

Upazila roundup

KUSHIA

Bijoya Dashami celebrated

Oct 20: Bijoya Dashami was celebrated here with immersion of the image of goddess Durga on the last day of the five-day celebration of the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community Friday, reports UNB.

On the third and fourth day Hindu community visited various puja mandaps established by various organisations of the same community in different parts of the district.

A total of 111 puja mandaps were erected throughout the district. Of them, 36 were erected in sadar upazila including 23 in Kushtia town, 36 in Khoksa, 28 in Kumarkhal, seven in Mirpur, two in Bheramara and two in Daulatpur upazilas.

A large number of people of all ages visited the puja mandaps Thursday. Prasads were distributed among the visitors at different mandaps.

After the celebration they embraced each other and exchanged greetings and arranged special food on the occasion.

PANCHAGARH

Six senior madrasahs to be constructed

Oct 20: The Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education has undertaken a project to construct six non-government senior madrasahs in the districts of greater Dinajpur during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

According to official sources, Tk 77 lakh project will be financed by Islamic Unnayan Bank (IUB).

Of the total, three will be constructed in Dinajpur, two in Thakurgaon and one in Panchagarh.

The construction work will start soon and is expected to be completed within June '92, the sources added.

With the implementation of the project over 3000 students will get facilities of Islamic education.

TANGAIL

Polytechnic Instt begins academic session this year

Oct 20: The newly constructed Tangail Polytechnic Institute begins academic session this year, officials sources said, reports BSS.

Over Taka 7.5 crore was spent in establishing the institute.

Admission will be made in diploma engineering under electrical discipline, the source added.

MANIKGANJ

Ferry services resume

Oct 20: Ferry services between Aricha-Daulatdia and Aricha-Nagarbari Ghat restored on Friday after 10 days of suspension, reports UNB.

The ferries stopped plying on the routes due to rapid recession of water level in the rivers Padma and Jamuna and emerging of innumerable shoals in the river beds.

The shoals have emerged due to heavy siltation in the river beds.

The ferry services in these routes were restored from Friday after necessary dredging work by BIWTA on the river Jamuna.

FENI

Dagan Bhuiya BNP biennial conference held

Oct 20: The Biennial conference of Dagan Bhuiyan thana BNP was held here on Thursday with Dagan Bhuiyan BNP President MA Hossain in the chair, reports UNB.

Speaking on the occasion as the chief guest Whip Mahub Alam Tara said his party was firm to implement the 19-point programme of late President Ziaur Rahman and establish a clean administration as committed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

He called for practising democracy in every sphere of life, eradication of terrorism from society and improvement of socio-economic condition of the people.

Feni district BNP President Abul Hashem Majumder Advocate and General Secretary Shahiduddin Ferdous addressed the conference as special guests.

They expressed optimism in materialising the hopes and aspirations of the people by the BNP government under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia.

MYMENSINGH

BAU halls closed till Oct 30

Oct 20: Due to unavoidable reasons, all Halls of Residence, classes and examinations of Bangladesh Agricultural University will remain closed from October 18 to October 30, says a notification duly signed by the Registrar of the University.

This announcement was made in accordance with the decision arrived at an emergency meeting of BAU Syndicate held on October 16.

JHENIDAH

Contraband goods seized

Oct 20: The law enforcing agency personnel seized two Hundred pieces of video cassette players worth about Taka 50 lakh and four bales of polyester clothes worth about Taka 20 lakh on Thursday near Alomkhal under Magura Sadar upazila on Jhenidah-Magura Road, reports BSS.

According to official sources, a mobile team searched two trucks and recovered the goods.

MALJEE COURT

91 shallow tubewells installed

Oct 20: Noakhali pourashava installed 91 shallow tubewells and 469 sanitary latrines in 16 slum areas under slum improvement project assisted by UNICEF during 1990-91, reports UNB.

About 1000 families were ensured supply of pure water under the programme. They were also provided with electricity and other basic amenities of life.

