

Upazila roundup

RANGAMATI

Loan given to 10,469 families written off

Sept 9: Addressing a meeting, Oatam Dewan said the government on humanitarian ground decided to write off the loan amounting to Tk 7,65,14,000 which was disbursed to 10,469 families in the district earlier, reports UNB.

The Chairman of Rangamati Hill District Local Government Parishad, Dewan hailed the government decision to exempt loan of the farmers who had been affected by the April 29 devastating cyclone. The meeting was held on August 27.

He also stressed upon the need for disbursement of fresh loan on agriculture and farming sectors with a view to rehabilitate the distressed and suffering people of the district as they have become jobless due to imposition of a ban on extraction of forest products and fishing in the Kaptal lake.

SIRAJGANJ

3 babies killed

Sept 9: Three minors were killed by the flood water and thunder bolt in three upazilas of the district Sunday, family sources said, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Labani (1) on Narina village in Shahjapur upazila, Bablu (3) of Bhadrachal village in Kamarkhand upazila and Arif (12) of Dhambhandi village in Sadar upazila.

With this the death toll here rose to six during the last four days.

Meanwhile, diarrhoea that broke out in an alarming proportion so far attacked 50 people in flood hit areas. Local doctors attributed scarcity of pure water and adulterated food to the spread of the disease.

BAGERHAT

Arms factory unearthed

Sept 9: Police unearthed an arms factory in Borni area of Rampal upazila of the district yesterday and arrested six people allegedly involved in its operation, reports UNB.

Acting on a secret information, police raided the factory and recovered five arms and ammunition including a foreign made gun and a large number of machine tools.

Those arrested were: Salim Malik, Alim Malik, Akram Malik, Kamal Malik, Abul Malik and Abdul Kuddus.

Police quoting the six said, they were supplying arms to some gangs of criminals since long.

A case has been filed with the Rampal police in this connection.

PATUAKHALI

Weaving factories remain idle

Sept 9: A large number of weaving factories remained idle in six southern districts due to price hikes of yarn, chemicals and other necessary inputs, reports UNB.

According to sources, the price of 40 count yarn has increased by Tk 200 per bundle. The sales tax in terms of VAT of imported chemicals has also increased by 30 per cent.

As the weavers of these districts namely Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Pirojpur and Jhalakathi are not getting yarn at the price fixed by the government, they are forced to keep their many weaving factories idle for want of yarn.

It is alleged that the dealers appointed by the BTMC and Handloom Board are selling their yarns at Narayanganj, Pabna and Narsingdi at high prices instead of selling in the local market.

Moreover, smuggled Indian sarces and cloths over flooding the markets, has made the crisis acute. These are being sold at prices less than local products. As a result, the people are fond of Indian sarces, local people said.

JAMALPUR

Reopening of all closed educational institutions urged

Sept 9: The activists of the district Chhatra League (A-N) brought out a procession on Sunday demanding immediate reopening of all closed educational institutions of the country, reports UNB.

The processionists paraded the main streets of the town and chanted various slogans in favour of their demand.

They also urged the government to nab the armed ter-

rroists from the campus and give exemplary punishment to them to ensure peaceful atmosphere in the academic arena.

Workshop on agri-loan

A two-day long workshop on agri-loan distribution and monitoring completed here on Sunday.

Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) and Canadian Resource Team jointly organised the workshop.

At least 50 cooperative samity leaders and rural development officers of BRDB from Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts participated in the workshop.

COMILLA

Husband jailed for throwing acid on wife

Sept 9: Md Emdadul Haque has been given life-term for throwing acid on his wife and seriously injuring her, court sources said here today, reports UNB.

The Additional Sessions Judge, in his judgement, recently, also fined him Tk 15,000, in default, to suffer one more year of rigorous imprisonment.

The case, in brief, was that the victim Jahera Khatoon on 22 December, 1987 was living with her mother Johara Khatoon in her paternal home. The accused Abul Hashem on the plea of having some discussion entered the house and threw acid on Jahera.

Johara lodged a complaint with Devidwar police who submitted charge sheet against Abul Hashem and three others.

Eleven witnesses were examined in this case. The three co-accused were acquitted.

JHENIDAH

Jute production likely to fall

Sept 9: Jute production is likely to fall short of the target this season as growers were disinterested in jute cultivation because of low price, reports UNB.

According to district Agriculture Extension Department (AED), a total of 10,500 bales of jute were expected to be produced on 41,500 acres of land in six upazilas of the district. But only 29,260 acres of land could be brought under jute farming as against 32,200 acres last year with the expected production of 7000 bales as against 10,500 bales last year.

