

TARAGANJ UPAZILA IN RANGPUR

Farmers worried as pest, disease wreak havoc on aman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Massive pest attack and stem rot disease have affected the transplanted aman (T-aman) in Taraganj upzila of Rangpur district, much to the worry of farmers.

Stem borer (majra poka) and stem rot disease have continued wreaking havoc on the aman plants, foiling farmers' attempt to prevent them by spraying insecticides.

Frustration has gripped the farmers of the upazila as they have to incur heavy loss this year because of pest attack and outbreak of the disease.

While visiting Rahimapur, Ghanirampur, Jhakuapara, Mandolpara, Kashiabari, Boraty, Kumarpura, Narayanjan, Balapara and Jalubar villages recently, this correspondent found that at least 20 to 25 percent of the T-aman plants have been badly affected.

The farmers told this correspondent that T-aman plants at different villages are turning yellowish and drying up due to attack by stem borer and outbreak of stem rot disease.

"If the situation continues, we will suffer huge losses," said Abdul Ali, 55, of Ghanirampur village under the upazila. Majumder, 45, a farmer of Ujjal village in the upazila, said he has planted aman on one bigha of land this year. But he failed to prevent spread of stem disease and pest attack on his



PHOTO: STAR

Stem rot disease badly affects an aman field in Taraganj upazila of Rangpur district. Attack by stem borer (majra poka) on the plants has also added to the worry of the farmers in the upazila.

farmland despite spraying insecticides.

He said, "Fifty percent of T-aman plants on my land have already been damaged even though I sprayed pesticides thrice a day". According to the district Agriculture officials, aman has been cultivated on 9,800 hectares of land in Taraganj upazila.

Taraganj upazila official of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said T-aman plants in different areas in the upazila have been attacked with stem borer (Majra poka)

and stem rot disease.

"Drought-like situation at the beginning of the season and shortage of potash fertiliser on the paddy fields are the main reasons behind the attack by stem borer (majra poka) and outbreak of stem rot disease," said Shamir Chandra, upazila agriculture officer.

He urged the affected farmers to use more potash fertiliser and spray pesticides like Sumithion, Darsban and kantop on their farmland.

THURSDAY'S VIOLENT STORM

Hatiya reels from deaths, destruction

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, from Hatiya

The violent storm that lashed southern coastal areas of the country early Thursday left a trail of destruction on Hatiya Island under Noakhali district.

Thousands of uprooted and broken trees and electric poles were seen lying on the roads and on roadside farmlands and ponds while many houses, shops, school buildings and other structures were razed to the ground across the island.

A few more bodies were found floating on the Meghna yesterday morning. As soon as the news spread, local people, who had lost their near and dear ones in Thursday's storm, thronged the bank of the river.

Upazila administration sources said around 100 fishermen of the island, who went missing during the twister, remained untraced

until yesterday afternoon.

Around 3000 houses, mostly thatched and tin-roofed, 100 schools and madrasas and aman on about 1,8000 acres of land in 12 unions of the upazila were damaged by the storm.

The said five unions--Carring Char, Jahajmara, Boyar Char, Noler Char and Nijhumdwip--are the worst affected areas.

Locals alleged that they did not get sufficient help from the upazila administration to remove the uprooted and broken trees from the roads.

A trader of Mosjid Market in Oskhali area alleged that the upazila administration even failed to remove a broken tree from the road adjacent to the upazila office. Locals later removed it from the road, he added.

Refuting the allegations, UNO Mahidur Rahman said the upazila administration with the help of the forest



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

A storm-hit family waits for relief beside their damaged house at Char Uriya under Subarnachar upazila of Noakhali district yesterday. No relief materials reached the family, comprising nine members, in the last two days.

department and a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) removed the uprooted and broken trees from both sides of the main road stretching from Jahajmara to Nolchira in the last two days.

Storm-hit people of the island alleged that they were yet to get any relief.

UNB adds: With the recovery of two more bodies from Monpura upazila yesterday, the death toll from the powerful storm in Bhola

district rose to nine.

Locals recovered the bodies from Meghna River near Monpura sluice gate and the western side of old Khamar. The identity of the deceased, aged about 15 and 20, could not be known.

Tortured for 2 years by master, little Munmun now cries for justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Brutally tortured by family members of the employer, Mushfika Munmun, 13, daughter of Monwar Hossain Master of Jahanarabad village in Parbatipur upazila under the district, is crying for justice.

Munmun went to work at the house of Sarwar Hossain, a constable of Parbatipur GRP, in 2009, said family sources.

"Sarwar had told me that Munmun would stay like his daughter, and she would have to do only a little domestic work. But shortly after her going there, they started torturing her on trivial matters," Monwar said in the statement of the case he filed on Monday.

"As Sarwar's son Limon attempted to rape Munmun on May 5 in 2010, she requested her employer to send her back to us but Limon and his mother Lovely Begum increased their torture on her. They poured



Mushfika Munmun

boiling water on her body, burning her chest, most of the abdomen, and two hands.

"Left without proper treatment for over two years, she got serious infection," he added.

"In late 2010, Sarwar Hossain was transferred from Parbatipur and his family left the place with my daughter. During the last two years we tried to know about Munmun but failed," said a tearful Monwar.

On September 10 this year, with the help of the local UP chairman, the girl

was rescued from Dhaka and brought home.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) on Monday helped Monwar Hossain Master to file a case with Dinajpur Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal against GRP constable Sarwar Hossain's wife Lovely Begum and their son Md Limon, on charge of torturing Munmun.

As of filing this report, police could not arrest the accused and this correspondent failed to contact Lovely and Sarwar as their mobile phones remained off.

9 trafficked to India back home after 5 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Nine Bangladeshi men and women returned home through the check post here yesterday after languishing five months in an Indian jail.

The returnees, aged between 19 and 39, hailed from different areas in Bagerhat, Pirojpur and other districts.

BGB-26 Battalion Benapole check post commander Naik Subeder M Abdullah said, human traffickers took them to India five months ago, promising to give better jobs there.

They were caught by Indian police in New Delhi in May, 2012 when they were looking for jobs. They served

five months in Tihar jail in New Delhi on charge of intrusion.

The home ministry took the initiative to bring them back on expiry of their jail terms.

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed them over to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel through the check post here at night.

On Friday, BGB rescued nine other people from Puthkhali border in Benapole while they were being trafficked to India.

The BGB men also caught Arif Hossain, on charge of human trafficking.

A victim said they were being taken to India by a gang promising them better jobs there.

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