

# Pest attack, diseases make Amon prospect bleak in greater Rangpur

## STAR NATIONAL DESK

After successive floods that destroyed AUS paddy, pest attack and diseases are making Amon prospects bleak in greater Rangpur, frustrating farmers and worrying agriculture officials.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials in Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Gaibandha have detected diseases along with pest attack in Amon fields that may affect the crop, now in flowering stage in most areas, our correspondents reported.

In Rangpur, some farmers claimed that the diseases and pest attack may reduce the yield by 25-30 per cent. Agriculture officials however differ on the extent of damage.

AED Deputy Director in Lalmonirhat Aftab Uddin said, "Transplanted Amon on 625 hectares of land out of 1,000,000 hectares in the district is so far affected with 'sheet blight' and 'rot blight' diseases. This may decrease the yield by 2 to 5 per cent".

Only BR-11 and Shawrana varieties of Amon are attacked with the diseases, he said.

"BR-11 is an old variety and so its disease resistance capacity has decreased. Shawrana is an Indian variety not suitable in the climate of the region", he explained.

Farmer Abu Mokadil of Itapotha village in Mogholhat union in Lalmonirhat said, he used pesticide but is worried that he would not get even 30 to 40 per cent yield.

Rangpur AED Deputy Director Shariful Alam admitted 'sheet blight' and 'rot blight' diseases in Amon fields in some areas but said the 'situation is now under control'. He said all agriculture officials have been deployed in fields to monitor the situation.

"Deficiency of potash in lands in some areas in the district may affect Amon yield. Farmers use only urea but they need to use Potash also", the AED official said.

Khondaker Topakharul Islam of Dahiganj in Rangpur Sadar upazila said farmers like him can not afford

to buy potash at high price now. He said most of the late-transplanted Amon plants are attacked with 'sheet blight'. Chief Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute in Rangpur, Dr. MA Mojed, identified two major causes for the diseases.

Climate in the region is dry after floods, which is suitable for the diseases to grow. Late planting may be another reason.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports:

Widespread attack by 'brown plant hopper' in Amon fields in the district has caused serious concern among farmers.

They said BR-11 variety is more susceptible to the pest attack. About one-fourth of BR-11 paddy fields have so far been attacked, they claimed.

The worst affected unions are Panchupukur and Kachukata in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.



Attack by pests including brown plant hopper (inset) turns Amon fields brown in Nilphamari.

In Dimla upazila, the affected unions are Balpara, Jhunagach Chapani, Khalisha Chapani, Nautara, Purba Chatnai, Paschim Chatnai and adjoining villages.

Mannan Fakir, a big farmer in Singdoi village in Sadar upazila said 'brown plant hopper, locally called 'current poka' suddenly attacks paddy fields in swarms, sucks plants' fluid within a short time and turns them into yellowish straw.

Ramzan Ali of Gayan village in Dimla said paddy fields turn yellow after the attack. No ear of paddy come out from the plants. Even animals do not eat affected paddy plants.

The farmers said cold at night now and hot during day time is favourable for breeding of such insects. Usually, low-lying lands are more affected.

Member of Uttar Tippara Union Parishad in Dimla, Abul Hossen, said paddy on seven bighas out of

his 24 bighas have been damaged by pest attack.

Fazlur Rahman of Modhyia Haroa village in Sadar upazila said he sold his cow and bought Amon seedlings at a high price for his one bigha land after the earlier crop was completely damaged by floods twice. But 'current poka' has damaged the field, now in flowering stage.

The farmers alleged that insecticides used by them are not effective against 'brown plant hopper'.

Pesticide trader Pijush Sarkar in Nilphamari town said farmers come to him in large numbers every day for pesticide to combat against 'brown plant hopper'.

He said Tido-20 SL and Mephisin are effective against the insect but should be used in appropriate dose.

Nilphamari DAE Deputy Director Eunus Ali however said farmer's claim of a massive pest

attack is not correct. "Amon on only 50-60 hectares have so far been attacked with brown plant hopper in the district, he said. The attack has been effectively controlled, he claimed.

A total of 1,15,135 hectares were brought under Amon cultivation in Nilphamari this year with a production target of 2,64,444 tonnes of rice, officials said.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: About 20 per cent of Amon fields in Gaibandha has so far been attacked with pests and diseases, according to a field survey by agriculture extension officials.