The farmers in the area said that they had cut down jute cultivation this year as they had to incur loss last year as jute prices had been below production cost.

BRAHMANBARIA

Rains damage crops on 3000 acres

Sept 9: Transplanted aman crops on a vast tract of land went under water due to ceaseless heavy rainfall and onrush of hilly waters in the district, reports UNB.

According to official sources, about 3,000 acres of transplanted aman crops were damaged by the flash flood.

The affected upazilas are: Brahmanbaria Sadar, Sarail and Nasirganj.

It is apprehended that more areas of croplands in the district will be inundated if heavy downpour continues further.

PABNA

Govt deprived of Tk 2 crore land revenue

Sept 9: Government has been deprived of revenue of over Tk 2 crore during the last financial year due to alleged corruption and negligence of duty of the officials, reports UNB.

Local elite complained that realisation of land development tax in nine upazilas of the district was quite disappointing. According to them, only 33.27 per cent tax has been realised during the period.

Official sources admitted that a total of Taka 1.4 crore was collected as land development tax during the period against the target of Tk 3.15 crore.

They, however, denied the corruption charges levelled against them adding that poverty of the peasants and visitation of natural calamities were the main reasons for the poor collection.



JAMALPUR: A pest infested sugarcane field at Dewanganj upazila of the district. — Star photo

Pests attack sugarcane on 3000 acres in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Sept 9: Sugarcane on 3000 acres of land have been attacked by pests in flood-hit areas under Dewanganj, Islampur, Melandah and Jamalpur Sadar upazilas.

According to the sources, pests known as Red rot, Stem Borer, Top rot, wilt rot and kind of brown grasshopper have attacked sugarcane on about 3000 acres on various flood affected areas of the district.

Due to the pest attack tender sugarcane plants grow yellowish and reduce to straw.

It is learnt that the concerned authority depends upon the reports from field supervisors about pest invasion. But the field supervisors allegedly prepare imaginary reports on pests invasion without visiting the affected areas, although the invasion is rapidly engulfing fresh sugarcane fields but yet no steps have been taken to curb the menace.

It is alleged that sprayers available with the upazila Sugarcane Development Centres are lying inoperative for want of spare parts. The situation has become worse as farmers are unable to buy the required quantity of insecticides because of its exorbitant prices in the local markets. However, small quantity of insecticides have been distributed by sugar mill authority.

Experience quarter opined that if the government does not take effective measures immediately the situation might go out of control.

Confirming the extensive pest attack in four upazilas of the district a top official of Melandah Upazila Sugarcane Development Centre told this

correspondent that they were making best efforts to stop the menace but due to serious shortage of insecticides and spray machines they were unable to do the needful.

It is further alleged that even after being informed of the situation in Dewanganj upazila, sugarcane officials did not visit the pest affected areas. Sugarcane growers of these upazilas have urged the higher authorities to take immediate steps in this connection.

Kidnapped girl killed

One Dulali Khatoon (14) was kidnapped and later killed by her brother-in-law in Islampur upazila recently. Sub-Inspector Subrata Sarkar Bakta of Islampur police station recovered the body in Benuarchar under Islampur upazila.

A case has been registered

with Islampur police station in this connection.

2 killed in road mishap

Two persons were killed and five others injured when a speeding truck hit a autorickshaw on Jamalpur-Tangal highway near interdistrict bus terminal recently.

Eyewitnesses said that Romiz (27) of village Glibari under Islampur upazila and Ishaq Ali (25) of village Narikeli under Jamalpur Sadar upazila both passengers of the autorickshaw died on the spot.

All the injured were rushed to the Jamalpur General Hospital. A case has been registered with Jamalpur police station in this connection.

The truck driver along with the vehicle, however, managed to escape and the autorickshaw driver is absconding.

with Islampur police station in this connection.

Low-lying areas in Netrakona inundated

NETRAKONA, Sept 9: Heavy downpour for consecutive four days and on-rush of water from the upstream caused inundation of a vast tract of low-lying areas and sharp rise of water level of three rivers in different points in Netrakona district, reports BSS.

The downpour had paralysed normal life in the town as the dwellers were forced to remain indoors.

Netrakona District Water Development Board (WDB) sources said the water level of the rivers Sumeswarati at Durgapur point, the river Kongso at Jaria and the river Mogra at Netrakona town point had registered a sharp rise and the rivers were flowing near the danger level.

