

Upazila roundup

HABIGANJ

Storm damages 40 primary schools

May 13: A total of 40 primary schools in the district have been damaged by recent heavy storm. Official sources said, there are 92 government and 16 registered primary schools in Habiganj Sadar upazila. As a result, education of several thousand students of the damaged primary schools is being hampered. They are prosecuting their study under the open sky. It may be mentioned that several thousand houses, School Buildings were damaged in five upazilas under Habiganj district due to recent storm.

MADARIPUR

Two drown

From Our Correspondent May 13: Azizul (9), son of Moazzem Hossain of village Bhadrakhola under Sadar upazila drowned recently. On the day of the incident the boy along with other mates went to bath in a pond of their house. After some hours the body of Azizul was found floating the pond. Meanwhile, one Abdul Hafez Bepari, 42, driver of trawler fell into the river. Kumar when the vessel collided head on with another trawler coming from the opposite direction. The body of Abdul Hafez was later recovered.

PABNA

JP leader joins AL

From Our Correspondent May 13: Thirteen people including one Upazila Chairman joined Bangladesh Awami League recently at Bhangura upazila under Pabna district. Makbul Hossain a leader of Jatiya Party and Chairman of Bhongura upazila and Mr. Lokman Hossain, President of BAKSAL, Bhongura upazila committee left their parties and joined Bangladesh Awami League with others, imbued on the ideology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In this occasion, a public meeting was held with Mr. Sana Master in the chair.

JAMALPUR

Release of JP leaders demanded

From Our Correspondent May 13: Jamalpur district unit Jatiya Samik Party organised a meeting here recently with former MP Shaiful Islam Khuka in the chair in protest against the shifting of deposed President Ershad to jail. The meeting was addressed by Messrs Jamiruddin, Abdur Rouf Choudhury, Babla, Lablu Ansar, and Golab Ali. The speakers criticised the government for sending Ershad into jail and demanded release of all detained Jatiya Party leaders including Ershad and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury.

FARIDPUR

Prize-giving ceremony

May 13: Prize giving function of book reading competition organised by Bishwa Shahtiya Kendra, Faridpur chapter for school students was held on May 10 at Kabi Jasmuddin Hall here, reports BSS. Mohammad Abdur Rahim, Deputy Commissioner, Faridpur attended the function as chief guest and gave away prizes among the competitors.

RAJBARI

Pure drinking water scarce

May 13: Tubewells in rural areas of the district have gone inoperative causing scarcity of safe water, reports UNB. Public Health and Engineering Bureau here said about 250 tubewells are lying unserviceable for a long time. Repair programmes could not be undertaken for lack of fund, officials said. As a result, gastro-intestinal diseases have broken out due mainly to consumption of impure water from ponds and other sources. The government sanctioned 440 deep tubewells for four upazilas of the district during the current fiscal year but later cancelled the sanction of 176 tubewells without any reason. Moreover, most of the shallow and hand tubewells in the district are not functioning properly due to abnormal fall in the ground water table. Officials said the ground water level has gone down 30 feet low compared to 18 to 20 feet of the previous year.

CHUADANGA

Relief operation

From A Correspondent May 13: An emergency meeting on Relief operation in cyclone affected areas was held on May 5 under the chairmanship of M. Tajul Islam, Deputy Commissioner, Chuadanga. High officials, local political leaders, Businessmen and elite of the town were present in the meeting. An 11-member committee headed by ADC (Gen) as Coordinator was formed to collect relief materials and cash through proper receipt. The team will collect old garments and food items. People of all strata has been urged to respond generously to meeting the plight of affected survivors.



Air Force Chief Air Vice-Marshal Momtazuddin Ahmed distributing relief goods among the cyclone victims of Kutubdia on Monday. — Star photo: Mohsin

Diarrhoea breaks out in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, May 13: Diarrhoea has broken out in an epidemic form in cyclone devastated Cox's Bazar district. A large number of cyclone survivors including children were attacked by the disease and 10 of them died within seven days in the district.

