

Seedlings crisis worries farmers

Massive damage of seedbeds in flood badly affects Aman cultivation



Crops damaged in 6.11 lakh hectares	Aman yet to be planted in 16 lakh hectares	Govt to provide farmers with vegetable seeds, Aman seedlings	They are encouraged to reap Aus quickly
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REAZ AHMAD

With crops on 6.11 lakh hectares of land damaged by floods, farmers in 32 districts are in dire need of Aman seedlings to recoup their losses by producing the foodgrain.

In many northern and central districts, farmers couldn't plant Aman seedlings as floodwater washed away most of the seedbeds.

Till the third week of this month, farmers could plant Aman on 40 lakh hectares across the country, around 16 lakh hectares short of the target, according to preliminary field assessment by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

In the corresponding period last year, Aman coverage was nearly 100 percent of the target.

Amid weather uncertainty and projections of more rainfall later this week, the DAE advised its staff all over the country to encourage farmers to reap Aus rice immediately so that no more grain is lost to floodwater.

The agriculture ministry expects Aus harvest of at least 23 lakh tonnes from 10 lakh hectares.

Aman, grown during the monsoon, contributes 38 percent to the country's annual rice output, the second highest after irrigated Boro that accounts for 55 percent of the total. Aus contributes the remaining seven percent.

Given this year's loss of 20 lakh tonnes of Boro rice due to flashflood in haor areas and fungal attacks, production of the staple in the current Aman season is considered crucial for the country's food security.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributed Aman seedlings among farmers during her visit to flood-hit Gaibandha.

Officials at the agriculture ministry and the DAE told The Daily Star that

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Rohingya families crossing the border to escape persecution are lodged in a makeshift camp in Ghumdhum point in Cox's Bazar. Families were seen with bottles of water, polythene sheets and other basic essentials as they entered Bangladesh.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Shaken, they tell of horror they've fled

ANISUR RAHMAN

Helpless and hapless. Feelings of trepidation at being at the mercy of border guards of a neighbouring country are etched across the faces of refugees escaping persecution at home in Myanmar. Hundreds of refugees huddled in a group at no-man's land in Ghumdhum along Teknaf border were pleading silently at border guards to let them into safety in Bangladesh.

They knew they would not be welcomed so easily. They would have to wait at the border for a long time before crossing it. Yet, they might not have had any other option apart from rushing towards Bangladesh. So they came with little a preparation.

Though they left their homes hurriedly, many of them came to the border

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Rohingyas pouring in

Hundreds cross border points in Teknaf, Ukha, Naikhyangchhari; scores wait on no-man's land

STAR REPORT

Hundreds of Rohingyas entered Bangladesh through different unguarded border points of Ukha, Teknaf and Naikhyangchhari yesterday while hundreds more took shelter on no man's land after failing to cross the border.

Although Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the local administration denied entry to Rohingyas, residents and elected representatives in those areas said refugees were coming through six unprotected points.

Locals added that some of the Myanmar nationals were going to unregistered refugee camps on foot or by battery-run easy bikes.

Visiting different spots and talking with locals in Ghumdhum under Naikhyangchhari upazila of

Bandarban, our Cox's Bazar correspondent learnt that many more Rohingyas were waiting to cross the border.

Some of the refugees who got into the country alleged that Myanmar troops were burning down their houses, killing men and torturing women. "We came here to save our lives," one of them told The Daily Star.

Border guards remained on high alert as fresh gunshots were heard in Myanmar's Maungdaw, opposite of Ghumdhum, between 8:30am and 9:00am yesterday, our correspondent reported.

The BGB chief warned of a "befitting response" if Myanmar's Border Guard Police (BGP) creates any untoward situation in the bordering area.

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Nobody's people

NEWS ANALYSIS

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

The latest wave of Myanmar's killing of Rohingyas and the preceding world reaction to the continued genocide happening in the Southeast Asian country have truly put these hapless people at the risk of complete annihilation. It now seems there is nobody to stand by them, nobody to stop the murderous behaviour of a nation that sits at the cradle of so many great civilisations.

What is equally worrying is that the Rohingya crisis has all the latency of becoming a major crisis relating to terrorism for the whole of Southeast Asia. But the reactions of the South Asian neighbours do not truly reflect that concern.

The new spate of killing started, as if as a counter slap, just after a day of a report by a commission led by former UN chief Kofi Annan that came down heavily on Myanmar for the pogrom and urged the country to scrap restrictions on movement and citizenship for its Rohingya minority.

Myanmar's new mindless behaviour was emboldened by

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Milestone men Shakib Al Hasan (L) and Tamim Iqbal, both playing their 50th Test, lifted Bangladesh out of the hole with a magnificent 155-run fourth-wicket stand on an absorbing opening day of the first Test against Australia at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigers start as promised

BISHWAJIT ROY

On the very first day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Australia, the home side's ploy to trap the visitors was demonstrated with some panache. The absorbing day at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium provided enough evidence that the Tigers' pre-series roars of a possible 2-0 outcome were not an idle threat. The reality that the Australians experienced at the fag end of the day's play was that Bangladesh had reached a position from where they could fully and confidently execute their strategy of victimising the Aussies on a tailor-made wicket.

Tamim Iqbal (71) and Shakib Al Hasan (84) stood tall on the occasion of their 50th Test faced with a wicket -- which soon became spotted with footmarks -- that helped pacers and spinners alike make merry from the very beginning, to share a masterful 155-run fourth-wicket partnership on a day in which 13 wickets tumbled.

At the end of the first day's play however, it was the panic the home side created in the visitors' camp while reducing them to 18 for three in reply to Bangladesh's first-innings 260 that became the centre of discussion and brought smiles on the faces of the home team players and coaching staff, who rushed to the pitch soon after the teams left the ground.

One could have understood the amount of pressure the Bangladesh spin duo of Shakib and Mehedi Hasan put on the visitors if he or she saw the

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TOP QUOTE

"Sad news has reached us of the persecution of our Rohingya brothers and sisters, a religious minority. I would like to express my full closeness to them ..."

POPE FRANCIS
AT THE ST PETER'S SQUARE

Don't demean the apex court

Eminent citizens urge everyone over 16th amendment verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-five eminent citizens yesterday expressed concern over the reactions by different quarters on the Supreme Court's verdict that scrapped the 16th amendment to the constitution.

They urged all quarters to refrain from making comments that demean the apex court, considering people's overall interest, says a press release.

Both -- politicisation of the apex court's verdict or showing over enthusiasm

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Teen gangs violent again

Two killed in four days

MUNTAKIM SAAD and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Remember schoolboy Adnan Kabir?

The 14-year-old was murdered over an enmity between two teen gangs in Uttara on January 6.

Since then, at least five other teenagers lost their lives in the capital apparently owing to the deadly gang culture where fighting for drawing "respect" from others and establishing supremacy in local areas is common.

Two of the killings took place last week. Nineteen-year-old tailor Kabir Hossain was murdered on Tuesday while 16-year-old small trader Mohammad Shahin on Thursday.

Kabir was beaten and stabbed to death in Uttar Pirerbagh area of Mirpur.

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MD & CEO,
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