Heavy rain for consecutive three days and onrush of water from the upstream of India had caused this situation, the WDB sources said.

The WDB officers also feared flash flood and extensive damage of standing crops in the areas if on-rush of water and heavy downpour continued further.

One caught while trying to bribe ADM

KUSHITIA, Sept 9: A man was caught red-handed here while trying to bribe Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Thursday, reports UNB.

According to police, the accused Zahur-e-Alam Officer-in-Charge of Kumarkhali local supply depot of Food Department entered the chamber of ADM Sekendar Ali Mondal and during discussion tried to hand over Tk 4,000 to the ADM as bribe to get rid of a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Department against the accused.

Later the ADM immediately called a Magistrate and a Court Sub-inspector and handed the officer to them. A case has been filed in this connection.

Delay in unloading of stones Govt to pay Tk 54 lakh demurrage to India

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Sept 9: The Bangladesh Government has to pay-off a huge demurrage to the tune of Taka 54 lakhs to the Indian Railway Authority owing to the delayed unloading of the stone carrying wagons from India to Rahanpur Railway station. This delay has resulted from the discord between the Customs and Railway authority.

With a view to importing stones from Pakur, an Indian province in Bihar, Bangladesh Railway for its development works with the financial aid of A D B signed a pact with an Indian Construction and Supply Company (IRCON).

According to the agreement wagons loaded with stones started reaching Rahanpur Railway station in Chapainawabganj district from December '90 to July 28 last. During the period 634 wagons have reached the station. But due to delay in unloading the wagons the government had to sustain a huge demurrage of Taka 54 lakhs.

It is learnt from a dependable source that if the concerned authority according to the pact fails to unload the wagons within 12 hours of its arrival, 30 dollars equivalent to

Taka 1170 per day will be charged as demurrage. It is learnt that the concerned authority took 4 to 15 days for unloading the stones.

When contacted, the Railway Officers told that the wagons could not be unloaded within 12 hours due to procrastination of the customs clearing authority and non-availability of the high level officials of the customs department. They also alleged that the National Revenue Board directed the customs authority to release the stones without duty but the local customs officials hood-winked the order.

On inquiry, the customs authority blamed railways for the delay in submission of essential papers.

Flood takes serious turn in C'nawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Sept 9: The overall flood situation here has taken a serious turn as the river Mahananda was flowing 55 cm above the danger mark, reports UNB.

About 40,000 people were marooned by the flood water and standing crops on about 20,000 acres of land were washed away during the last few days, officials said.

Three people were also reported drowned in the district during the last week.

Besides, nearly 2500 homesteads in 33 unions of the district were so far damaged by the onrush of flood water, local flood control centre sources said.

Many parts of Dhaka-Chapainawabganj highway also went under flood water.

Meanwhile, district administration here has decided to open 14 relief centres for the flood affected people.

Schools beset with problems

A large number of government and non-government primary schools in five upazilas of the district are beset with manifold problems, retarding the progress of universal primary education programme.

Informed sources said that there are shortage of teachers and accommodation, lack of necessary appliances, paucity of drinking water, shortage of funds, furniture and other amenities.

According to the District Primary Education Department, there are 369 government and 121 non-government primary schools in Sadar, Shibganj, Bholahat, Gomastapur and Nachol upazilas of the district.

The total number of students in the government and non-government schools is about 1.11 lakh.

Most of the schools do not have adequate number of benches and students are compelled to sit on bricks or mats. In some schools there is no chair for the teachers also. Blackboards, chalk, duster and other teaching appliances are also lacking in most cases.

Ninety per cent of the schools do not have playgrounds and recreational facilities. Most of the school buildings are dilapidated and may collapse any time. The roofs leak compelling the teachers to suspend classes frequently.

Due to shortage of funds, the managements are not in a position to repair the school buildings and even pay regular salary to the teachers, it is learnt.

Moreover, some of the primary schools which have been damaged by floods, storms, cyclones and other natural calamities during the last few years have not yet been repaired for lack of funds, sources said.

The local leaders have appealed to the authorities to take effective steps so that the long-standing problems of the primary schools are resolved as early as possible.

Pilferage of railway property rampant

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Sept 9: Railway materials are being pilfered on a large scale from different railway stations of the district, it is alleged. Some organised gangs in connivance with the railway employees have been stealing railway goods regularly for a long time which include spare parts, steel plates, rails, hose pipes, cappings, brush bearings, brake blocks, universal cappings and even the steel made bodies of the wagons.

