

## Upazila roundup

### C'NAWABGANJ

#### Eye disease breaks out

Sept 13: Eye disease has broken out in an alarming proportion in all the five upazilas of the district during the last two weeks, reports UNB.

The disease has taken a serious turn and members of almost all the families of Sadar, Shibganj, Nachol, Bholahat and Gomostapur upazilas have been attacked by the disease.

The cause of the widespread outbreak of the disease could not be ascertained.

Everyday, a large number of people of all ages having various eye diseases are rushing to sadar hospital and all upazila health complexes for treatment.

The disease is cured within four to five days, doctors said.

It is alleged that a section of medicine traders taking full advantage of the situation have enhanced the prices of all kinds of eye-drops and ointments.

Another report from Kushtia says, eye disease has broken out in all the six upazilas of the district during last two weeks.

### JHENIDAH

#### Body recovered

Sept 13: Police recovered body of an unidentified young man from a cropfield at village Jagannathpur of Moheshpur upazila, reports UNB.

On an information, police rushed to the spot and found the body lying there with hands and legs tied up. Police suspected that previous enmity might be the reason behind the murder.

The body was sent to local hospital for autopsy and a case has been filed with the police in this connection.

### NETRAKONA

#### Call to cast 'yes' vote in referendum

Sept 13: The Whip of Treasury Bench in Jatiya Sangsad Mr MA Karim MP Tuesday called upon the people to cast 'yes' vote in the coming referendum on September 15 for establishing parliamentary form of government in the country, reports BSS.

He was addressing a workers rally at Netrakona district BNP office.

Presided over by Mr Abu Abbas MP the workers rally was addressed, among others, by Advocate Abdul Kuddus, General Secretary of BNP Netrakona district unit.

The Whip said it was moral obligation of the people to vote in favour of parliamentary system of government.

### FARIDPUR

#### 10 dacoits nabbed

Sept 13: Ten alleged inter-district dacoits were caught red-handed by the villagers of Salehpur of Char Bhadrashan upazila here risking their lives Tuesday, reports UNB.

According to police and witnesses, a gang of armed dacoits coming by an engine boat in the morning raided the village to commit dacoities. Being alarmed the villagers chased the dacoits.

When fleeing the dacoits opened fire on the villagers injuring Sk Jalal, Bachchu, Mridha Shaheb Bepari and Pashan Pattandari seriously. Other villagers after a hot chase rounded up the dacoits from the nearby village Janajpur. Later they handed over to the police after a good beating.

The injured villagers were rushed to the Faridpur General Hospital where their conditions were stated to be critical.

All the 10 arrested dacoits were also admitted to the same hospital under special police protection. They are: Taramia, Hasen and Abdul Berek of Bera upazila in Pabna district, Alauddin, Khayer, Tozafat Hossain, Fazla and Badruddin of Daulatpur upazila, Majidmia and Lalmita of Shibshaya upazila in Manikgonj district.

### FENI

#### 2 dacoits nabbed

Sept 13: Village Defence Party (VDP) with the help of villagers nabbed two dacoits at Sonapur Village under Sonagazi upazila of the district, reports UNB.

The dacoits were caught while they were raiding the house of one Syed Darbesh Ali of the same village.

They were identified as Md Helal and Swapan and were handed over to Sonagazi police.

### PABNA

#### Tk 7.30 crore revenue loss

Sept 13: District Customs and Excise Department incurred a huge revenue loss of Tk 7.30 crore during the last financial year, reports UNB.

Sources said revenue target was fixed at Tk 23,96,45,000 while the department realised Tk 16,66,36,900 during the period.

Reliable sources said that a section of dishonest officials is allegedly responsible for the loss.

### GOPALGANJ

#### Water supply irregular

Sept 13: Water supply in the district headquarters have become irregular during the last eight days due to damage of water transformer, reports UNB.

The water transformer is yet to be repaired after it was damaged by lightning on September 6.

Pure drinking water is hard to find in the area which has thrown about 60 thousand residents of the pourashava in danger.

Finding no other alternative local people have been collecting water from nearby water bodies which may cause outbreak of diarrhoeal disease.

Pourashava chairman Hasmat Ali Sikdar told UNB that he informed Public Health and Engineering Department but no step was taken yet.

