

Dense fog, cold seriously damage boro seedbeds

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT,
Thakurgaon

Boro seedbeds in many areas of Thakurgaon district are getting damaged under the impact of persistent cold wave and dense fog.

Farmers struggling to save the seedbeds by covering them with polythene and spraying medicines are now worried about recovery of their production cost, especially against the backdrop of low market price of paddy. During visit to different areas in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila including Salondor, Shingpara, Madarganj and

Kochubari villages Wednesday this correspondent saw many farmers sowing boro seeds in their fields again as their seedbeds got damaged due to cold weather and dense fog.

Farmers of five upazilas in Thakurgaon district have prepared seedbeds on 3,340 hectares of land, as there is a target of cultivating Irri-Boro paddy on 67,554 hectares of land with the production target of 2 lakh 61 thousand 716 tonnes of rice in this season, said officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension

(DAE).

Asraf Ali, 47, a farmer of Madarganj village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, said he prepared boro seedbed on eight decimals of land but a portion of it got damaged due to cold weather.

"I sprayed pesticides and fungicides several times during last 20 days to save my seedbed from cold. But the paddy plants are still dying. I have sowed seeds again to get seedlings for boro cultivation on my selected land," he said.

Mohammad Hafizur of

Shingpara village said he has to sow seeds again to cultivate boro paddy on his lands as the seedbeds, prepared for boro cultivation on three bighas of his land, have turned yellowish and got damaged.

"I sowed 20-kg of boro seeds on ten decimal of land but most of the seedlings have been damaged due to cold weather. I am now worried about recovery of the high production cost as the market price of paddy is low," said Ismail Hossain of the same village.

Belayet Hossain, deputy director of Thakurgaon DAE, said boro seedbeds in some villages of the district are affected due to severe cold weather but it will be recovered if the weather improves shortly.

"Farmers are advised to water seedbeds at night, cover them with polythene and use proper fertiliser. After maintaining this, if needed, farmers can spray Thiovit to save their Irri-Boro seedbeds from cold injuries," he said.

"When the weather becomes sunny, farmers can apply top dressing on affected seedbeds with a mixture of 280-gram urea and 100-gram potash per decimal of land to help the seedlings get back normalcy," he added.

He claimed that the production target will not be hampered as such situation arises in the northern districts every winter.



PHOTO: STAR

A boro seedbed at Boikunthapur village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila turn brownish under the impact of persistent cold accompanied by fog in the northern region.

Durgapur people call to spare 200 century-old trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Netrakona

People from all walks of life in Durgapur upazila under the district have urged the government to save 249 trees including 200 century-old ones on both sides of the road from Jhanjail Bazar to Durgapur upazila headquarters.

The trees are essential for environmental balance as well as beautification of the area including Durgapur tourist spot but Netrakona Zila Parishad sold the trees in the name of road development, locals said.

On October 11 last year, the High Court directed the government to maintain a 10-day status quo on felling of the 249 trees on both sides of the road between Jhanjail Bazar and Durgapur upazila, following a writ petition filed by Liton Mrong, general secretary of Garo Baptist

Convention.

Later on October 23, the High Court further directed the government to maintain a three-month status quo on chopping the trees.

Effectiveness of the status quo ends on January 23 this year.

Cutting of only a few trees on one side of the road at one or two places would be enough to widen the road but the authorities decided to unnecessarily fell down a large number of trees, locals said.

Urging the government to take permanent steps to save the 249 trees including 200 century-old ones, Jalaluddin Talukder, former lawmaker from Netrakona-1 constituency, said, "Initiative to cut the trees was taken to satisfy a vested group."

Barrister Kaiser Kamal, MP candidate from BNP in Netrakona-1 (Durgapur-

Kalmakanda) constituency in 2008 general election, also expressed similar views.

"The cutting of trees will affect the balance of the environment and natural beauty of the area, including Durgapur tourist spot. Twenty-six of the century-old trees belong to the Garo Baptists Convention and they have been sold without informing us. The act violates the law of the land," said Liton Mrong, general secretary of the convention.