Besides, diesel, coal, and stones are also being pilfered from Parbatipur, Dinajpur, Kholahati, Kanchan Junction and Setabganj stations. In most of the cases no GD of FIR is lodged with the local police station for unknown reasons.

Two jailed for murder

Mr Alauddin Sardar, District and Session Judge, Panchagarh convicted two persons and sentenced them to life imprisonment for murdering one Saiful Islam (25) of village Tistapara under Dabiganj upazilas of the district.

The two convicts Md Faizul Rahman and Nuruzzaman have also been fined Taka 5000 each in default to suffer imprisonment for six months more.

The prosecution case in brief is that on September 19, 1989, Saiful Islam was returning home from Doga with accused Md Faizul Rahman and Nuruzzaman. Suddenly Nuruzzaman attacked Saiful Islam with lethal weapons near his house at Tistapara leaving him dead on the spot.

Law, order situation deteriorates in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Sept 9: The law and order situation in the district has deteriorated with 500 crimes reported in last three months, reports UNB.

Informed sources said 50 murders, 300 dacoities, 100 hijackings and 50 highway robberies were committed during the period.

About 100 dacoities and six murders were committed in Sadar upazila, 50 dacoities and 10 murders in Shibpur upazila, 30 dacoities and 3 murders in Polash upazila, 30 dacoities and 20 murders in Raipura upazila and 50 dacoities and 10 murders in Monahadi upazila.

The sources said miscreants and musclemen were moving scot free in different parts of the district committing various types of crimes like murder, rape, dacoity, stabbing, robbery and hijacking.

The young girls are often teased by them and refrained from going to schools and colleges.

Local people alleged that a number of specific allegations were submitted to the administration, but no action was taken to combat crimes in the district.

The miscreants threaten those who try to voice protest against criminal activities, they said.

Dacoits loot Tk 68,900 from Sonali Bank branch

JHENIDAH, Sept 9: Armed dacoits looted Tk 68,900 from the Sonali Bank at Sheikhpura in Shatlabkupa upazila Friday night, police said on Saturday, reports UNB.

A gang of about 25 robbers broke into the bank through the main gate at about 2 Friday night and also took away prize bonds and lottery tickets worth Tk 1,000.

Police said there was no security guard during the dacoity, but an official at the Jhenidah branch of the bank claimed the guard fled the attack.

The dacoits also decamped with a double-barrel gun along with eight rounds of ammunition from inside the bank.

Fodder scarcity acute

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 9: Acute shortage of fodder has been prevailing throughout the district specially in the haor areas reducing the domestic animals to skin and bones.

It is learnt that the acute shortage of fodder is prevailing due to large-scale damage of straw by excessive and incessant rain during the last boro harvesting season.

Cultivators in these areas used to preserve the year's stock of straw from the boro harvest but this year it was not possible on account of incessant rain.

Cultivators are unable to feed their cattle regularly. Moreover, traditional grazing fields have been turned into agricultural lands in all the 13 upazilas of the district without any consideration for fodder.

According to the farmers, fresh grass for milching cows is not available in the rural areas because most lands are being brought under cultivation with the introduction of mechanized system. Crop pattern has also been changed. Prices of oil cakes, husk, bran and other varieties of fodder have increased. As a result, a

large number of cattleheads throughout the district has already been reduced to skin and bone. Besides, large number of cattleheads has fallen prey to various diseases due to constant starvation.

Many cultivators are selling off their cattle at nominal rates as they are unable to feed them.

Bad effects of smuggled insecticide

Smuggled Indian insecticides are causing adverse effects on the crops and land all over Kishoreganj, Netrakona and Mymensingh districts.

According to dependable sources, a section of smugglers under the guidance of some influential persons is selling the smuggled insecticides in the markets of border belts of the districts at cheap rates compared to the local insecticides.

Thiodine-3 insecticide abundantly available in Bangladesh markets has great demands among the farmers due to its cheap price and strong action.

According to the reports, these insecticides are killing all types of insects even those which are useful for land fertility. The poultry birds have also become victims of these insecticides.

Market sources said that cultivators are purchasing these insecticides as the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) is unable to ensure adequate supply and good quality insecticides at reasonable prices in the open markets. The imported insecticides are sold at high prices which is experienced to be adulterated before sale.

According to the agricultural experts, due to extensive use of Indian insecticides yields of paddy have been declined reducing the land fertility to a great extent in these districts.

Massive campaign against these insecticides should be launched all over the country explaining the adverse effects on the crops and land, it is felt.