

# Aman likely to face setback in flood-hit dists

## Delay in seed distribution

### STAR NATIONAL DESK

Attainment of *Aman* cultivation target in flood affected districts in the current season is uncertain due to scarcity and high price of seedlings.

The government-promised *Aman* seeds and fertiliser are yet to reach the affected poor and marginal farmers, according to reports reaching from some of the affected districts.

The government earlier announced free distribution of five kg *Aman* seeds and 25 kg fertiliser to each poor farmer in flood affected areas.

But at most places, seeds are yet to reach farmers though it is high time for transplanting seedlings. Seedlings can be transplanted from seedbeds after 21 days of sowing, at the earliest. Transplantation after August reduces output significantly, according to

agriculture experts.

Small quantities of seedlings are available in markets in affected areas, which are sold at exorbitant prices, according to reports from our correspondents. Big farmers can buy seedlings but smaller and marginal ones, can not afford those.

**Our Rangpur Correspondent reports:**

*Aman* seedlings are scarce in five upzilas of Kurigram

District, where floods damaged most of the seedbeds.

Small quantities of seedlings are sold at local markets at very high prices, which is beyond the buying capacity of farmers.

Some farmers this correspondent talked to said they went to neighbouring districts for seedlings, but returned empty-handed.

An official at Rangpur AED office said they do not have any reserve of *Aman*

village in Ulipur upzila on Thursday, farmer Motiur Rahman told this correspondent that he bought Tk 3000 seedlings from Dinajpur for one acre of land. The price is ten times higher than normal, he said.

All seedbeds in 71 unions in the district were damaged by flood.

The farmers said about 3000 hectares of land may remain fallow in the current *Aman* season.

Asked about government's free seed and fertiliser, some said they heard it on TV but did not know whether any one received it.

Kurigram AED officials said BADC (Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation) officials regretted to them, failing to supply the required quantity of seedlings.

An official at Rangpur AED office said they do not have any reserve of *Aman*

seeds but have floated tender to procure seeds.

Those will be distributed among affected farmers after procurement, they said.

A BADC official seeking anonymity said only three percent of government's *Aman* seed distribution target could be achieved because of shortage.

"Procurement of four tonnes of *Aman* seeds in the current season is almost impossible", he said.

**Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports:** Seedlings on 3,080 hectare of land have been completely damaged by flood in Gaibandha district, according to assessment made by the AED. A total of 32,563 farmers were badly affected in the district.

Most of the small and marginal farmers spent their last penny during flood for survival. Now they have no money for *Aman* farming. Many of them will have to transplant seedlings for the second time as earlier transplanted *Aman* seedlings were damaged by the deluge.

"I am searching for seedlings for the last two days and procured three and half pawn (80 bundles) of seedlings from market at Tk 160 per pawn," said Abdur Rahman of Chagoa village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

Prices have shot up in market. One pawn now sells at Tk 160 to 180 depending on quality against Tk 50 to 70 earlier, he said. Five to six pawns are needed per bigha.

Moneylenders have also become active in flood affected areas, providing poor farmers with loans at Tk 10 to 12 per cent interest per month, some farmers said.

Finding no alternative, farmers are compelled to borrow money at so high interest or promising to sell paddy at Tk 200 per maund after harvest.

Government has allocated Tk 1.51 crore for agriculture rehabilitation

in Gaibandha. Under this programme, 23,010 small and marginal farmers will get seedlings and other inputs free for one bigha.

AED officials here said they received Tk 33 lakh so far for supplying seedlings among farmers.

"Seedbeds of late variety *Aman* is being prepared on 150 acres of land for supplying seedlings to farmers," said AED Deputy Director Abdur Rouf.

"Priority list of farmers for distributing seedlings is being prepared by union rehabilitation committees", he said.

But many farmers this correspondent talked to in the sadar upazila said the government help will go to people close to local body members.

Model farmer Kamru Hasan at Khola village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila said, "It is high time but I can not procure seedlings".

**Our Netrakona Correspondent reports:** *Aman* seeds are sold at between Tk 400 and 500 per five kilogram in markets, which is beyond the purchasing capacity of poor flood affected farmers in Netrakona and Kishoreganj.

The government-promised seeds are yet to reach agriculture officials, they said.

An acute scarcity of *Aman* seedlings is prevailing in the two districts, most areas of which were severely affected by the flood.

AED officials said it would be difficult to attain the *Aman* cultivation target of 1,26,000 hectares in Netrakona and 1,18,000 in Kishoreganj.