Normally, downpour after flood and disproportionate use of fertiliser are the main reasons for pest attack and disease, which need instant care for remedy, they said.

Amon fields turned brown due to deficiency of potash, they said.

Farmers usually apply high dose of urea and lesser quantities of triple super phosphate (TSP), murate of potash (MP) and zinc sulphate. This creates an ideal situation for attack by diseases and pests, said Shahidur Rahman, sub-assistant agriculture officer in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

According to AED, Amon was cultivated on 1,14,851 hectares in the district against a target of 1,27,447 hectares because of flood twice.

The officials said, Amon on 397 hectares have been attacked with 'stem rot' disease, 145 hectares with 'leaf rot', 54 hectares with 'stem blight' and 40 hectares with 'brown plant hopper' insect in the district.

"We have already controlled 90 per cent of the pest attack stopped its further attack", said AED deputy director Abdul Matin.

Adequate measure have been taken to combat spread of diseases and pest attack and an awareness campaign is going on urging farmers to contact local agriculture officials in case of any problem, he added.

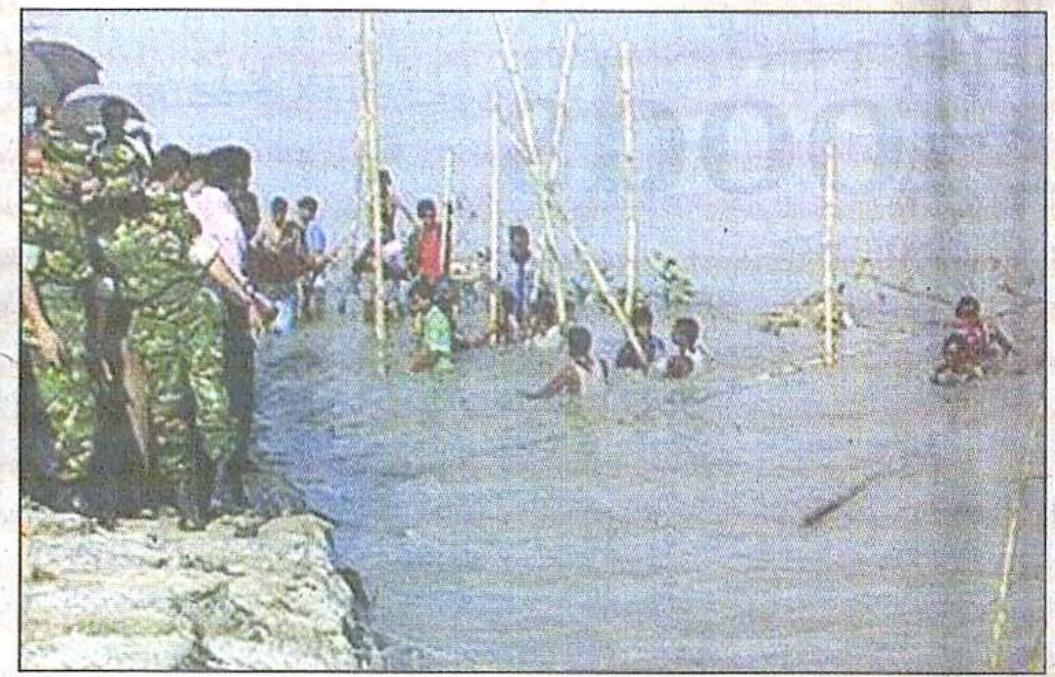


PHOTO: STAR  
Army men along with people try to prevent erosion by the Jamuna at Itakuri in Shaghata upazila on Saturday.

## Villagers join hands to combat Jamuna erosion

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of people from all walks of life have joined hands to combat Jamuna erosion at Itakuri in Shaghata upazila on self-help basis.

They also supplied sandbags, bamboos, timber and collected money for this.

Earlier, a ring embankment was constructed on the western bank of the river a few years ago but it was eroded by flood. Since then over 2,000 homeless people took shelter at a nearby embankment.

As the erosion continued unabated, it rendered 300 families shelterless anew in last two weeks. About 1,500 others are now facing the threat of erosion.

