



An Aman field at Sreenagar village in Khulna's Dacope upazila dries up due to lack of rain during the ongoing rainy season.

PHOTO: STAR

Scanty rain worries Khulna farmers

Croplands drying up, Aman seedbeds damaged

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Aman cultivation in the ongoing sowing season is badly hampered amid insufficient rain in the district as farmers are reluctant to use saline water for irrigation.

Sowing of Aman paddy starts early July and continues till late August, but hundreds of acres of land in nine upazilas still remain uncultivated, said Pankaj Kanti Majumder, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Khulna. The upazilas include Batiaghata, Dacope, Dumuria, Paikgachha and Koira.

About 18,900 hectares of land in Dacope upazila have been brought under Aman cultivation this year but a large number of farmers cannot prepare seedbeds due to scanty rainfall during the ongoing rainy season, said Mehedi Hasan, agriculture officer in Dacope upazila.

Only one to two percent farmers could prepare seedbeds in the upazila

this time, said Mehedi.

As the growers are dependent on rainwater for Aman farming, cultivation of the paddy usually does not require any irrigation.

Rainfall has been decreasing in the district for the last five years, hampering Aman cultivation, said Amirul Azad, senior met officer of Khulna.

Meanwhile, the canals and rivers in the district contain saline water, much to the worry of farmers.

Khulna Met Office recorded 336 millimetres of rainfall from July 1 to August 22 this year while it was 371 millimetres during the same period last year and 689 millimetres in 2017.

Only 115 millimetres of rainfall was recorded in June this year while it was 266 last year and 356 millimetres in 2017, said Amirul.

Proshad Roy, a farmer of Khalashibunia village in Batiaghata upazila, said after

preparing the Aman seedbeds, they can wait highest 40 days to sow the seedlings in the field.

"But the farmers of my locality could not prepare seedbeds for lack of rains," he said, adding that "My land developed cracks due to continuous high temperature for the last three months."

Another grower Ayub Ali of Katianangla village in Batiaghata said "Generally we depend on rainwater. After mid-June, rains come in the region but it seems summer season this time."

Dacope upazila Agriculture Officer Mehedi said farmers have faced difficulties to prepare seedbeds due to lack of rains this year.

Shyama Prosad Mondal, a farmer of Sutarkhali village in Dacope upazila, said he has faced manifold problems to prepare seedbeds on twelve bighas of his land.

Due to insufficient rainfall, he used water from canal for irrigation and as the

canal contains saline water, his seedbeds were ruined, said Shyama Prosad.

There is no rain in their locality in the last couple of weeks, he said.

The target of Aman cultivation in the district this season is 92,807 hectares of land but only two to three percent of land have been brought under the cultivation till July 15, said sources at DAE in Khulna.

But during the same period last year, Aman was sown on over 90,000 hectares of land.

Insufficient rainfall is hampering Aman cultivation during the ongoing peak sowing season, said the DAE deputy director.

Now the farmers are watering their land with pumps, he said.

He, however, hoped that the target will be achieved as the sowing will continue till August.

Khulna district produced over 2 lakh 75 thousand tonnes of Aman paddy last year.

8-yr-old boy, man killed in two districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A child and an elderly man were killed in separate incidents in Moulvibazar and Kishoreganj districts.

An eight-year-old boy met a tragic death following stab injuries during a fight between his two uncles in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar on Wednesday night, reports our correspondent.

The deceased, Anik Mia, 8, was the son of Ilai Mia, a day labourer, said police.

The Shiblu Mia and his cousin Ilai Mia took lease of a water body six months ago. Another cousin Dilu Mia wanted 50 percent partnership and he engaged in an altercation with Shiblu Mia at Ilai Mia's house on Wednesday night when Ilai Mia was outside.

"At one stage, Shiblu and Dilu attacked each other with sharp weapons and Anik Mia was seriously injured, being stabbed with Shiblu's knife," said Ilai Mia.

Anik was admitted to Kulaura Health Complex around 11:30pm on Wednesday, from where he was shifted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital, said Dr Zakir Hosain, resident medical officer at the health complex.

Doctors at the Sylhet hospital declared him dead.

"The body was sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Anik's mother filed a complaint regarding the incident. Attempts are on to arrest the accused," said Eardous Hasan, officer-in-charge of Kulaura Police Station. Our Mymensingh Correspondent reports: An elderly man was stabbed to death allegedly by his younger brother over land dispute in Pakundia upazila of Kishoreganj on Wednesday morning.

The victim was Ali Asgar Mustafa Mukul, 62, son of late Harun-or-Rashid of Charteki village in Pakundia upazila.

"Mukul used to live in Dhaka for business purposes and he came home on Monday to attend a namaz-e-janaza of his relative who died of dengue at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Sunday," Pakundia Police Station officer-in-charge Md Mofizur Rahman quoted locals as saying.

Mukul had an altercation over land dispute with his younger brother Shamsul Muslimin Moti, 55, around 6:00am on Wednesday.

At one stage, Moti allegedly attacked Mukul with a knife and stabbed indiscriminately in his chest, said the OC.

