



## Struggling for every drop

Plight of hill villagers in Bandarban for safe water

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Residents of Thangkhroi Para, a centuries-old village in Bandarban Sadar upazila, are grappling with an acute drinking water crisis even before the peak of summer.

Their only source of water is a stone pit in a dried-up stream called Thangkhroi, where water trickles down at an agonisingly slow pace. Meanwhile, as the dry season sets in, this meagre supply dwindles further, making survival increasingly difficult.

Home to around 30 families, Thangkhroi Para is a picturesque yet remote village located approximately 15 kilometres from Bandarban town.

Rugged terrain and a lack of proper transportation isolate the community, causing their struggles to go largely unnoticed by authorities, leaving residents to fend for themselves.

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## COASTAL AREAS IN KHULNA Where drinking water becomes a luxury

DIPANKAR ROY

When Razia Begum, now 56, got married at just 16, water was not a concern. Like most women in her village of Banisanta in Khulna's Dacope upazila, she collected freshwater from nearby ponds. Life was simple, and water was abundant.

But everything changed with the spread of shrimp farming. Once brimming with freshwater, the ponds gradually turned saline. By the early 2000s, Razia and her neighbours were caught in a mounting crisis. By 2002-03, access to drinkable water became a daily battle that stretched on for years.

To cope, the community restored a pond near Amtala Banisanta Government Primary School, three kilometres from Razia's home. For years, she walked the distance to fetch water. But declining health – kidney disease and bone ailments – have now made that impossible.

"My family needs at least three pitchers of water a day. Each 15 litre pitcher costs 30 taka, and delivery adds another 10 taka. We spend 2,500-2,700 taka a month just for drinking water," Razia said.

For a household of 10, surviving on a modest monthly income of 9,000 taka, this is a crushing burden.

Her father-in-law is immobile,

and her husband too ill to work. The family depends on her son, an easy bike driver, and her son-in-law, a security guard, for survival.

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Just half a kilometre away,

Taslima Begum faces similar

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survives on one 20-litre water jar

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