

A window to poverty alleviation

Goat rearing earns hefty profit for the poor in 10 SW districts

AMANUR AMAN, back from Meherpur

Goat farming is changing the life of many ultra poor families in remote villages in ten southwestern districts.

The government's 'national programme for poverty alleviation through goat tending' has created great enthusiasm among the poor in the areas.

Many of the ultra poor this correspondent talked to during a recent survey said they earned good profits in last one and a half years. The programme was launched two years back.

The government distributed Tk 23 crore soft loans among 52,156 poor people in the districts through Livestock Department, Social Welfare Department, BRDB (Bangladesh Rural Development Board), nationalized

banks and NGOs for goat rearing.

The districts include Kushtia, Jhenidah, Meherpur, Chaudanga, Magura, Jessore, Khulna, Narail, Satkhira and Bagerhat.

More Tk 2.6 crore is being distributed this year.

Of the amount, the Livestock Department distributed Tk 2 crore, BRDB and Social Welfare Department Tk 8 crore, public sector banks Tk 6 crore and NGOs Tk 9 crore.

Sources said people who got the loans reared 1,74,872 goats last year.

Fifty-five out of 59 upazilas in this region have been brought under the programme. Terakhada and Kira upazila in Khulna; and Sharankhola and Morelganj upazilas in Bagerhat are not included in the programme.

The goatskin produced in the country is in very good demand abroad

because it is the best in the world, sources said.

It is known as 'Black Bengal' in foreign markets because most of the goats in Bangladesh are black.

Zinarul Islam, a 35-year old young man of Jagarkundi village in Meherpur, said the profit he earned from goat rearing was beyond his imagination some months back.

"I earned Tk 20,000 by selling only 10 goats, which I had bought with Tk 10,000 only eight months back. Zinarul got Tk 15,000 loan from Kushtia Social Welfare Department office.

This year Zinarul is tending 25 goats with a target to earn Tk 50,000.

Union Parishad member Rokeya Khatun is tending 27 goats in Dudhkumra village in Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia.

Last year she tended 11 goats and

earned about Tk 8,000, she said.

About 500 families in the areas are tending goats.

But all of them have a common problem. Scarcity of vaccine is the main problems, they said.

"The government is giving us loan but not supplying vaccine and medicine to treat diseases of our goats", said Salim Ahamed of Dudh-kumra village. He is tending 20 goats.

Goat fodder is another problems because pasturelands are few, he said.

Veterinarians of the Livestock Department never visit our houses, they said. They demand money when we take our sick goats to their office at the upazila haedquarter, many goat farmers alleged.

The government should come forward with more facilities to encourage people in this profitable business, they said.

6 newsmen sued in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Six journalists including editors of three local dailies were sued on Monday for publishing 'defamatory stories' against the complainant.

The journalists are The Daily Juger Barta Editor Abu Naser Md Sayeed and the paper's Shyamnagar correspondent Anisur Rahman, The Daily Patradut Editor Lutfunnesa Begum and the daily's correspondent Abdul Hakim and The Daily Satkhira Chitra Editor Anisur Rahim and its correspondent Pabitra Mondal.

The complainant is Noor Muhamad, son of Liakat Ali of Datnakhali village in Shyamnagar upazila. He filed the case in a magistrate's court for publishing 'defamatory stories' in collaboration with each other in their dailies on July 17 and August 6. "They did so because he did not concede to their demands", according to the complainant.

After a hearing the magistrate passed the order for a judicial inquiry into the matter.

Local journalists protested the incident and demanded immediate withdrawal of the case.

Inu distributes relief among 4,000 flood victims in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) President Hasanul Haque Inu on Monday criticised the government for failure to mitigate the sufferings of flood victims.

He criticised the government while addressing a meeting on the JSD office premises here before a relief distribution programme. He distributed rice, potato, pulse and oral saline among 4,000 flood-affected people.

JSC Inu Joint Secretary Iqbal Hossain Khan, BCL President Shariful Khokon Swapon, JSD Manikganj district unit Joint Secretary Jebesh Chakrabarty, Organising Secretary Aslam Khan Babu, Bangladesh Chhatra League Joint Convenor Mohabubul Alam Babu addressed the meeting.

Extortionists burn house of newsmen at Natore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A journalist's house in Natore was set afire by miscreants for non-payment of toll on Monday.

The criminals tried to kill his family members. But they saved themselves from their wrath by fleeing from the house.

The attack was made on the house of Natore Zilla Press Club president and Dinkal newsmen SM Manjurul Hasan in Sadar thana for his denial to pay extortionists Tk two lakh as per their demand. They poured petrol on the house and burnt a portion of it. Later, local fire fighters extinguished the fire.