### SIRAJGANJ

#### 2 feared drowned

Sept 13: A young woman and a minor girl were feared drowned and seven others injured seriously when two mechanised boats collided in the midstream of Fuljore river yesterday morning, reports UNB.

The missing persons were identified as Beauty (9) and Golbanu (28) of Shouvagacha village in Sherpur upazila.

Witnesses said an engine boat carrying about 15 passengers collided with another boat head-on near Chandakona in Rajganj upazila.

The boat sailed toward Dhangara from Middhabag village in Sherpur upazila of Bogra district.

The injured were admitted to different local health complexes in Rajganj and Sherpur upazilas.

### COMILLA

#### Revolvers recovered, 3 arrested

Sept 13: Police arrested three alleged dacoits and recovered four revolvers from their possession on Tuesday, reports UNB.

A police patrol party, on a tip, stopped a rickshaw at Jalal Road and searched its two passengers Chand Mia and Mohammad Hossain and recovered two loaded revolvers from their possession.

Following their confessional statement, police later recovered two more revolvers from a house at Katabela area and arrested one Abul Hossain.

### MYMENSINGH

#### CSSB biennial conference November 27

Sept 13: A three-day biennial conference of the Crops Science Society of Bangladesh (CSSB) will begin here on November 27 next, reports UNB.

The theme of discussion has been selected on "Crop and Environment" to engineer the research and development programmes and activities in the field of crop production in relation to flood, drought and other natural hazards.

The conference will focus on various aspects of crop research management including development of crop research and technology transfer, natural hazards and appropriate crop production technology, post-harvest crop management and modern technology for crop improvement and production.

The conference programme consisting of five scientific sessions will present posters also, says a press release.

Intending contributors have been requested to send the abstracts of their papers and posters on or before Sept 25 and full papers before October 15 to the member secretary of the first biennial conference of the CSSB, BAU.



'Muri' (puffed rice), a popular dry food is widely consumed in rural as well as urban areas. Photo shows women preparing the item at a village in Chandpur while a child looks on. —Star photo

## Flood situation worsens in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Sept 13: The flood situation in the district has aggravated further with an abrupt rise in water level of the rivers following onrush of hilly water from the neighbouring countries and also due to incessant rains.

Standing crops on vast areas in four upazilas have been submerged while more than 15,000 inhabitants rendered homeless during the last three days.

Islampur Upazila Chairman Faridul Haq Khan told the Star correspondent that Aus and Aman paddy, sugarcane and jute in different villages of the upazila had been submerged following breaches on the Harindara WDB flood control embankment. Melandah Government Girls' High School and a portion of upazila office have also gone under water.

According to Water Development Board sources, during the last 24 hours the Brahmaputra at Dewanganj rose 32 cms and Jamuna at Bahadurpur rose 18 cms.

Four persons died of diarrhoea and gastro-intestinal diseases in Jamalpur district during the last two weeks. Other 500 persons are suffering from intestinal diseases in different parts of the district.

According to the reports from different affected areas of the district acute scarcity of necessary medicines has been prevailing in the district. The supply of medicines by the government is almost nil. The poor patients are unable to purchase medicines from out-

side due to exorbitant prices.

Besides, two more persons died of diarrhoea at Nayanagar under Melandah upazila last week.

Patients coming from remote areas of the upazila to the government hospitals are disappointed for want of proper treatment and shortage of medicines and diets.

Serious patients are not being shifted to other hospitals in time of emergency due to absence of ambulance.

It is alleged that most of the doctors are irregular to their duties. As a result, diarrhoea patients are suffering much.

Economic life of the rural inhabitants of the district is being crippled due to crop loss and short production during the last few years.

Due to scarcity of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation facilities and persistent drought, particularly the marginal farmers who constitute about 85 per cent of population were unable to cultivate crops for want of agricultural inputs and bank loan.

The total population of the district is 18 lakh and only five per cent are engaged in business and services while the rest 95 per cent depend on agriculture. Poor farmers were forced to sell their produce at nominal prices to grapple with the situation.

Recent survey reveals that over 65 per cent of the villagers live below poverty line and have to sell out their hard-earned produce at Taka 80 to 100 per maund to the local

money lenders just to maintain their livelihood. Taking advantage of the situation, the local money lenders are doing bribe business by granting loan at high interest.

The sources added that the landless villagers who are deprived of the daily work are almost starving. They are even compelled to sell out their domestic animals and utensils only for mere survival. Fifty per cent of them already sold off their domestic animals.