Kamal Hossain of Jugir Nagura village in Atpara upazila in Netrakona said he will transplant *Aman* on two acres and another three acres will remain fallow for want of seedlings.

Many farmers said they did not get the government seeds and fertiliser but the prime time for sowing is almost over.



PHOTO: STAR

People demolishing the house of drug lord Shaymol in Manikganj town on Friday.

# Manikganj youths rise against drug abuse

## Massive campaign launched, house of drug lord demolished

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Amid rising drug use, some groups of youngsters in Manikganj have raised a hope against the social scourge.

Grouped under the 'Conscious Young Generation', they have launched a determined campaign against drug use and drawn people from all classes into their fold to make Manikganj district 'free of drug use and trade'.

Drugs like phenidini, hemp, heroin and pathine injection are taken almost openly in some areas in the town. Youths fall victim to those easily.

Patua ferry terminal under Shivalaya police station is a safe point through which most of drugs flow into the district, sources said.

But they are getting a lukewarm response from police, some members of newly floated body told this correspondent.

In the last couple of weeks, they held several gatherings in different areas of the town.

"Our message is well received by the people", one member said.

Enthused by the Conscious Young Generation and determined to "drive away drug traders and demolish their houses", several hundred people led by former municipality chairman Suder Saha demolished the house of drug lord Shaymol at Dashora in the town. Shaymol is the son of Ram Pashad.

Cricketer Moshed Ali Khan Sumon, journalist Rashedul Islam Khan, college teacher Abdul Karim Biswas and businessman Abdus Salam were also among them.

The faction led by CU BCL President Mahbub Elahi and backed by Ward Commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun announced a four-day programme.

The organisers said they demolished Shaymol's house after persuasion to desist from drug trading failed.

Members of the Young Generation

had gone to Shaymol several times earlier and tried to convince him to give up the trade, they said.

When contacted over cell phone, the

Manikganj Police Superintendent said he is on leave and advised this correspondent to talk to the Additional SP.

The Additional SP said he does not know

anything about the matter.

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Rashid Mamun announced a four-day

programme.

The faction led by General

Secretary Kazi Mazharul Islam and

backed by influential Awami League

leader AZM Nasir declared a weeklong

programme on the occasion.

# CU BCL split over Aug 15 programmes

### CU CORRESPONDENT

The Mazharul Islam group brought out a procession yesterday in support of today's countrywide hartal called by AL to press execution of the Bangabandhu murder case verdict. It will bring out a mourning procession and form a human chain tomorrow to press the demand. It held a Milad Hifz at CU station mosque on August 12.

The rival faction led by the CU BCL president took out a separate procession on the campus yesterday demanding execution the verdict. It will hold a Milad at CU station mosque tomorrow, bring out a mourning procession on August 18 and stage a token hunger strike on August 19.

# Train service to N dists resumes early Sept

## Balashi ghat to be open to goods train today: One of five damaged tracks restored

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Railway will resume goods wagon movement from Trimohoni to Balashi ferry ghat in the Brahmaputra river from today after 35 days.

The five tracks from Trimohoni to the ghat were badly damaged by the recent flood as water inundated those and removed the soil underneath. Railway officials and employees worked round the clock and restored one of the tracks.

Restoration of passenger train service through the ghat is still uncertain but railway officials hope to open the service by the end of this month.

A temporary bridge has been set up on about 1000 feet stretch of the breached railway line adjacent to Balashi ghat by using RS joist and CC piles. The damaged tracks were virtually hanging with no soil underneath.

The Railway authorities on July 11 suspended train movement from Trimohoni to Balashi and also the ferry service between Balashi and Trimohoni.

"The emergency step has been taken to restore the Trimohoni-Bahadurabad ghat section as at least 100 wagons loaded with essentials like fuel, food grain and fertiliser are stranded in the mid-stream (of Brahmaputra) on board four barges since July 11" said Divisional Railway Manager Emdadul Haque.

Initiative has also been taken to restore Dewanganj-Bahadurabad ghat in Jamalpur to resume train service between Dhaka and Bahadurabad ghat by August 25, said a railway source.

The Divisional Railway Manager said emergency renovation of tracks in the flood-damaged Kurigram-Ramna section is nearing completion. Train communication in this section will resume soon.

"We are expecting to restore direct train service between northern districts and Dhaka through Balashi and Bahadurabad ghat by the first week of September", he said.

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