

Water scanty to rot jute

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Good yield of jute this season fails to make farmers happy as they are facing problem to rot and process the natural fibre due to lack of water in the absence of adequate rain in the ongoing monsoon.

Encouraged by good price of jute last year, farmers in Tangail grew the cash crop on more areas of land this season, reports our Tangail correspondent.

According to local

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), jute was cultivated on 22,867 hectares of land in 12 upazilas of the district this year while it was cultivated on 15,165 hectares last year.

The farmers have also got good yield as weather was favourable during the cultivation period.

Atoar Rahman of Gomjani Mahmudpur village under Atia union in Delduar upazila cultivated jute on his 200 decimals of land this year and got a good yield. But he is

facing problem to rot the plants due to lack of water.

"As there is scanty water in local water bodies, we have to manage water with shallow machine to rot jute plants. Insufficient rainfall and unplanned construction of several sluice gates in the area has led to the situation," said Atoar's wife Razia Begum.

Many other jute growers in the area are facing the same problem.

"I expect at least 12 maunds of jute from 52 deci-

mals of land this year. However, I have to spend more labour cost for carrying the jute to other place for rotting," Saiful Islam of Elenga in Kalihati upazila said.

SM Afazuddin, deputy director (DD) of Tangail DAE, said they have extended all kinds of assistance for jute cultivation in the district and also introduced 'ribbon rating' method to the jute growers for rotting their jute plants.

The government has already allocated Tk 1 crore 70

lakh for 85,000 jute growers in the district as financial support for rotting jute plants with ribbon rating method.

Jute growers, however, said it is not possible to rot jute plants in large scale with ribbon rating system.

Besides, the jute sticks cannot be used for purposes other than burning after rotting jute plants using 'ribbon rating' method, they added.

A Correspondent reports from Benapole: Jute farmers in bordering Sharsha upazila of Jessore district are fearing losses as they cannot rot the plants due to lack of rain water in the middle of monsoon.

Huge amounts of cut jute plants, kept in the field by farmers in hope of rain, are turning reddish and getting dried.

Insects are also infecting the fields.

Many farmers have refrained from cutting jute plants as there is no water to rot it.

As they got high price for jute last year, farmers in Sharsha upazila became more interested in jute cultivation and the production exceeded target in this season.

Of the total 29,240 hectares of arable land in the upazila, 6781 acres were brought under jute cultivation this year. It is 4,221 hectares more than last year's.

The government has allocated subsidy of Tk 200 for each farmer for rotting jute but lack of water frustrates the initiative.

The agriculture department, however, has started providing the farmers with training on alternative ways to rot jute by taking off the barks and keeping the jute in pits.



Gabiar Khal, a natural canal at Kuarpar in Sylhet city, turns into an awfully narrow flow as the much-publicised drive to recover such streams by the city corporation got stalled shortly after its start in April this year.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer of Gomjani Mahmudpur village in Atia union under Delduar upazila of Tangail district arranges water with a power pump to rot jute from his 200 decimals of land as local water bodies have only a little water due to inadequate rainfall during the ongoing monsoon. Local farmers have held construction of unplanned sluice gates also responsible for the situation.

Jute rotting pollutes 40km of Chitra

A CORRESPONDENT, Narail

Water of around 40-kilometre area of Chitra River in Narail district has become dangerously polluted as farmers are rotting jute in the river due to lack of sufficient water in the beels, marshy lands and ponds.

The pollution is causing massive death to fish and other aquatic creatures, and their decomposed bodies have made the situation all the more worse.

Failing to use the literally untouchable water, people on both sides of the river are facing untold sufferings.

Every year, farmers use the water of Chitra River for rotting jute in the harvest season but this year the situation has turned grave due to lack of necessary rain during the monsoon.

In around 40-kilometre area from Sigha-Harigara village under Narail Sadar upazila up to Kalia upazila, farmers are putting large amounts of jute plants in the river water for rotting this year, locals said.

"As Chitra River is used for rotting jute plants during the harvest season, its water becomes unusable. Besides, fishes and other aquatic creatures die due to lack of



PHOTO: STAR

Huge amount of harvested jute plants, kept for rotting in around 40-km area of Chitra River in Narail district, is dangerously polluting the water and threatening fishes and other aquatic creatures in the water body.

oxygen. Everybody should become aware to evade the immense danger," said Borun Kumar Biswas, associate professor of biology department in Narail Government Victoria College.

Fishermen Sukumar Malo and Subod Malo of Pangkovi

village said life has become hard for them as fishes are facing massive death in Chitra River that has been spoiled by rotten jute.

The farmers have been asked to rot jute using ribbon method but they are hardly following the suggestion, said

ABM Fazlur Rahman, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension office at Narail.

In the district, 20,073 hectares of land was brought under jute cultivation during the current season, he said.

COP KILLING Another suspect arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police arrested one more suspect in Pabna police killing case at Savar in Dhaka district on Friday night.

The arrestee is Ayub Ali, 35, son of Jonab Ali of Daspara village under Dhalarchar union of Bera upazila.

On intelligence report, law enforcers from Bera Police Station with the help of Savar police raided an area in Savar on Friday night and arrested Ayub.

Officer-in-Charge of Bera Police Station Sheikh Zillur Rahman said the arrestee is one of the 11 suspected killers. He will be produced in a court here today, the OC added.