According to official sources, an amount of Tk 2.56 lakh has been disbursed among the 252 slum families as loan for running small business to attain self-reliance. The loan will be repaid by 48 equal instalments.

Several programmes including Health, Family Planning, Co-operative, Education have also been introduced in these slum areas.

NARAYANGANJ

3000 children fall victim to night blindness

Oct 20: 3000 children in Ruppang upazila have fallen victim to Nyctalopia (night blindness) due to malnutrition in 11 unions. The upazilas experienced several diarrhoea epidemics in the last few years and many affected children did not get proper nutrition which is held responsible for night blindness.

It is reported that most of the child patients came to the medical centres with this complaint. Doctors say that the lack of vitamin 'A' is the main cause behind night blindness.

Most of the roads in the town area so narrow that they are unfit for the movement of pedestrians and vehicular traffic. For want of proper care and maintenance breaches have developed at different places of the roads. Even after a slight rainfall these roads become muddy and slippery and the roadside ditches are filled with garbage which turn into

KUSHIA

30 metric tons rice allotted for open sale

Oct 20: District administration has allotted 30 metric tons of rice for open sale in the local markets to arrest price hikes, reports UNB.

Prices of rice and other essentials have shot up abnormally during the last one week. Coarse variety rice is being sold at Tk 13 per kg while medium quality rice is selling at Tk 16.

Three kilograms of rice are being sold at the rate of Tk 10 per kg per head in six sales centres under open market operation in the town, official sources said.

Deputy Commissioner of the district Syed Hafiz Ahmed said, more rice will be allotted for sale to prevent price hikes in the district.

