



An inundated vegetable field at Baoikhola village in Basail upazila of Tangail. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: MIRZASHAKIL

# Floods inflict crop loss of Tk 141cr

*Vast croplands in 11 out of 12 upazilas in Tangail damaged by the recent flood*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Farmers in Tangail are facing financial doom, as the recent flood inflicted damage on crop fields in 11 out of total 12 upazilas in the district.

Thousands of hectares of crops fields in the district were inundated during the flood that began on July 10, which damaged standing paddy, seed beds of paddy and different kinds of vegetables. The water started receding from July 21.

At a time when farmers were not receiving good prices for their boro paddy, they were

hopeful that the current aman would help improve their situation. But the flood washed away their hopes.

Shariful Islam, sub-assistant agriculture officer at Department of Agriculture Extension in Tangail, said there were different crops and vegetables being grown on 42,537 hectares of land.

Of these lands, almost 40 percent or 16,705 hectares were inundated.

There were some 817 hectares of transplanted aman, 11,515 hectares of broadcast aman, 1,445 hectares of aush, 1,088 hectares of seed beds of transplanted aman,

1,795 hectares of vegetables and 45 hectares of banana on these inundated lands, he said.

Crops on 13,571 hectares of lands were fully damaged while 3,134 hectares were partially damaged, he said.

Of the fully damaged crops fields, there was transplanted aman on 490 hectares, broadcast aman on 9,212 hectares, aush on 1,156 hectares, seed beds of transplanted aman on 1,088 hectares, vegetables on 1,615 hectares and banana on 10 hectares.

The district DAE estimated crop damage at Tk 141.25 crore (141 crores 25 lakhs), he said.

A total of 157,811 farmer families were

affected and faced losses due to the flood, he added.

Md Ashraf Hossain, a farmer of Aloa Bhabani village in Tangail Sadar upazila, said he cultivated transplanted aman paddy on 12 bighas of land, 11 bighas of which were damaged by the flood.

“The flood has doomed my all hopes. Now I do not know how can I make up for this loss. How can I bear my family’s expenses?” the farmer asked hopelessly.

Contacted, Agriculturist Abdur Razzak, deputy director of DAE in Tangail, said

the local farmers had cultivated different vegetables in addition to the transplanted and broadcast aman paddy, aush paddy and jute this season.

But the recent flood damaged vast areas of crop fields, he added.

“We have made a list of affected farmers and sent it to the agriculture ministry. They will receive support as per the ministry’s decision.”

“We are now preparing aman seed beds on 50 acres of land, so that we rush the saplings to the affected farmers just as the flood waters recede from the fields,” he said.

# Four months ‘holiday’ every year!

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Academic activities at Madan Gouri Government Primary School in Moulvibazar’s Kulaura upazila come to a standstill with the advent of monsoon every year.

Knee-deep stagnant rainwater is visible for at least four months both inside and outside the classrooms of the school covering 0.33-acre area.

Locals, guardians, current and former students of the school said the situation had been like that for the last 25 years.

There are 200 students currently enrolled in the school established in 1882. Its permanent campus was built in Madan Gouri neighbourhood in 1994 and flood had been hitting the premises bad every monsoon since then, according to the school management committee.

Saif Uddin, a local shopkeeper and an alumni of the school said, “I see clogged water submerging the premises every year. Classes remain suspended for four to five months then. During childhood, it felt like an unofficial vacation,” said Saif, who passed from the school in year 2000.

Such repeated disruption adversely affects the students and their performances, according to Saif. Johirul Islam, 14, a current madrasa student who passed PSC from the school, echoed him.

Nadir Mohammad, 75, of Madan Gouri village, said, “My granddaughter Samira Begum is in grade II. She has lost interest in studies. ‘What’s the point

of studying? Classes will not be held,’ she says.”

Monir Uddin, whose daughter reads in class III, said that the school had been closed for about two months now. “The authorities could not come up any solution although 25 years have elapsed,” he said.

“We had to suspend the classes in mid-June to protect the students,” said Abdul Kadir, president of the school management committee. “The school premises are inundated every year as it lies five feet below the main road. Moreover, the Hakaluki haor surrounds the village.

“Some PSC candidates, however, are taking tuitions from teachers living nearby the school,” he added.

He told this paper that a proposal to build a two-storey complex for the school, which would house a flood shelter as well, had been put forth the authorities.

“Written applications have been submitted to the deputy commissioner, upazila education officer and the district education officer. I have visited the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education a couple of times in this connection, but there is hardly any initiative in place.”

When asked why no initiative was taken in last 25 years, Kulaura Upazila Education Officer Ayub Uddin said, “We sent reports on the overall condition of the school to the district education office every month. But they never took any step following those reports.”



The compound of Madan Gouri Government Primary School in Moulvibazar’s Kulaura upazila remains waterlogged for almost four months every year, hampering academic activities of 200 students of the institution.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA



One of the 16 houses, made after raising lands owned by poor families at Char Sindurna in Lalmonirhat’s Hatibandha upazila. The recently taken initiative by an NGO has been proved successful to provide safety for locals during floods that visit the area every year.

PHOTO: SDILIP ROY

# Teesta char people want houses on raised land

*16 such houses served as shelter for flood-affected people in remote Lalmonirhat*

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Poor people living in different remote char areas along the Teesta river in Lalmonirhat have sought help to build houses on raised lands as 16 homesteads made above the flood level at Char Sindurna in Hatibandha upazila provided shelter to the affected people during the recent floods.

During the recent floods, 234 of the 250 houses at Char Sindurna in a Teesta riverbed area of Sindurna union, went under floodwater while the 16 others remained safe as those were made after raising the lands by around five feet.

These homesteads were used as shelter centres for flood-affected people from nearby areas.

Two months before the monsoon, these 16 homesteads were built after raising the level of lands owned by ultra-poor families in the char (land

emerging from riverbed) island, some five kilometres from the mainland.

The project was implemented under Integrated Communication Development Project (ICDP-II) of non-governmental organisation (NGO) Eco-Social Development Organisation with fund from PLAN International Bangladesh.

Tk 40 thousand was spent for each house, which included putting earth to raise the level of land, building the structure and planting different trees around.

“Our house went under floodwaters last year but we remained safe this season as our house was built on a land that was raised by five feet. Affected people from the nearby area took shelter in our house during recent floods,” said Rafiqul Islam, 48, a farm labourer at Sindurna.

Shamsul Islam, 62, a farmer of the area, said their house remained under floodwaters for two weeks in last month.

“But we didn’t go elsewhere. Instead, we took shelter in a neighbour’s house that was made on a raised land before the rains. We also want such houses but we don’t have the ability,” he said.

Sindurna Union Parishad Chairman Nural Amin said he visited the Teesta char area during floods and saw how houses on raised lands provided safety for people.

“NGOs can help people in char areas to build this type of homes as they face floods every year,” he said.

Rangpur Divisional Manager of PLAN International Bangladesh, Asis Kumar Baksi said, “With our limited fund, houses for 16 ultra-poor families were built on raised land and these benefited the char people during floods. We will share the success story with high officials of the government so that steps can be taken for such initiative in other char areas.”