Three policemen, including a sub-inspector, were shot dead by underground operatives at Daspara in Bera upazila on July 20.

With the arrest of Ayub, the number of the suspected killers now stands at six. Five others arrested last week are Md Nader Pramanik, Md Wazed Ali, Abdur Rahim, Md Tajul Islam and Md Sayem Uddin. Tajul and Sayem were arrested in Rajbari district while the rest in Pabna.

Much publicity, little recovery of canals

Drive in Sylhet remains stalled

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Work under the much-talked project for reclaiming 11 canals and natural streams in Sylhet city has remained suspended for over two weeks.

To rid residents of the city and its suburbs from immense sufferings due to water logging especially during the rainy season, Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) initiated the Tk 11 crore project amid huge publicity in April this year.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, also the lawmaker of Sylhet Sadar constituency, formally inaugurated the work and visited different sites wherefrom a few illegal structures were removed and some excavation work was done at the initial stage.

But shortly afterwards, the illegal grabbers created obstacles while some of the ward councillors took stance in support of the grabbers.

Consequently, the city corporation officials suspended works at places and withdrew their bulldozers and other equipment from the sites.

Termining excessive rain

and foul weather as the reason of 'temporary suspension' of the work, acting Chief Engineer of SCC Nur Azizur Rahman said, "We expect resumption of the work in September when there will be lesser rainfall. Already we have reclaimed a good part of three streams -- Dubi Chhara in Shahi Eidgah area, Goalichhara at Baluchar and Malnichhara."

Under the programme 1450 boundary pillars, 1200 metre RCC wall, 1000 metre guard wall and four box culverts were to be erected for reclaiming the natural canals and streams in the city.

The courses once helped water from the city flow to the Surma River, especially during the rainy season.

But they have become narrow due to encroachment by influential people during the last three decades, said several city dwellers.

Even after a moderate rainfall, most of the areas in the city go under water as rainwater cannot easily pass through the drains and canals as those are too narrow and indiscriminately dumped wastes block up most of the drains, said SCC officials.

Sometimes many city streets at Shahjalal uposhshar, Hawapara, Agpara, Zatarpur, Subhanighat, Raynagar, Sheikhghat, Bhatalia, Bilopar, Pimahalla, Khasdabir, Dargah Mahalla, Jhalopara, Station Road, Bangabir Road, Kadamtali, Kanishail, Nabab Road, and Dakshin-Bagbari areas remain under water for days together, causing immense sufferings to the pedestrians and residents, said city dwellers.

It happens as banks of almost all the natural streams and canals in the city have been narrowed by the grabbers, said Faizur Rahman Khosru of Uposhahar area.

Many influential people have already built pucca buildings and commercial establishments on the grabbed lands.

Contacted, the SCC Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamrur said, "Although there were some problems at places, we are hopeful to continue the programme. Things will start effectively in September when there will be less rain. Water stagnation problem will be solved to a great extent if we can implement the programme."

Dharla renders 500 more families homeless

Luckless people take shelter on roads

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Erosion by river Dharla rendered at least 500 more families in six villages of Mogholhat union in Sadar upazila homeless in the last four days.

Over 300 bighas of cultivable land, ten fruit orchards, a mosque and a temple were devoured by the river, said Mogholhat UP chairman Habibur Rahman Habib.

The erosion-hit people have taken shelter on government roads and in relatives' houses, locals said.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader visited the affected areas on Friday noon. Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner (DC)

Mokhlesar Rahman Sarkar and Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) officials are present.

During his visit GM Quader said that river erosion is making hundreds of people in the district homeless every year. The Dharla at Mogholhat is eroding away homesteads, cultivable land and orchards almost every day, he added.

"I have already talked with the Water Resources Minister Romesh Chandra Sen for taking steps to check Dharla river erosion permanently at Mogholhat", he said.

Erosion-hit freedom fighter Abu Bakkar of Badaitari village at Mogholhat said, "I have lost three bighas of cultivable land and homestead on

Wednesday night. My five-member family has now taken shelter on the embankment".

I had two fruit orchards in this village and they were devoured by Dharla on Thursday noon. I used to earn Tk 25 to 30 thousand from my orchards yearly. It was the major source of income of my family," lamented Mazidul Islam, another erosion victim at same village.

The most affected villages are Badaitari, Bumka, Kurul, Etapota, Majhitari and Bowalmari of Mogholhat union.

Thousands other homesteads, vast cultivable land, orchards and important establishments in these villages are under erosion threat, locals said.

Sirajganj clinic ransacked as baby dies

A CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Agitated people ransacked Avcinna Hospital at Mujib Sarak in the town on Friday night following death of a five-month-old baby.

They also besieged Sadar police station demanding punishment to the doctors.

Victim's family sources said, baby Jobayer Hossain, son of Mukul Hossain in Kamarkhanda upazila of the district was taken to the hospital on Friday afternoon with high fever.

But he died in the evening allegedly for lack of treatment by the on-duty doctors as the boy's family could not give Tk 20 admission charge.

Relatives of the victim and locals also confined the hospital director to his chamber for about an hour.

During the period they damaged the furniture of the hospital.

On information, police and Rab members rushed to the spot and arrested a doctor. A case was lodged with the police station in this connection.



A large crack, developed on Friday shortly after removal of the temporary frame used for casting during construction of this bridge at Baraigram in Natore district, leaves it highly risky for users.