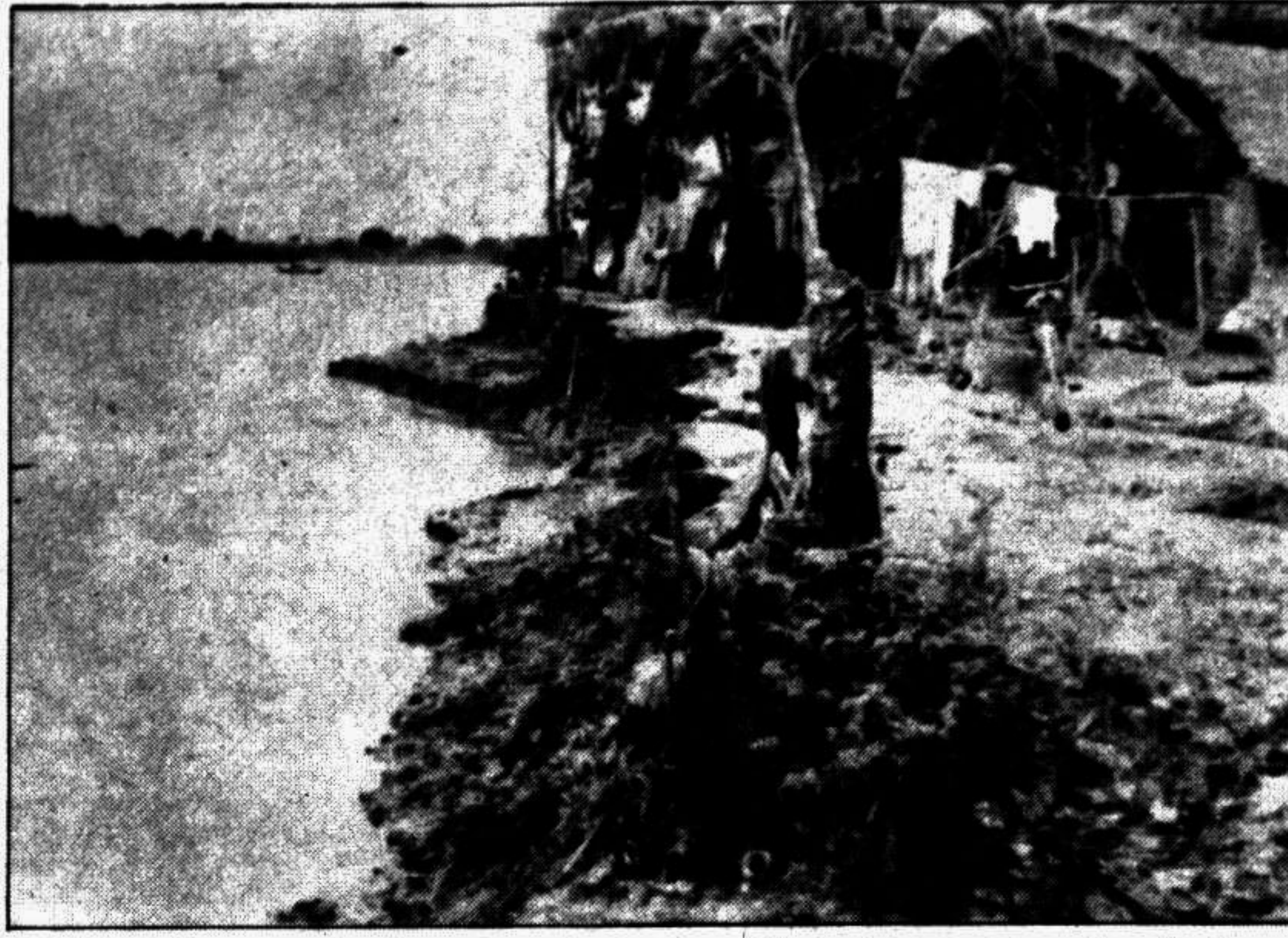
COMILLA

Contraband goods worth Tk 21.47 lakh seized

Oct 20: Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized contraband goods valued over Tk 21.47 lakh at or near the border outposts last month, reports UNB.

Six alleged smugglers were also arrested during the period. The seized contraband goods included Indian saree, lungi, garlic, onion, luxury items, medicine, sugar, cycle and rickshaw parts which were being smuggled into Bangladesh.

Hilsha, dry fish, powder-milk and electronic goods were seized while being smuggled out of the country.



RANGPUR: Teesta erosion has taken a serious turn. Photo shows major portion of a house swallowed by the river at Pirgacha. — Star photo.

Spurious Indian insecticides flood markets

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 20: Spurious Indian pesticides have flooded markets in Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts. Some dishonest traders have been selling contraband spurious pesticides in the rural markets for a long period, it is alleged.

Indian pesticides like Agrohecto, Lodinhibel and Acron, Hilbish are freely sold at a very cheap rate. The farmers have been purchasing these items without knowing its effects and chemical reactions. Local agricultural scientists said that extensive use of Indian pesticides decreases yield of paddy and destroy soil fertility. The spurious pesticides are also causing health hazard and various kinds of ailments to the consumers of agro-products.

According to a report, one variety of these insecticides is so strong that it kills not only

the harmful insects but kills even those who are helpful in increasing soil fertility. To save the fertility of land selling of contraband pesticides should be stopped and stringent action should be taken against those unscrupulous dealers, it is felt.

Post-flood rehabilitation

The post-flood rehabilitation scheme has been started in Rajshahi city from last week. A total of 200 metric tons of wheat have been initially allocated for this purpose and 1000 tons more wheat are wanted by City Corporation from the government to make the programme effective. Rajshahi City Corporation sources said.

According to the sources, at least 1.25,000 people of 20,000 families in 30 wards of the city have been affected by the recent floods. About 1,500 dwelling houses have fully and

3,000 houses partially damaged by the devastating floods.