Smuggled goods worth Tk. 3.18 cr seized

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 13: Huge quantities of smuggled goods worth about Taka 3.18 crore were seized by the BDR personnel of the 31, 20 and 1 Battalion of Rajshahi Sector last month. Three hundred twenty cases were registered and 92 alleged smugglers were arrested during this period. The Bangladesh Rifles men recovered Indian cloths, cows, sugar, medicine, cycle parts and cosmetics. The incoming Indian goods seized during the period valued at Taka 3.9 crore. The outgoing seized materials valued at Taka 8 lakh 12 thousand.

According to BDR official sources, 20 Battalion recovered smuggled goods worth about Taka two crore 13 lakh 28 thousand, filed 133 cases and arrested 57 alleged smugglers. The 31 Battalion seized smuggled goods valued at Taka 80 lakh 10 thousand, 154 cases registered and 33 alleged smugglers arrested. The 1 Battalion recovered goods worth Taka 18 lakh 44 thousand, 27 cases registered and none arrested in this connection. A special team of Rajshahi Sector Headquarters seized smuggled goods valued at Taka 4.96 lakh, filed 15 cases and arrested two alleged smugglers.

Notes from Kushtia

From A Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 13: Staff reporter of weekly Ispat Mr Ghiasuddin Abul Azhar Firoz was seriously injured when he was attacked and stabbed by six miscreants in the premises of Kushtia General Hospital on May 5. He was later admitted to the hospital. Journalists community in Kushtia have expressed their strong resentment over the attack on Firoz in an attempt to murder him for allegedly writing true and objective report against some vested interest. They have also expressed their concern over the silent role of law enforcing agencies in this regard. Jagorani Group of publication condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest of those responsible for their attempt to murder Firoz.

Power failure

Frequent power failure and load shedding have become a regular feature in the town and adjoining areas causing much inconvenience to the town dwellers and loss to businessmen. According to informed sources hardly a day or night passes without power disruption. Almost every night electricity goes off plunging the entire town into darkness. As a result students and businessmen have been suffering much. Erratic power supply has also affected production in the local mills and workshops. Irrigation work in the IRRI-boro block with power connection is also affected at the sowing stage. The price-hike of foodstuff in the market is largely attributed to frequent power failure. The people can not crush their paddy and wheat due to absence of power supply. Besides, fluctuation of voltage causes damage to electronic goods. Inadequate streetlights have also aggravated the situation. Injured about a hundred, besides extensively damaging property.

During the Minister's visit to Haimabala Girls High School, Rajshahi Education Board Chairman Gazi Abdus Salam handed over Taka 25,000 to the Head Master for reconstruction of the school, where the examinees were injured. Later, the Education Minister also visited Jamuna river bank eroding into the river's gorge.

TB patients

Tuberculosis disease has been spreading alarmingly in the district due to lack of proper awareness among the people about its contagious nature. Over the last decade the number of TB patients have increased manifold in the district. Doctors told this correspondent that at least 10 patients with double and triple positive plus with no chance of survival are detected every year. But TB is almost perfectly curable if it is detected at the early stage, they added. The villagers who are mostly illiterate are deprived of necessary medical facilities. Moreover, the lone TB hospital situated in middle of the town is plagued with various problems due to absence of X-ray machine, necessary medicines, ambulance and medical apparatus, informed sources said. People of the district urged the concerned authorities to equip the hospital with modern apparatus and ensure smooth supply of emergency medicines and to take proper mass motivation scheme to create awareness among the people to check the spread of the disease.