The Netrakona Zila Parishad floated tenders on August 24 last year as they had decided to sell over 249 trees in the name of developing a 37km road from Durgapur upazila and Shamganj Bazar in Purbadhola upazila.

It is alleged that 35 organisations won the tenders for throwaway prices. Zila Parishad sources said

they decided to sell the trees as Netrakona Roads and Highways Department (RHD) requested them to sell the tree for developing and widening the road.

"The government allocated Tk 27 crore for developing the road. The trees were sold through due tender process to increase width of the road from existing 3.7 metres to 5.5 metres," said ayeeduddin, sub-assistant engineer of Netrakona RHD.

When contacted, Matior Rahman Khan, administrator of Netrakona Zila Parishad, said, "I shall look into the matter to rules and regulations. I will visit the spots to see the actual situation. After exchanging views with the engineer of zila parishad and executive engineer of Netrakona Roads and Highways I shall take decision in this regard."



PHOTO: STAR

Netrakona Zila Parishad has sold a number of century-old trees like these ones beside the road at Birishiri in Netrakona district in the name of road development.

SNAPSHOTS OF NARSINGDI POLLS



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

1) Supporters in jubilant mood yesterday after Kamruzzaman, brother of slain Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain, won the mayoral post that fell vacant following the tragic murder on November 1 last year, 2) Lokman's widow Nusrat Tamanna Bbulgarlands mayor-elect Kamruzzaman, 3) voters wait in queue at Shalidha Government Primary School centre to cast vote in the mayoral election, and 4) mother, sister and widow of slain mayor Lokman Hossain break into tears outside their polling centre.



Bogra trader sued for evading tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Bogra

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday filed a case against a Bogra businessman for evading tax.

Md Abdus Salam, deputy commissioner of taxes at Bogra Cricle-1, filed the case against Gouri Shanker Prosad, owner of GS International, with the Special Senior Judge's Court in Bogra for evading Tk 16.30 crore tax.

Public Prosecutor (PP) advocate Helalur Rahman Helal told this correspondent that the court took the case into cognisance and issued an arrest warrant against the businessman. The court fixed February 6 for hearing of the case.

In the case statement, the NBR official alleged that Gouri Shankar evaded the tax by preparing fake documents on import of commodities during the fiscals 2007-2008 and 2009-2010.

Robber killed in gunfight with Rab in Sundarbans

Call to strengthen vigilance in the area

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bagerhat

A robber belonging to infamous 'Jihad Bahini' was killed in a gunfight with a joint team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and coastguard on Shukpara Canal in the Sundarbans yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab personnel and coastguards led by Major Sabbir Rahman Osmani conducted a drive on the canal under Sharankhola range of the mangrove forest at around 12:00 noon.

Sensing their presence of Rab and coastguard members, a gang of 15 to 20 robbers of 'Jihad Bahini' opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate, said Major Sabbir.

At least 700 to 800 bul-

lets were traded during the battle that continued for one and a half hours, Major Sabbir added.

After the gunfight, the law enforcers searched the spot and found the bullet-hit body of a gang member whose identity could not be known as of 6:00pm yesterday.

They also recovered six one shooter guns, a foreign made single-barrel gun, a rifle, two airguns and 34 live cartridges from the spot.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Dubla Fishermen's Group Major (retd) Ziauddin Ahmed has urged the government to intensify regular patrols by Navy, Coastguards and Rapid Action Battalion on the sea and in the Sundarbans to protect its resources from

being looted by foreign fishermen.

In a press statement on Wednesday, Major (retd) Ziauddin, who was the sub-sector commander of the 9th Sector during Liberation War in 1971, expressed his grave concern at rampant trespassing of Indian, Thai and Myanmar fishing trawlers into Bangladesh maritime boundary for fishing and looting fish, reports our staff correspondent from Khulna.

Most modern fishing trawlers of these three countries are simply taking advantage of alarming rise in robbery being committed by local bandits, Major Ziauddin said in the statement.

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