Taka 13 crore and 50 lakh is needed to repair damaged roads of the city. A City Corporation spokesman told The Daily Star that a total of eight relief centres were opened and 13,000 families took shelter in these centres which were closed on October 14 last. The relief activities began on September 12 and 140 metric tons of rice, 115 tons of wheat, sacks of pulse, 50 cartons of liquid milk, 50 cartons of powdered milk, 100 cartons biscuits, old clothes, 200 pieces sarees, 200 pieces of lungies and Taka 2,16,000 in cash were distributed among the flood-hit people during the last one month.

Meanwhile, City Corporation authorities chalked out a plan to repair flood damaged houses, roads and drains under test relief programme, the sources added.

Problems grip Tetulia

From Our Correspondent

PANCHAGARH, Oct 20: The inhabitants of Tetulia border upazila under Panchagarh district have been experiencing multiple problems.

The upazila having a population of about 70,000 in seven unions spreading over 73 square miles is yet to be provided with minimum civic amenities. Tetulia was upgraded into an upazila in 1983 with Banglabandha, Bojonpur, Shalbahan, Debnagar, Dureburi, Vitorgarh and Tetulia unions. Lack of good drainage system, deplorable condition of roads, paucity of drinking water, lack of recreational facilities, inadequate street lights, shortage of accommodation and erosion of the river are the main problems.

Most of the roads in the town area so narrow that they are unfit for the movement of pedestrians and vehicular traffic. For want of proper care and maintenance breaches have developed at different places of the roads. Even after a slight rainfall these roads become muddy and slippery and the roadside ditches are filled with garbage which turn into

ideal breeding centres for mosquitoes.

There is only a 31-bed hospital in Tetulia upazila. The hospital is beset with a host of problems. As a result, the people of the area are deprived of medical facilities. The condition of beds are not satisfactory as the bedcovers are not changed timely. The health complex is also facing shortage of surgical appliances and for this reason physicians face difficulties during operation.

Besides, irregular water supply has become a serious problem to patients and staff of the hospital. The health complex has also been running without ambulance and X-ray machine.

The literacy rate of the upazila is only 16 per cent. There are only two colleges, eight high schools, seven madrasahs, 37 government primary schools. Most of these institutions cannot run smoothly for shortage of chairs, benches, tables, teachers, educational appliances and pucca houses.

Out of the total population, 80 per cent are dependent on

agriculture. The farmers do not get improved seeds, fertilizers and agricultural loans, it is alleged. For these reasons agriculture sector of the upazila still neglected resulting in poor output in all seasons.

Tetulia upazila town has no water supply system. The scarcity of pure drinking water is one of acute problems of the town dwellers. There are about 1300 tubewells but 60 per cent of them are out of order for a long time. As a result, people are compelled to use polluted water of canals, ditches and ponds.

Shortage of accommodation also poses a great problem to the dwellers. New houses were not constructed in the upazila town area for residential purposes either by public or by private initiatives. Some buildings were constructed only in the bazaar area for commercial uses only.

There is no drainage system in Tetulia upazila. As a result, water always remain stagnant with filth and garbage. Lowlying areas of the bazar go under water after a slight rainfall.

50 illegal liquor shops in Satkhira?

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 20: More than 50 unlicensed liquor shops are running throughout the district giving rise to theft, crimes and other anti-social activities in the district.

It is reported that one licensed liquor shop has been permitted at Satkhira town but more than 50 illegal liquor shops are still running in seven upazilas including Satkhira Sadar in the knowledge of narcotic department. Anti-social elements have become active in the night. Besides, the young chaps often create unpleasant scenes. It is further learnt that most of the shopkeepers are selling illegal liquor under the sign board of herbal medicines in different places of the district. Illegal selling of liquor is not only vitiating the severe atmosphere in these areas but also depriving the government of huge amount of revenue.

Quacks on rise

The number of quacks is on the increase in all the upazilas of the district. Quacks are found active in every village of Satkhira Sadar, Debhata, Kaliganj, Assasuni, Shyamnagar, Tala and Kalaroa upazilas of the district.