A case was filed against five persons. However, none was arrested.

Leaders' tussle troubles townspeople

AL Poura Chairman and BNP MP at loggerheads in Syedpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Normal activities of Syedpur municipality have come to virtual standstill due to a conflict between newly elected municipal chairman Akhtar Hossen Badal of opposition Awami League and local lawmaker Amjad Hossain Sarkar of ruling BNP.

Amjad Hossain is also the immediate past chairman of the municipality.

Sources said the conflict ensued from appointment of 17 new municipal employees made by outgoing chairman Amjad Hossain at the fag end of his tenure allegedly without consulting the chairman-elect.

The municipal election was held on May 6. Akhtar took charge on May 29. The 17 employees were appointed on May 23.

Akhtar says Amjad had no right to appoint employees six days before his takeover without consulting him.

Meanwhile, the 17 employees filed a case alleging that the municipal chairman was not allowing them to sign the

attendance register. The municipal chairman denied the allegation and field a case against them for "creating anarchy and chaos".

The district administration probed the allegation on August 4 but the findings are yet to be made public.

Syedpur, with a population of around 2.5 lakh, is a Class one municipality and is regarded as a stronghold of BNP. Majority of the townspeople are Urdu speaking Beharis.

But in the last pourasabha election, the BNP candidate, who is the younger brother of Amjad Hossain, was defeated by AL candidate Akhtar Badal.

Akhtar says the municipality is in deep financial crisis. Fifty-six regular employees are not getting salary for 42 months and 29 others are yet to get their retirement benefits. The total dues to employees is now over Tk 1.32 crore. The new appointments are not justified in such a financial crisis, he told this correspondent.

Sources said the Local Government Ministry had approved the new 17

appointments on May 20 following a proposal sent by the former chairman on March 3 this year.

To this, Akhtar said the former chairman "misled the ministry" and got the approval by using his influence as a ruling party man.

"I have asked the ministry to reconsider appointment of the new 17 employees as we are in financial crisis", he said.

When contacted, Amjad Hossen Sarkar MP said the 17 appointments were approved by the ministry.

"Everything will be clear when the district administration investigation report is made public".

He also denied an allegation made by the new chairman that seniority was ignored in making the appointments from Master Roll employees. All appointments were done through test, he claimed.

He also denied the allegation by Akhtar that he was obstructing development work by the municipality.

One lakh flood victims still displaced in Bogra, Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least one lakh flood affected people are still staying on roads, embankments and high lands in Bogra and Sirajganj districts.

They have lost everything including dwellings, sources in District Relief and Rehabilitation offices in the two districts said.

About 20,000 of them are homeless as floods and erosion devoured their dwellings. The areas worst affected by erosion are Dhunot upazila in Bogra and Kazipara upazila in Sirajganj.

The current floods affected about 27 lac people in 16 upazilas of Bogra and Sirajganj districts, washed away over 82,000 houses and damaged another 2, 55,000.

Schoolteacher Sumsul Haque of Shemulbari village in Dhanut said that he and his neighbors could not retrieve anything as their houses were washed away by turbulent Jamuna waters in minutes. Another schoolteacher Siraj and Arun Shil and Abdul Latif of Chaniapara village also made similar statements while talking to this correspondent on Saturday.

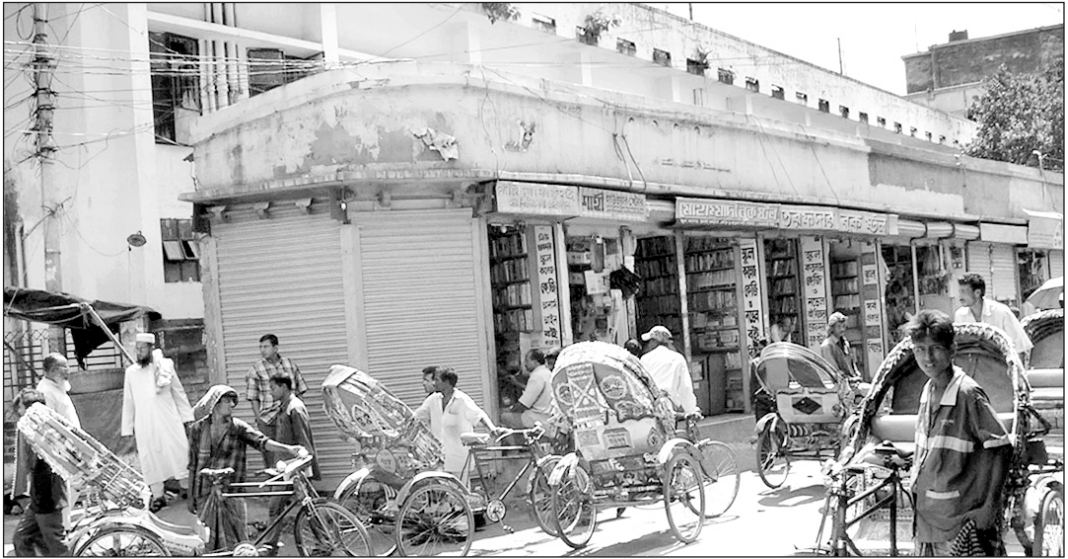
About 2,000 families in Dhanut have no alternative to living under the sky, said a government official in Bogra.

