

AMON HARVEST BEGINS IN CHT Over 12,000 tonne less output feared

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

trict, Deputy Director of Khagrachhari AED TM Monjurul Islam said.

Amom yield in three hill districts of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban may miss the target by 12,280 tonne as the recurrent floods damaged paddy fields on 4,634 hectares of land.

However,

starting of Amon harvest in different areas in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) comprising the three districts has brought relief of poorhumia people.

A total of 47,067 hectares of land was brought under Amon cultivation in CHT this year with a production target of 1.25 lakh tonnes of rice (in average 2.65 tonne per hectare), Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources said.

In Khagrachhari, the production target in 26,355 hectares of land was 69,840.75 tonnes of rice but the recent floods damaged 3,490.05 tonnes of Amon paddy in 1,317 hectares of field in the dis-

trict, Deputy Director of Khagrachhari AED TM Monjurul Islam said.

Deputy Director of Rangamati AED Mohammad Laich Uddin said they had a production target of 27,864.75 tonnes in 10,155 hectares of land in the district but they fear the production will be less by 8,790.05 tonnes as recent floods damaged Amon paddy in 3,317 hectares.

The Daily Star correspondent saw sale of huge quantities of rice in Manikchhari and Khagrachhari Sadar wholesale markets. The prices of rice varied between Tk 400 to 450 per pound (one pound = 40 kg). Farmers said the price rates are 'reasonable'.

Meanwhile, at least 1.5 lakh Amon farmers have been affected due to pest attack following floods that hit the area thrice while attack of rats also caused harm to paddy cultivated on hills.

Several farmers said they are even worried about repaying the loan that they took for cultivating Amon.

devoured in the river last week as the erosion took a serious turn in the winter. —

Affected people in the area demanded of the government to start work for a permanent dam in the beginning of the winter season and finish work before the rainy season.

BWDB sources said because of erosion and flood most portion of the 78.89-kilometre flood control embankment stretching from Verakhola of Shahzadpur to Kazipur were damaged. This year, crops on a vast tract of land, property, roads, bridges, culverts and establishments damaged thrice due to recurrent flood in nine upazilas in the district. Of them, the worst affected areas are Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Chowhali and Shahzadpur upazila.

As per statistics of BWDB and district administration, at least 1,000 homesteads and 400 hectares of croplands of five upazilas like Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali

walks of life including teachers, rickshaw pullers, traders, government and non-government officials.

At least 7 lakh people of the nine upazilas were affected badly by recurring flood this year.

Thousands of people in the area are still homeless and jobless. They are passing days in misery either half-fed or ill-fed, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) officials said.

Besides, after recession of

floodwater, continuous river erosion in the area turned them pauper.

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