It is gathered that many educated unemployed youths have chosen job of quackery in the rural areas. A few of them have basic training on health care. Poor rural people mainly landless and labourers rely on them because they charge nominal fee. A large number of graduates are found among the quacks.

Many boys on completion of their primary education are earning money by adopting quackery. They are usually sighted in the hats and bazars of the district.

Some government health workers are also found practising as quacks in the rural areas of the district. Rural people with various diseases go to the quacks for necessary treatment. The other cause of inclination of the poor people towards quackery is because the health complexes set up at every upazila headquarters have been beset with manifold problems. Patients are deprived of medical facilities at health complexes. A section of doctors and other staff allegedly take illegal gratifications from the poor patients for providing them prescriptions and medical treatment.

Erosion renders 4500 homeless in C' nawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 20: About 1,500 people of three upazilas of the district have been rendered homeless due to unabated erosion by the rivers Mohananda and Padma over the last one month, reports UNB.

The worst affected areas are: Namonimgachi, Alato and Narayanpur of Sadar upazila, Pankka and Uzirpur union of Shibganj upazila and Bajratak and Poladanga of Bholahat upazila.

Meanwhile, vast tracts of cultivable land, homesteads, religious and educational institutions, markets and other buildings have already been devoured by the river Mohananda and Padma.

Namonimgachi and Alato are the worst hit areas where mosques, schools and union parishad office were threatened by the erosion.

Local people said if the erosion continues at this pace, Namonimgachi and two other villages will be devoured shortly. Despite repeated appeals, no measures were taken by concerned authorities to check the erosion.

Bamboo shortage hampers construction

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 20: Shortage of bamboo has been hampering construction and repair works of thatched houses in all five upazilas of the district, reports UNB.

The upazilas are: Shibganj, Nachol, Gomastapur, Bholahat and Chapainawabganj Sadar.

Informed sources said traditional cottage industries which depend on bamboo are also facing a setback due to the shortage of raw materials.

Growth of bamboo has been hindered due to the lack of adequate bamboo roots which are being sold to brick manufacturers as firewood.

With the decrease of bamboo supply the price has increased in recent days making the villagers unable to purchase bamboo for their household works.

Sharp rise in prices of essentials

PABNA, Oct 20: Prices of essential commodities have registered a sharp rise over the last 2 weeks in the markets here adversely affecting the low income group of people, reports UNB.

Medium and low varieties of rice are being sold at Tk 14 and Tk 12.50 per kg respectively in the markets as against Tk 12 and Tk 10 two weeks back.

Coarse flour is being sold at Tk 10.50 per kg as against Tk 8 a few days back.

Prices of salt and vegetables have also gone up considerably.

Local people complained that the traders were engaged in profiteering by creating artificial crisis in the markets.

But the traders said heavy downpour and flash flood disrupted transportation which caused short supply and the consequent price-hike.

UP chairman granted bail

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 20: The Raiganj Upazila Court here Tuesday granted the bail, of union parishad chairman Haroonur Rashid of Chandaikona Union, reports UNB.

He was arrested along with two of his accomplices, Secretary Ashraf Ali of Chandaikona and member Mobarak Ali of the same union. They were arrested on charges of defalcating 12 bags of rice sanctioned for the flood victims of the union.

Musharaf Hussain sent a news item regarding misdistribution of test relief wheat allocated against a project in pourashava which was published in the daily Ittefaq on October 15. Being irritated at the news Chhatra Dal activists assaulted newsmen Musharaf Hussain.

Mr. Meherullah, Secretary, district unit BJA, Advocate Motiur Rahman Talukdar, president district unit AI, Advocate Nazrul Islam Dulu President district Bar Association, Jamalpur Press Club Secretary, district units of NAP, BSD, Communist Party, BCL (S-A), Jatiyatabadi Sangbadik Samity condemned the attack on Musharaf Hussain and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits. They urged the law enforcing agency to take legal action immediately.