Hearing screams, neighbours rushed to the spot and took badly injured Mukul to Pakundia Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Police sent the body to Kishoreganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Police also arrested Moti for his alleged involvement in the killing, the OC said.

4 get life term for murders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sentenced four people to life term imprisonment in connection with a case for killing three rival group members in Baniachong upazila in 1998.

Habiganj District and Sessions Judge Nasim Reza delivered the verdict yesterday afternoon in presence of the convicts -- Karam Ali, son of Haji Ismail, Ali Mohammad, son of late Halim Ullah, Suruj Ali, son of Abdul Hashim, and Turab Ali, son of late Sanjab Ali.

They all hail from Puran Patharia village in the upazila, Court Inspector Mohammad Al-Amin said.

According to the prosecution, a clash took place between two groups of villagers in Baniachong upazila over previous enmity on September 19 in 1998 that left three people-- Samsul Haque, Afil Uddin and Nur Mohammad--killed and nearly hundred others from both sides injured.

3 kids drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Three children drowned in Netrakona and Kishoreganj in the last two days.

A four-year-old boy drowned in a pond at Krishapur village in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Zakir Hossain, son of Nabi Hossain of the village.

Zakir accidentally fell into the pond while playing on its bank and drowned, said Officer-in-Charge of Kalmakanda Police Station Md Mazharul Karim.

Later, locals recovered the body from the pond, said the OC.

Meanwhile, two kids drowned in Nandail upazila of Mymensingh on Wednesday, police said.

Makaddis Bhiyan, 5, drowned in a pond at Hayatpur village in Nandail around 5:00pm.

Makaddis, son of Mamun Bhuiyan, accidentally fell into the pond while playing on its bank with other children.

In another incident, three-year-old Shamima Akter drowned in a pond at Pachpara area.

College girl sues boyfriend

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A college girl appeared at a police station in Rangpur on Wednesday with a dead foetus and sued her boyfriend and his friend for aborting her unborn child by rendering her unconscious.

In the statement of the case filed with Gangachara Police Station, the first-year college student said on Monday, when she was 26 weeks pregnant with the child of Mohammad Jony, his friend Mohammad Shimul told her that Jony wanted to marry her and the former wanted to meet her at a clinic in Rangpur town.

Jony, who recently passed HSC and son of Bishadur Rahman of Ghagatari Bhangi village in Gangachara upazila, had cut off ties with her after she became pregnant with his child. Before going completely out of reach, he refused to marry her and asked her to abort the child.

After arriving in the town from Gangachara on Monday, Shimul made her wait at the clinic till late at night, saying that Jony was still on the way from Dhaka. "I trusted him and continued waiting for Jony," she said.

Shimul then brought her food as it was getting late. Soon after having the food, she slipped into deep sleep. "He must have given me sedative drugs in the meal," she said.

On Tuesday morning, she realised that her child was aborted through surgery. Later, at her persistent demand, the clinic authorities were compelled to give the dead foetus to her.

She then went home and took her family members along to the police station to file the case on Wednesday.

Susanta Kumar Sarkar, inspector (investigation) of the police station, said they launched an investigation and autopsy of the foetus has been conducted.

Sub-Inspector Moqbul Hossain, the investigation officer, said they would take the girl along in Rangpur town to identify the clinic.



Born without the right hand, Md Afzal Hosain serves customers, writing with his deformed left hand, at his Flexiload shop at Pattai village in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, alongside running a pharmacy there. PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Physically challenged yet indomitable

Born without right hand and deformed left hand, Afzal runs pharmacy and Flexiload business

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

A physically challenged by birth, Md Afzal Hosain of Pattai village in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila has set a laudable example of self-reliance and benevolent service through determination and hard work.

Afzal, 34, was born without the right hand and a deformed and weak left hand.

Many would expect such a man to depend on others and set their expectations low in terms of anything they can deliver.

But, Afzal proves otherwise.

He passed Kamil (equivalent to master's) from Jamia Islamia Darul Ulum Madrasa in Bishwanath upazila of Sylhet in 2006.

Afterwards he completed a course at a government-run organisation to qualify for running a pharmacy and received technical training under the government's youth



development programme in Sylhet.

"In 2010, I opened a pharmacy at my village bazaar. Now I am running the shop along with Flexiload business here," he said.

Afzal keeps his pharmacy open even during rain or cold, said Md Salaudinn,

a resident of the area.

Visiting his pharmacy at Pattai on an afternoon a few days ago, this correspondent found Afzal attending customers.

"I give medicines for free to ultra-poor people when they have serious problems. I want no one to die without medicine or primary treatment," he added.

Afzal, fourth among six siblings, lost his father when he was a third grader.

Syed Ashfak H Tanvir, general secretary of Robirbazar club (a local welfare organization), said Afzal is very sincere in his work and inspiration for others, especially the challenged ones like him.

Shafi Ahmed Solman, chairman of Kulaura Upazila Parishad, said, "Although physically challenged, Afzal is mentally very strong and does his work diligently."



A bronze-winged jacana, called dal-pipi in Bangla, roams around at a field in Mohadanga Beel in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN