulbuli, daughter of day labourer Hafizur Rahman of Pirapat village in Kahalu upazila was married off with a staff of a tailoring shop, Sakur, of Comilla.



PHOTO: STAR

A procession was brought out in Sirajganj town last week demanding punishment to the killers of Sumi Roy, who was killed recently allegedly by her husband and in-laws. The procession paraded main thoroughfares of the town.

Punishment to killers of Sumi demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A processions was brought here last week demanding arrest of killers of housewife Sumi Roy who was allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws in the town on January 12.

The procession led by Shamim Ferozi, president of JSD backed-Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), paraded main thoroughfares in the

district town.

Later, the agitated people submitted memorandum to the deputy commissioner demanding exemplary to the culprits. They also condemned police for failure to arrest any accused in the case.

The accused including Subir Roy, the husband, went into hiding.

Sumi was tortured to death by her husband and in-laws in Mujib

Sarak area in the town. The accused tried to hush up the murder as suicide by hanging the body of the housewife from ceiling of her bedroom.

Neighbours said Subir, owner of a jewellery shop in the town, has extramarital affairs with other women. They also said Subir married Sumi for the second time after his first wife died two years back.

Jhenidah Diabetic Hospital nearing completion

DELWAR KABIR, Jhenidah

Jhenidah Diabetic Hospital is going to start functioning after its completion work by end-January, according to authoritative sources.

More than 80 per cent construction work of the three-storied building of the hospital has been completed.

The building is being constructed at a cost of Taka 2.03 crore at village Laudia, about 3 kilometre south of Jhenidah district headquarters.

When contacted Principal Tobarak Hossain, Project Director (PD) of Jhenidah Diabetic Hospital informed that medical equipment including an ambulance costing Taka One crore would be supplied for the 25-bed hospital. Diabetic, dental, gynaec, eye and emergency words will be installed to ensure

health care services to the patients, PD said.

Now the number of registered patients the diabetic centre is 3,307.



PHOTO: STAR

The construction work of Jhenidah Diabetic Hospital at village Laudia in Jhenidah district goes on in full swing.