Money lenders exploit poor farmers

From Our Correspondent

NARAIL, May 13: Most farmers of the district are being exploited by the money lenders. Due to economic hardship the farmers can hardly buy agricultural inputs for cultivation. As a result, they are compelled to sell their crops to the money lenders in advance at a nominal price. Those who are capable to wait for the harvesting of crops do not usually get fair price for their produce. Taking full advantage of the prevailing situation the local money lenders are doing brisk business by granting loans at high interest against the security of the crops in fields. A large number of landless people who do not find employment as agricultural labourers has been passing their days half fed and unfed. Often they sell their utensils

and domestic animals. The price of bullocks has recorded a sharp fall and about half of the farmers in Narail have already sold their draft animals. The day labourers are virtually out of employment. A good number of farmers in the district are engaged in cultivation of sweet potatoes in char areas. Poor production and lower price of the items have caused serious set-back to the growers of sweet potatoes. The item is now selling at Taka 120 to Taka 140 per maund depending on quality. The growers are forced to sell sweet potatoes much below the production cost in the absence of buyers. Previously fish was available in ponds canals beels and rivers in the district. But most of the places have become silted up resulting in

the scarcity of fish. This has thrown thousands of fishermen out of their profession.

Bazars in bad shape

Rural hats and bazars of the district are plagued with problems. A section of ejaradars is exploiting rural people in buying and selling of various commodities in hats and bazars of the district. Tolls are being collected at exorbitant rate by some unscrupulous ejaradars in most hats and bazars. It is learnt that such pictures are more or less common in other rural hats and bazars well. The ejaradars collect tolls both from the buyers and sellers at their own whim causing immense sufferings to the people.

Drought affects crops in Satkhira

From A Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 13: Persisting drought for the last two weeks in the district has seriously affected standing Irrigation and other seasonal crops. Informed sources say that a vast tract of land has become rock like hard due to continuous drought hampering cultivation of seasonal vegetables, fruits and sowing of Aus, Aman and Jute seedlings. Besides, irrigation work is being hampered as most of the canals, beels and ponds have been dried up. Meanwhile, paucity in drinking water has further intensified as most of the tubewells have been rendered inoperative following abnormal fall in the water level. As a result people are compelled to drink impure water of ponds canals and rivers. Innumerable chars and shoals have emerged in the

rivers of Kabadak, Betna, Kakshiali, Ichhamati and Kholopetra disrupting riverine transportation. Dried rivers are also creating a set back to irrigation facilities.

Bank dacoity

UNB adds: A daring dacoity was committed in a nationalised bank in Tala Upazila of the town Saturday night. The burglars decamped with Taka one lakh 95 thousand, police said yesterday. A gang of armed miscreants entered Khalta Khali Sonali Bank branch and broke open the strong room before making good their escape with cash booty without any hindrance. Police said there was no night guard in the bank. A case was filed with the local police, but none were arrested so far.

Clash over shrimp farm: 26 arrested

From Our Correspondent

BAGERHAT, May 13: Police of Rampal arrested 26 persons and recovered 7 live bombs from their possession recently when a battle took place between two rival groups of people over the possession of shrimp at Khamghata under Rampal upazila of the district. It is reported that on the day of occurrence at small hours a gang of armed people led by one Reza went to the spot to take possession of the shrimp farm which belongs to one Mazif. When the later and his associates tried to oppose the farmers the gun battle took place. At one stage the local people drove out Reza and his party and chased them to a

nearby house. At that time police rushed to the spot and arrested them with bombs. In this connection a case was registered with Rampal P.S.

Civil Surgeon's office opens

The newly constructed office building of Bagerhat Civil Surgeon was inaugurated through a Milad Mahfil held on May 1. The Milad Mahfil was attended by the Deputy Commissioner M A Mannan, Police Super Mr. M A Rauf, other high officials, elite of the town and the local journalists.

One murdered in Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, May 13: Abdul Khaleque (60) of village Darapur under Sreepur upazila of the district was brutally killed by some unknown miscreants. He was a village leader. The miscreants attacked him and cut his throat by sharp weapons while he was returning home from Sachilapur Bazar Saturday night. His body was recovered on Sunday morning from a jungle near Sachilapur Bazar. It may be noted that a tension was prevailing among the two groups of the area in connection with a girl kidnapping and according to the local people this was the cause of the murder.

