

No monga bite due to effective govt initiatives in N-dists

RANGPUR, Oct 19:—The poorer people in the poverty-prone greater Rangpur and other adjoining northern districts have been facing the current seasonal lean period of monga very successfully following various effective steps of the government this year, reports BSS.

The day- and farm labourers and all other distressed people are now leading almost a normal life for the first time this year without any bite of seasonal monga that repeated every year during the months of Aswin and Kartik in the region, officials said.

The steps including the 100-day employment generation programme, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programmes, Test Relief (TR), BRRRI Dhan-33 farming, and various allowances programmes have been proved to be very effective this year.

The concerned district and upazila level officials today told BSS that there is no incident of any starving by anyone and anywhere in all eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur as the poorer section people are getting the ongoing government assistances.

They also hoped that there will be no monga situation at all in the poverty and natural calamity prone northern districts in near future and the people of the area will get complete rid of the century-old curse of monga by the year 2013 as targeted by the gov-

ernment.

The ongoing Taka 302.04 crore two-phase 100-day special employment generation programmes has been continuing very successfully and helping the poor during this lean period in all eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur, officials said.

The river-eroded hapless people, poor and farm-labourers have now been earning Taka 100 as wage per day since last September 15 to tackle the seasonal monga situation that significantly helps them avoiding any impact of it this year.

The Deputy Commissioners, UNOs and government officials formally launched the first 60-day phase of programme at various places at all unions of all upazilas in these eight districts on September 15 last like elsewhere in the country.

The programme has been helping the targeted people, especially in the poverty-prone char areas in the river basins, to overcome the monga and also helping the poor in earning their livelihoods and helped celebrating the Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja festivities.

The Food and Disaster Management Ministry has allocated 60 per cent of the money amounting to Taka 181.224 cr for the first 60-day phase to create jobs during the monga period in these districts.

The targeted beneficiary group of people has been working under the programme in all unions of all

upazilas in the districts of Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur.

The first 60-day works of the programme will continue till November 30 next during the months of Aswin and Kartik, the peak period of the seasonal monga in the poverty-stricken northern region, the officials said.

The ministry will allocate the other 40 per cent of the total money amounting to Taka 120.816 crore to continue the programme for another 40 days under the second phase from March 1 to April 15 next year.

Senior officials concerned today told BSS that a total of 30,20,400 beneficiaries including women labourers will get Taka 100 as wage a day in two phases of the 100-day programme.

Each of the beneficiaries might get a total amount of Taka 10,000 after completion of his or her 100-day works under the programme to combat seasonal job crisis of monga this year, they said.

Besides, similar works began from the first and second week of this month in every UP of Rangpur under the ongoing Test Relief (TR) programme and the government has allocated more 3,284 tonnes rice for Rangpur alone.

The same TR programme also began in the other seven districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur simultaneously that further eased the situation.

Like in other districts, the administration already completed distribution of a total of 3,870 tonnes VGF rice for the months of September and October with 1,935 tonnes rice every month among 1,29,000 distressed families in all 83 Ups and three pourashavas in Rangpur.

The next allocation of more 1,935 tonnes VGF rice is now being awaited by the administration for the month of November in Rangpur like in the other northern districts, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) Jargis Rahman told BSS today.

Like in the other northern districts, the local administration successfully distributed 75.79 tonnes of rice among 583 Puja Mandaps in Rangpur for assisting the Hindu community people to celebrate their greatest religious festival of Durga Puja.

The situation started easing further harvesting of the short duration BRRI Dhan-33 variety Aman paddy, cultivated in over 40,150 hectares land in five districts of greater Rangpur alone under the government initiatives this year, now continues in full swing.

While talking to BSS this noon, chairman of Ramna Model Union Parishad in poverty-prone Chilmari upazila of Kurigram and Principal of Chilmari Degree College Prof Abul Kashem told that there is no bite of monga this year in the upazila due to the various government programmes.

SM Nurul Amin Sarker, Editor of the Weekly Janopran of Chilmari upazila on the Brahmaputra basin also told BSS that the distressed, river-eroded and poorer section people of the upazila are living better without any monga bite for the first time this year.