

# Food crisis in remote CHT hills as rats eat up paddy

## Officials assure of assistance

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

Indigenous jhum farmers in remote hills in Rangamati are facing a food crisis this year as rats are eating up their paddy.

Paddy yield was good this year but the crop is lost due to massive attacks by rats, people said.

Locally they call it Indur Bonnya (flood of rats) because the numerous rats can not be killed or controlled.

There is a saying in the hills that flowering and fruiting of bamboos is followed by food crisis. This year there was flowering and fruiting of bamboos in large scale in different remote hills in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban. The Daily Star published a report on it months ago.

Paddy harvest is going on in the hills but most farmers are frustrated as little of the yield is left by rats.

Some 3779 families in Sazek union under Baghaichhari are passing hard days for want of food as rats destroyed their paddy in fields, locals said.

All the 17 Karbaries (village chiefs) from 17 villages in remote Farua union under Bilachhari upazila came to the district town on Monday. They brought a large number of rats killed by them to show people and draw attention of the authorities.

They also submitted applications to Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman and the Deputy Commissioner (DC) for food supply and financial assistance to tide over the crisis.

L. Thanga Pankhua, chairman of

Sazek Union Parishad, women UP member Kuliti Tripura, ward member Jopaitang Tripura submitted applications to the district administration, Rangamati Hill District Council, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and representatives of UNDP and Red Crescent Society for food and financial help.

About 3500 families in six mouzas of Lankar, Betling, Rului, Tuichui and Haldalui in Sazek union are worst affected by the rat menace this year, Thanga Pankhua told this correspondent.

Some 300 families in Rainkhyang Para, Barthali Para, Pukurpar, Prangan Para, Hakichhara, Chadrichhara, Tiger Para, Sepro Para, Arif para, Dhupanchhara, Charging Para and Kiyandachhara Para have also been affected in remote Farua union in Bilachhari upazila, chiefs of the villages said on Monday.

"Many villagers in my union are passing days amid hardship due to food crisis", Thanga added.

The district administration has ordered upazilas nirbahi officers (UNOs) and officials of the department of agriculture extension (DAE) to visit the affected areas to assess the crop damage.

Administration sources said they have assured affected people of providing VGF (vulnerable group feeding) cards.

Quoting indigenous jhum farmers, sources said around two-thirds of the paddy has been destroyed in hilly terrains in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari.

"Last year, the average yield was lesser than this year but we could

take home the crop. The yield is better this year but the crop is lost", Nolini Tripura whom came from Sazek said.

"Indur Bonnya will keep us unfed this year", he apprehended while talking to this correspondent.

"I cultivated paddy on five acres of jhum land this year but got only 160 kilograms", he said.

Thousands of indigenous jhum farmers in inaccessible areas in CHT particularly in Sazek union in Baghaichhari upazila and Farua union

Bilachhari upazila are absolutely dependent on jhum cultivation for survival.

People of these remote areas are not covered under government development programmes and assistance by NGOs do not reach the inaccessible areas, sources said.

DAE officials said there about 20 varieties of jhum paddy are grown in hills by indigenous farmers. These include Sonali, Chigan, Galong, Kamarang, Bhupoy, Bini, Pattigi, Rengui, Kabarak, Amei Dhan.

Elders said flowering, fruiting and withering of bamboo forests take place in the hills after about every 50 years. It broke out in a large scale in 1937 when natural bamboo forests were destroyed, followed by massive rat attack on paddy fields, they said.

The rats come to eat bamboo flowers and fruits and then eat crops, they said. Once it appears, the menace normally persists for three years, they said.

Many people died from starva-

tion in Mizoram in India in 1959 following a rat menace after such flowering and fruiting of bamboos, they said.

Flowering of bamboos continues in many forests in CHT, they claimed.

When contacted, Rangamati DAE deputy director Md. Liyes Uddin said upazila agriculture officers in Bilachhari and Baghaichhari will visit the affected areas in Farua and Sazek unions on Sunday (tomorrow) to estimate the crop damage.

Deputy commissioner (DC) Md. Nurul Amin said he has ordered UNOs and UAOs to visit affected areas.

"We will provide relief. I told UP chairman and members and Karbaries in Sazek and Farua to come through concerned agriculture officers and UNOs for relief".

Talking this correspondent, Jagat Jyoti Chakma, chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council, admitted that many jhum farmers are passing hard days for lack of food.

"We are thinking to launch a package programme from the district council fund for the affected people. We will also supply pulses, edible oil and provide them with ginger and turmeric for cultivation to create alternative income sources."

He said advisor for CHT affairs ministry Dr. Iftekhar A Chowdhury at a meeting in Dhaka on October 23 allocated Tk 15 lakh for the affected people. "We will get this money in few days", he said.

## Ex-BNP MP chargesheeted in 8th extortion case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Charge sheet in an extortion case against detained former BNP lawmaker MAH Selim was submitted to Bagerhat court on Thursday.

In last three months, seven other charge sheets were filed in extortion cases against Selim, also the president of district BNP.

The names of Bagerhat district BNP Organising Secretary Sheikh Nazrul Islam, Sadar upazila Jubo Dal President Touhidul Islam, district-Sramik Dal President Shankar Kumar Das, BNP activists Milton Sheikh and Abdur Rahman were also included in the charge sheet filed on Thursday.

Razia Makbul, a field worker of upazila health complex, filed the case with Kachua Police Station of Bagerhat district on July 3 this year.

The complainant said in her FIR that former lawmaker Selim forced her to pay Tk 50,000 on June 10 last year.

The accused had demanded Tk 5 lakh as toll and threatened to kill her in case of non-payment, she added.

## Shahidul Islam faces another extortion case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Another extortion case was filed against former BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master and 11 others on Thursday.

Eleven others Ishaq Ali, Mohon, Shahidul Islam, Pintu, Abdul Aziz, Nawar Ali, Anwar, Dabir Hossain, Helal, Hamid, and Jalal doctor -- were also included in the case filed with a magistrate's court in Jhenidah.

Alkas Mia of Moeshpur town filed the case. The accused went to Alkas Mia's house and told him to give two decimal land in the name of Shahidul Islam Master, also district BNP general secretary, for making a BNP office in front of his (plaintiff) house, goes the case statement. "They demanded Tk 5 lakh as he refused to give the land for making a BNP office. The plaintiff paid them Tk 1 lakh but they vandalised his house and took away valuables worth Tk 2 lakh as he failed to pay them the rest amount."

Facing death threat, Alkas Mia left his house and took shelter at Fatullah in Narayanganj, the plaintiff said. He could not venture to file any case against the former lawmaker and his associates fearing further reprisal as Shahidul Islam was a ruling party lawmaker, he added.

Earlier, nine cases, including those for extortion and misappropriation of relief materials, were filed against the former lawmaker.

## JUDICIARY SEPARATION

## Team from Dhaka holds meeting in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A seven-member team headed by Justice MM Ruhul Amin of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court exchanged views with officials of the judiciary, civil and police administration and prominent lawyers yesterday at Khulna Circuit House.

The team arrived in Khulna earlier on the day as part of its programme to see preparation and progress to implement separation of the Judiciary from the Executive from November 1.

At the meeting, Justice Ruhul Amin said people would be greatly benefited if the judiciary, civil and police administration perform their duties properly. Separation of the judiciary is vital for this, he added.

The view-exchange meeting was addressed by, among others, Justice Kamrul Islam Siddiqui of High Court division, Khulna Divisional Commissioner Yunusur Rahman, DIG of Police Asaduzzaman, Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Commissioner Nazibur Rahman, Khulna Deputy Commissioner SM Firoze Alam and Khulna District Bar Association President advocate Sohrab Hossain.



Farmers waiting in a long queue for fertiliser in front of a dealer's shop in Basail upazila in Tangail. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

## Short supply of urea thwarts Rabi farming in Tangail

### Authorities say there no crisis, panic buying creates problem

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Short supply of urea fertiliser is affecting cultivation of Rabi crops in most areas of Tangail district, farmers alleged.

In many areas, farmers are returning home disappointed after waiting in long queues in front of dealers' shops for fertiliser.

This correspondent visited different areas of Tangail Sadar, Mirzapur and Basail upazilas in last two days.

At Basail upazila headquarters, several hundred farmers were seen queuing in front of a dealer's shops on Wednesday.