Road needs repair

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, May 13: Obaydullah Road running between Shabazpur and Shajadapur is in a very deplorable state for eight years causing untold sufferings to the people of nine villages of Sarail upazila. A 10 kilometre long road with two bridges and one culvert on it is connected with Dhaka-Sylhet highway has been damaged completely during devastating floods in 1988. However, some major parts of the road have been repaired but still the bridges and culvert are unrepaired left. As a result, the movement of 25,000 villagers has become impossible. Besides, they used to bring their agricultural tools and fertilizers from Brahmanbaria and Sarail upazila using automobiles and carts but now they cannot. Farmers, traders and students are facing untold sufferings due to bad communication. They urged the concerned authorities to take immediate steps to repair the said road.

Spring festival

Brahmanbaria Sangeet Sangsad held a spring festival at local Shilpakala Academy recently. DC Kabiruddin Ahmed and SP Nurul Anwar were the chief guest and special guests respectively while Md. Faiz Ahmed presided over the function.

Miscreants active in Satkhira

From A Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 13: A group of miscreants attacked a house in broad day-light with bombs, country-made weapons and acid at Kushtia under Tala upazila recently. According to the reports, a gang of looters led by Murtazidul Hossain of the same area entered the premises of Sukumar Ghosh by exploding a series of bombs and tried to get into the house. The inmates threw bricks from the second floor to protect themselves. Thousands of people witnessed the heinous activities of the miscreants but could not protest due to fear. When the fire

brigade personnel reached the spot the miscreants got scared and tried to escape. At that time the witnessing people chased them and was able to catch one injured Sarafat a notorious dacoit and murderer. In the attack several people received serious injuries. The police seized the weapons while fire brigade personnel recovered a large number of bombs. A case against the looters were lodged while Sarafat was arrested. Shaheedul Howladar, ASP assured the people of every possible help against the culprits. According to the reports,

Adverse effects of smuggled insecticides

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, May 13: Smuggled Indian insecticides are causing adverse effects to the crops and land all over Kishoreganj, Netrakona, and Mymensingh districts. According to the sources, a section of smugglers under the guidance of some influential persons are selling the smuggled insecticides in the markets of border belts of the district at cheap rates compared to the local insecticides. "Thiodine-3" insecticide abundantly available in Bangladesh markets has great demand among the farmers due to its cheap price and strong actions. 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 local Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) is unable to ensure adequate supply of quality insecticides at reasonable prices in the open markets. The imported insecticides are sold at high prices which are experienced to be adulterated before sale. According to the agricultural experts, due to extensive

use of Indian insecticides yields of paddy has been declined reducing the land fertility at a great extent in these district. Massive campaign against these insecticides should be launched all over the country explaining its adverse effects on the crops and land, it is felt.

Canal needs dredging

Maguria canal needs immediate dredging to improve the communication system of the vast tract of the haor areas of Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Habiganj and Sunamganj districts during the dry season. People of the haor areas

Development Board in 1988 took up a programme on allocation of 11,000 maunds of wheat but only 4000 maunds of wheat were spent on the scheme without achieving any positive results. The IWTA subsequently took up a plan for dredging the canal at an estimated cost of Taka five crore but the implementation of the scheme was shelved due to unknown reasons. It is widely felt that dredging of the canal besides easing the communication system of the vast tract will also ensure irrigation facilities on both the sides of the canal for boosting the production of Boro paddy.

Badruddoza calls for united efforts to face calamity

SIRAJGANJ, May 13: Education Minister Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury said yesterday it was not possible for the government alone to face tremendous devastation by natural calamities across the country, reports UNB. Addressing a meeting with local officials and people at Kasipur upazila, the Minister called for united efforts to tackle calamity aftermaths. Chowdhury arrived here yesterday and visited tornado-torn areas in the district, including Kasipur and Belkuchi upazilas and Khalafapara, Stadiungpara, Malshapara and Tanglahata College in sadar upazila. The Minister also visited the sadar hospital to see the injured students admitted after suffering injuries in house collapse during SSC examination on Thursday when tornado lashed the district.