In face of erosion, local people shifted Hatbari Primary School and Char Haldia Government Primary School to safer places. But

Kanaipara Primary School went under the gorge of river.

In such a dismal situation, people in the affected areas on Saturday gathered and decided to combat erosion on self-help basis.

They also supplied sandbags, bamboos, timber and collected money for this.

Development Board (WDB) executive engineer Shaful Azam said that he had appreciated the endeavour of local people in combating river erosion. He further said he will send a proposal to the higher authorities on emergency basis to combat erosion.

Shaghata union chairman Abdur Rouf presided over Saturday's meeting.

Among others, Major Arif of joint forces, Shaghata upazila mirbahi officer (UNO) Mustakim Billah Faruki, Gaibandha Water Development Board (WDB) executive engineer Shaful Azam, former upazila chairman Altaf Hossain Sarker, Principal Sайдур رحمن, Union Parisad (UP) member Lutfar Rahman, Shah Alam Mondal, Mosharaf Hossain and Fazlul Huq Sarker addressed.



PHOTO: STAR  
Construction of this bridge on Jhagrabil-Rangamati road is postponed due to rise in the water level of Kaptai Lake.

## Greedy fishermen poison Juri river for catches

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

It was unique event at Kulia, a remote village in Debbata upazila, where about 2,000 people have vowed to curb the menace of drug abuse and drug peddling from the society once for all.

Kulia Sachetan Nagar Samaj, a newly formed anti drug committee organised the meeting. Held at Kulia Union Parishad (UP) office, the meeting was presided by Kulia UP chairman Abdul Hannan.

The people who took vow at the meeting included teachers, students, farmers, religious leaders, local government leaders, youths, political leaders, journalists, lawyers and local elite.

Locals saw many dead fish of Ruhu, Boal, Pabda, Kali-baush, Ayer, Gojar and Puthi floating in the river Friday morning. Many ducks also died following intake of poisonous fish, locals said.

Locals said they witnessed the same practice in September last. They said aquatic resources in Hakaluki Haor are also at threat due to the bad practice.

Aquatic fauna are also threatened because of the phenomenon.

Fishermen at Purbo Shilua, Paschim Shilua, Montrigaon, Jugimura, Sagarnia, Patila Sangon, Somaia, Bhabanipur and Gobindapur villages collect poisonous fish by fishing nets.

Originating from Jamnapari hill in the Indian state of Tripura, the Juri, a small river entered into Bangladesh from where it is flowing through Fultala, Sagarnia, Goalbari, Jayfarang and Paschim Juri unions. Renamed as Kanthinala near Juri upazila headquarters, the river met at Hakaluki haor, one of the biggest water bodies in the country. The haor pro-

duces a large quantity of fish.

People living near the Juri have alleged that unscrupulous fishermen extract juice from 'Bish Lata', a kind of poisonous creeper and pour it in the river. This results in death of a large number of fish.

Fishermen catch the poisonous fishes by fishing nets. This is a regular practice in every dry season, people alleged further.

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When contacted with Juri Upazila Fisheries Officer Phanindra Chandra Sarker over phone, he confirmed the incident. He assured action against the dishonest fishermen after consultation with the upazila administration.

However, Juri Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nazrul Islam Sarker said that he had no knowledge about the incident.

## 200 urea bags seized in Dinajpur

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police seized 200 sacks of urea at Phulbari upazila in Dinajpur yesterday while those were being transported to Birganj. Two persons were arrested.

The arrestees were identified as Muhammad Dablu of Vognanar village in Birganj upazila and Md. Asabur Rahman of Shiekh-Hati village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

Police said they suspected that the fertiliser sacks were being taken to the border for smuggling. A case has been recorded.

## Training of election officials begins in Pabna

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The training of enumerators, supervisors and assistant registration officers began in Pabna yesterday.

Pabna Deputy Commissioner Md Golam Mousa as the chief guest inaugurated the training camp on Pabna Zila School premises in the morning.

District election office sources said 1302 enumerators, 288 supervisors and 25 assistant registration officers will be trained up as voter listing in Pabna Sadar upazila including the pourasava area starts on November 4.

## Vow to curb drug abuse

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

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