Show cause on Ishurdi Poura Chairman

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 20: A show cause notice was served on Mr. M. Khairuzzaman Babu, Chairman of Ishurdi Pourashava for his alleged misbehaviour with the Chief Scientific Officer in charge of Ishurdi Regional Agricultural Research Institute of BARI recently.

It is learnt that Mr. Hafizuddin, Joint Secretary of the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry issued the show cause notice on the Chairman for his misbehaviour with Mr. Abdul Kahir.

Mr. Khairuzzaman was asked to show cause as to why lawful action would not be taken against him within seven days on receipt of his show cause notice. A spokesman of BARI told this correspondent that they observed two-hour strike instantly protesting the misbehaviour with Mr. Khairuzzaman.

Diarrhoea has claimed about 110 lives and attacked 5000 others in nine upazilas of the district within 10 days, although the health department admitted 98 deaths.

According to the Civil Surgeon of Pabna, 13 medical teams are working at the nine upazilas of the district. People said that scarcity of saline and pure drinking water is the main cause of the outbreak of diarrhoea.

Post-flood relief work in progress in Rangpur

RANGPUR, Oct 20: Massive post-flood relief work is in full swing in all the affected areas of the district to mitigate the sufferings of the people, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the civil administration and army personnel are continuing their relief work after the recession of flood waters from affected areas of the district.

All possible measures have been taken by the administration to minimise the suffering

by providing relief materials among the people with the objective that none should die of starvation, they said.

The State Minister for Land, Mr. Kabir Hossain, told BSS that government is providing relief, including wheat and rice, among the affected people in such a way so that nobody's left out of it. He said there is no famine-like situation in Rangpur district and government would do every thing possible for the affected people.

Earlier a general meeting was held with Md. Alamgir Siddique Khan Arun and Md. Ruhul Amin were elected President and General Secretary of Pabna district branch of Bangladesh Non-Government Primary Teachers Association. The election was held at its Kachari Para office. Besides, a 12-member executive committee was also formed.

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Number of landless farmers on rise

JAMALPUR, Oct 20: The number of landless and unemployed people are increasing alarmingly in all the seven upazilas of the district, official sources said, reports UNB.

Of the total population of over 16 lakh, 50 percent depend on agriculture, 10 percent on different occupations and the rest 40 per cent are totally unemployed.

Among the farmers, 60 per cent are landless, 20 per cent have few acres of land and the rest 30 per cent have sufficient landed property.

The farmers having a few acres of land cannot afford to buy necessary inputs, fertilizer, seeds, pesticides and even bullocks for cultivation due to poverty.

The marginal farmers are not getting fair price for their products. Consequently, they are forced to sell off their land to maintain their livelihood.

The number of the educated unemployed are also on increase in the district giving rise to social unrest.

The farmers are also being hard pressed by the price hike of essential commodities.

They alleged that unscrupulous dealers in collaboration with a section of dishonest officials are engaged in creating artificial scarcity of fertilizer in the market to earn maximum profit.

Primary schools in bad shape

THAKURGAON, Oct 20: The universal primary education programme in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts is facing setback owing to shortage of teachers, furniture and accommodation, reports UNB.

High prices of paper and other educational materials and financial crisis of the schools are among other factors directly discouraging children from going to schools.

Most of the primary schools damaged by floods, storms, cyclones and other natural calamities during the last few years are yet to be repaired.

Many of the schools are holding classes under the open sky and have no arrangements

for drinking water and toilet for the children.

There are 1555 government and 255 non-government primary schools in the districts.

According to primary education department, the total number of children of primary school age in 23 upazilas of the three districts is 10,97,064. Of them only 2,97,903 are getting facilities of studying in 1555 primary schools.

The shortage of teaching staff has aggravated the situation further. A total of 164 posts of primary school teachers have been lying vacant for a long time in these districts, it is learnt.



JHENIDAH: Contraband goods worth Tk 30 lakh seized from different places of Jhenidah and Jessore. — Star photo.