Farmer Dukhiram Mondol, 55, of Joutuki village said he stood in the line at 3am for four sacks of urea. But he did not get any fertiliser as about 150 people who were ahead of him emptied the stock.

Hossain Miah said he came from Kanchanpur Dakkhin Para village, about 10 from the upazila headquarters but did not get any urea.

Upazila agriculture officials in

Basail said they planned to bring 6,100 hectares under mustard cultivation this year. Last year, mustard was grown on 4,040 hectares against a target of 3,100 hectares, they said.

Farmers are more interested for mustard cultivation this year as this is a short time crop and benefits them if the yield is average. Farmers now need urea, dye ammonium phosphate (DAP) and single super phosphate (SSP) fertilisers for mustard and vegetables, they said.

They can buy DAP and SSP from local markets, albeit at higher prices. But urea supply is controlled by the government, they said.

Nurul Islam, acting upazila agriculture officer in Basail, said they had 363 metric tonnes of urea in stock till Wednesday.

"The problem has been created as farmers want to buy more than what they need now fearing crisis", he said.

Basail Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khalid Ahmed, however, told The Daily Star that there was no reason for concern as there was

adequate supply of urea.

Mohammad Hakim Uddin, deputy director (DD) of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) in Tangail, said 500 tonnes of urea were allocated for Basail for October and 700 tonnes for November. This allocation should be enough to meet the demand, he said.

He said we sought 7,000 tonnes for Tangail district for October and got it. For November, we sought 8,500 tonnes and the allotment has been made.

He said most of the farmers want to buy more than what they need now fearing short supply in coming days.

"We are observing the situation," the DD added. When contacted, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Akhter Ali Sarkar said there is no urea crisis in the district.

Fertiliser distribution management was good in the district last year and there will not be any problem this year also, he said.

"We will send urea to farmers timely," the DC assured.

## Ex-chairman of Haragachh municipality arrested

### Forged bidi band roll recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Joint forces arrested former chairman of Haragachh municipality Anwarul Islam Maya from his residence in Haragachh and seized a huge quantity of alleged forged band roll from his bidi factory.

Anwarul Islam Maya is also chairman of Maya group of industries.

Acting on a tip off, joint forces raided his factory and house at Haragachh in Kounia upazila, police said. He was handed over to Kounia police.

Officer-in-Charge of Kounia police station said, Anwarul was shown arrested in a case filed against him by Kounia Polli Biddyt Somity (rural electrification association).

Police sources said officials from the National Board of Revenue examined the band roll seized from his bidi factory and detected those as forged.

NBR is taking preparation to lodge a case against Anwarul Islam, an official of the joint forces said.

Kounia police said, there are complaints Anwarul fort grabbing

## Tangail ward commissioner held for 'drug trading'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three people including a ward commissioner of Tangail municipality on charge of drug trading Wednesday night.

Acting on a tip off, a Rab team arrested Mohammad Shajahan alias Babu, 38, commissioner of ward No 2 under Tangail municipality, on midnight, Rab sources said.

Following his confession, Rab personnel raided the house of Mokbul Hossain of Brahmanhasan village in Ghatail upazila on the same night and recovered a local made pistol with two bullets and 10 bottles of phensidyl from there, they said.

They also arrested house owner Mokbul Hossain's son Sumon Siddiqui, 18, and daughter Suborna Siddiqui, 26; from there.

Later, Rab personnel handed over the three to Ghatail Police Station.

Additional Superintendent of Police Mosharraf Hossain of Rab-12 told The Daily Star that arrested ward commissioner Shajahan Babu is involved in drug trading and was using Sumon and Suborna for his illegal activities.



As treatment seekers exceed accommodation capacity, diarrhoea patients stay on the corridor at Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital yesterday.

## Diarrhoea claims 5, attacks 1,928 in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Diarrhoea claimed five lives and attacked 1,928 people in 12 upazilas in the district in last 10 days, Surya Kanta Hospital (SKH) sources said.

The victims are: Jamal Uddin, 40, son of Kamal Uddin of Chhitpara village in Sreepur, Gazipur, Rukshana Begum, 8, daughter of Arju Miah of Rupchanda in Nandail and Moimuddin, 70, son of late Hoshar Baba of Uchakhila village in Iswarganj, Aman Ali, 60, of Narilla village in Dhanbari upazila, Tangail and an unidentified woman aged about 20.