Sirajganj DRRO sources said about 15,000 out of over 4.87 affected in the district lost everything.

Most of them are living on roads, embankments and high lands areas in the district.

The floods completely damages crops on 72,396 hectares in Bogra and Sirajganj, according to agriculture officials.

Meanwhile Mobil Jumuna Lubricants Ltd distributed relief goods among 250 flood in Dhanut.



A partial view of the shopping complex built on the Bogra Sadar Thana complex recently.

Cattle diseases break out in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Cattle diseases have broken out in different areas of the district as an aftermath of the flood, killing at least 1128 so far. Many more have been attacked.

Twenty cattleheads died on Monday and Tuesday, sources at the District Relief and Rehabilitation Office (DRRO) said yesterday.

Cattle diseases like fever, cough, dysentery and diarrhoea have become almost endemic now as all the eight upazilas and three pourasabhas were under three to eight feet water for days during the flood. Cattle suffered the most, they said.

The worst affected areas are Brahmanbaria Sadar, Sarial, Kasba, Akhaura, Nabinagar, Nasirnagar and Bancharampur upazilas. About 600 cattle died in Brahmanbaria Sadar including the pourasabha areas, they said.

Malnutrition due to fodder crisis aggravated the situation.

Farmer Arab Ali at Shahjadpur village told this correspondent during a visit that two of his cattle is sick but no veterinarian visited the villages.

Many farmers this correspondent talked to said a vaccination campaign should launched immediately to check outbreak of cattle diseases in an epidemic form.

When contacted District Livestock Officer Md Nurul Islam however said most of the deaths were due to malnutrition from fodder crisis, not disease.

He said they will soon launch a programme to immunise 3,00,000 cattle and 30,00,000 poultry birds under a post-flood vaccination programme.

60 industries damaged by flood in Savar

ZAHANGIR ALAM back from Savar

Manikganj: Nearly 60 big industrial units in Savar including textile, garment and knitwear have been badly affected by the current floods.

Machinery worth crores of taka in these industries have been damaged due to inundation.

This correspondent visited some of the industries in the last three days and saw the damaged machinery, which will take some more days for renovation and involve huge costs. These include Pakiza Dyeing and Printing Industry Private Ltd, JK Fabrics, HR Textile, Biswas Group, GK Garment, Doel Group, Aboni Knitware and Landmark.

Nital Kumer Das, Chief Maintenance Engineer of Pakiza said the floodwater damaged dyeing machines worth about Tk 1. 25 crore. "We bought Tk 80 lakh spares to renovate the machines", he said. Production at some of the units is stopped since July 22.

He said about 1 lakh 90 thousand metres of cloth and 8,000 pieces of saree were produced in the mill daily.

Doel Group General Manager Rashid Mawla said about 16 per cent of 3900 employees are still without work as some machines in different units are yet to be renovated. The company has textile, dyeing, knitting and garment units. The ground flood of the factory was inundated.

On the other hand, a large number of workers of the flood affected industries are still without work as their units are yet to be renovated, it was gathered from different sources including workers

associations and mill authorities.

Most of them are in distress as they had worked on daily basis.

A worker of Pakiza seeking anonymity said, "The flood water made me jobless and my house is also damaged. However the company gave me some relief".

Doel group GM said the company is paying the workers made jobless by flood.

World Bank to set up information centre at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

World Bank (WB) will set up an information centre on Chittagong University (CU) campus.

WB Senior Communication Officer Dr Subrata S Dhar disclosed this during his meet with Vice Chancellor (VC) Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury at his office on Tuesday.

All the journals and research work of the global bank including its latest publications will be available for use of students and teachers.

The VC requested Dr Subrata to submit a full-fledged proposal in this regard.

Among others, Communication and Journalism Department Chairman Ali Asgar Chowdhury and Acting Librarian Md Abu Taher were present.



PHOTO: STAR

National Awami Party distributing relief among flood victims in Sampashi village in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila (Left) and Uzziban Samity preparing oral saline packets (Middle) and Diabetic Samity treating patients in Brahmanbaria.

Make-up 3

6,000 to 60,000