The worst affected upazilas are Nandail, Phulbaria, Haluaghat and Muktagacha, civil surgeon (CS) offices sources said.

Twenty-eight patients were admitted to Surya Kanta Hospital

(SKH) till Thursday noon.

Many diarrhoea attacked children were found to be taking treatment at the corridor of the hospital.

The worst affected upazilas are Nandail, Phulbaria, Haluaghat and Muktagacha, civil surgeon (CS) offices sources said.

Rush of patients is increasing at the hospital. On average, 35 patients are being admitted to the hospital daily. The same situation prevails here for the last 10 days, hospital sources said.

Meanwhile, a severe crisis of Intravenous (IV) fluid has been prevailing at the hospital, some patients alleged.

On contact, Surya Kanta Hospital (SKH) In-Charge Dr Md Abdul Kader claimed there is no crisis of oral saline and medicine in his hospital.

However, a source in the hospital said the supply of IV fluid is

meagre. Now the hospital receives 100 packets of IV fluid while the demand is more than 300 bags daily, he said.

During a visit to the hospital on Thursday, this correspondent talked to some attendants. An attendant named Arif hailing from Gohalkandi in Sadar Upazila said he received a bag of IV fluid from the hospital but he bought a Ceftriaxone injection at Tk 165 from a drug store. Md Abdur Razzaq, another attendant hailing from Phulbaria in Sadar bought two bags of IV fluid and two injections at a cost of Tk 455 outside the hospital.

Abdul Wadud Dudu, another attendant hailing from Phulbaria said he bought four injections and other medicine at a cost of Tk 1,400.

The CS office sources said about 54 medical teams are working round the clock in the affected areas.

## US support for polls roadmap to continue, says envoy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The US support to the caretaker government will continue in its effort to implement the official roadmap for holding general elections in the country in scheduled time.

The Charge d'affaires of US Embassy in Dhaka, Geeta Pasi said this while addressing a function jointly organised by Justice Debesh Bhattacharya Foundation and Uday Smriti Manob Kalyan Tohobail at Elenga Zamindar Bari in Kalihati upazila yesterday.

The president of Justice Debesh Bhattacharya Foundation and Uday Smriti Manob Kalyan Tohobail, Dr Debopriya Bhattacharya was in the chair.

At the function, gold medals were distributed to six talents who scored brilliant results in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations in three preceding years.

The US diplomat said as long-term partner of Bangladesh, we support the efforts of its government in strengthening the democratic institutions.

"We welcome the announcement of the caretaker government for partial lifting of ban on political activities," said Geeta Pasi.

Geeta Pasi also hailed the progress of voter listing all over the country. She urged the caretaker government to move as quickly as possible in taking other steps

towards restoration of democracy.

The US diplomat also lauded the move of the Election Commission (EC) for electoral reforms by holding meetings with the political parties.

The US diplomat hoped that Bangladesh would rewrite the history of Bangladesh democracy in near future.

Among others, Tangail deputy commissioner (DC) Akhter Ali Sarkar, former director of BGMEA Lutfar Rahman Matin, executive chief of Justice Debesh Bhattacharya Foundation Dr Irina Bhattacharya, its secretary Shree Akhlay Bhoumik, Kalihati upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Saifullah-hil-Azam, and Elenga UP chairman Shafi Khan addressed.

| Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Technical Service, Bangladesh Betar               |   |  |  |   |
| Administrative Building                           |   |  |  |   |
| Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.                  |   |  |  |   |
| No. Babe/tender-02/project(dhamrai)/2007-174;     |   | Date: 25-10-2007.  |  |   |
| Invitation for International Tender               |   |  |  |   |
| 1   | Ministry/Division   | Ministry of Information.   |  |   |
| 2   | Agency  | Bangladesh Betar.  |  |   |
| 3   | Procuring Entity Name   | Project Director.  |  |   |
| 4   | Procuring Entity Code   | Not used at present.   |  |   |
| 5   | Procuring Entity District   | Dhaka.   |  |   |
| 6   | Invitation for  | Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from manufacturers/Suppliers through their Local Agents in Bangladesh for -<br><b>LOT-1 (Single lot):</b> Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1500 kVA Diesel Generator with auto on/off and load transfer system for Super Power Transmitting Station at Dhamrai, Dhaka, Bangladesh. |  |   |
| 7   | Invitation Ref No & Date  | Babe/tender-02/project(dhamrai)/2007-174; Date: 25-10-2007.  |  |   |
| 8   | Procurement Method  | Open Tendering Method (International Competitive Tendering).   |  |   |
| 9   | Budget and Source of Funds  | GOB  |  |   |
| 10  | Project / Programme Code  | 5010   |  |   |
| 11  | Project / Programme Name  | Establishment of 1000 kW MW equal power Transmitter as an alternative of old 1000kW MW Transmitter at Dhamrai.   |  |   |
| 12  | Tender Package No.  | G2   |  |   |
| 13  | Tender Package Name   | G2 : Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1500 kVA Diesel Generator with auto on/off and load transfer system for Super Power Transmitting Station at Dhamrai, Dhaka, Bangladesh.  |  |   |
| 14  | Tender Publication Date   | 12-11-2007   |  |   |
| 15  | Tender Last Selling Date  | 12-12-2007, During Office hour.  |  |   |
|   |   | Date   | Time   |   |
| 16  | Tender Closing Date and Time  | 27-12-2007   | 11:00 AM (BST)                               |   |
| 17  | Tender Opening Date and Time  | 27-12-2007   | 11:30 AM (BST)                               |   |
| 18  | Name & Address of the office(s)   | Address:   |  |   |
|   | - Selling Tender Document (Principal)   | Project Director: Establishment of 1000 kW MW equal power Transmitter as an alternative of old 1000 kW MW Transmitter at Dhamrai, Technical Service, Room No.317, Administrative Building, Bangladesh Betar Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.   |  |   |
|   | - Receiving Tender Document.  | Project Director: Establishment of 1000 kW MW equal power Transmitter as an alternative of old 1000 kW MW Transmitter at Dhamrai, Main Gate, National Broadcasting House, Bangladesh Betar, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.   |  |   |
|   | - Opening Tender Document   | Project Director: Establishment of 1000 kW MW equal power Transmitter as an alternative of old 1000 kW MW Transmitter at Dhamrai, Technical Service, Room No. 318, Administrative Building, Bangladesh Betar Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.  |  |   |
| 19  | Eligibility of Tenderer   | All Tenderers except from ISRAEL.  |  |   |
| 20  | Brief Description of Goods and Services                                       | -1500 kVA Diesel Generator with auto on/off and load transfer system.<br>-Other necessary auxiliary & protective devices with LT cables.<br>- Installation, Testing, Commissioning & Training.   |  |   |
| 21  | Price of Tender Document (Tk)   | Tk. 5,000/- (Five Thousand Only) in the form of Treasury Challan in favour of Director General, Bangladesh Betar. Code: 1/3351/0001/2366.  |  |   |
|   | Lot No.   | Identification of Lot  | Location                                     | Tender Security Amount  |
| 22  | Lot-1 (Single lot)  | Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1500 kVA Diesel Generator with auto on/off and load transfer system for Super Power Transmitting Station at Dhamrai, Dhaka, Bangladesh.   | Bangladesh Betar, Dhamrai, Dhaka, Bangladesh | Tk 8,00,000/- (Eight Lakh) or US \$ 11,500/- Only in the form of a pay order/ a bank draft / an irrevocable bank guarantee, only issued by a scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Director General Bangladesh Betar. |
| 23  | Name of Official Inviting Tender  | MD. NAZRUL ISLAM.  |  |   |
| 24  | Designation of Official Inviting Tender                                       | Project Director : Establishment of 1000 kW MW equal power Transmitter as an alternative of old 1000 kW MW Transmitter at Dhamrai  |  |   |
| 25  | Address of Official Inviting Tender   | Technical Service, Room No. 317, Administrative Building, Bangladesh Betar, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.   |  |   |
| 26  | Contact details of Official Inviting Tender                                   | Tel: 880-2-8113877<br>880-2-8117934  | Fax: 880-2-9112475<br>880-2-8612021          | E-mail: niloy@bttb.net.bd   |
| 27  | Proper approving authority reserves the right to accept or reject the tender. |  |  |   |

GD-3700

(Md. Nazrul Islam)  
Project Director