The condition of sugarcane growers is more pitiable as they have incurred a heavy loss this year due to lack of marketing facilities. Fifty per cent of their produce have gone waste.

A large number of fishermen are left unemployed following sharp decline in fish production. Most of the beels and rivers have silted up causing havoc to the pisciculture at dry season.

To solve the unemployment problem a huge quantity of rice and wheat has been sanctioned against uplift project under the Food and Works Programme. But massive irregularities and misappropriation have hampered the scheme.

The villagers are selling their poultry birds and other movable property to meet their daily requirements. The price of land has also declined for want of purchasers. The money lenders have seized the opportunity thus grabbing the land of the poor people in rural areas.

## Civic amenities absent at Habiganj town

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Sept 13: The inhabitants of Habiganj pourashava have been battered by a host of problems which include deplorable condition of roads, inadequate street lights, absence of proper drainage system, shortage to accommodation, lack of proper sanitary arrangement, mosquito menace, erratic power supply and absence of recreational facilities.

The town is expanding accordingly with the increase of population but the pourashava authorities fails to provide necessary civic amenities to the town dwellers.

Most of the roads in the pourashava area are narrow and uneven. Cracks and potholes have developed at many points of the roads. After a slight rainfall the roads become muddy and slippery.

Rainwater remains stagnant causing difficulties to pedestrians and vehicular movement. Moreover, the roadside ditches filled with filth and garbage are not cleaned regularly which have gradually turned into mosquito breeding centres.

Absence of drainage system is another problem for the town dwellers. During rainy season water accumulates on the roads causing much inconvenience to the people. Most of the street lights in the municipal areas have no bulbs. As a result, some areas of the town plunge into darkness giving advantage to the anti-socials.

Acute shortage of accommodation also poses another problem. Construction of new houses is not in proportion to the increasing number of people.

The condition of ordinary hotels and restaurants is pitiable because adulterated foodstuffs are sold in open places without any check by the concerned authorities.

There is no recreational facilities for children or for the elderly people of Habiganj town except a cinema hall with a very limited scope for amusement. The necessity of a big modern park is keenly felt. There is no toilet or urinal in the town area. People respond to the nature's call beside roads and office buildings, thus polluting the environment.

There is poor arrangement for cleaning garbage regularly. Mosquito menace has assumed an alarming proportion creating untold sufferings to all section of people.

## Health complex in sorry state

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Sept 13: Gomostapur upazila health complex is plagued with manifold problems.

The patients coming from the remote villages of the upazila go back home without necessary treatment due to absence of doctors, lack of life-saving drugs and medical appliances.

The only medical centre of the upazila lacks in X-Ray machine and ambulance. Though the government supplies huge quantity of medicines the patients are deprived of the medicare, it is alleged. Rather these medicines are sold to local pharmacies.

On the other hand patients are supplied with stale and poor quality food. The beds are also unfit for use. The doctors of the hospital remain busy with private practices neglecting their normal duties in the health complex, it is further alleged.

### 3 heroin addicts die

Meanwhile, three more heroin addicts died in August last raising the death toll to 27 in Chapainawabganj district alone. The deceased are Fakir Ali (40) of Arambag, Abdus Salam (35) of Barogherta and Manju Pramanik (35) of Mosjidpara.

## Aman crops on 30,000 acres submerged

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Sept 13: Aman crops on about 30,000 acres of land were submerged due to continuous rainfall within the embankment of "Chandpur Irrigation Project."

Jute, sugarcane and other crops have also been badly damaged. This is the second time that Aman crops were damaged by water logging due to heavy rainfall at Chandpur Irrigation Project.

It is reported that Chandpur Irrigation Project pump house at Charbagadi is out of order for a long time. As a result, excess rain water within the embankment can not be bailed out.

According to Chandpur Water Development office

sources, about 70,000 acres of land were brought under Aman crops this season within the project area.

Due to water logging Aman crops in a vast areas were submerged and damaged. The badly affected areas are Shekdi, Shokdt Rampur, Lohaghar, Tubgi, Char Basanta and northern part of Faridganj upazila. Crops were also damaged in Hatmchar upazila.

People of the area demanded more pump houses in Chandpur Irrigation Project area to bail out excess rain water from the project area. Otherwise every year crops of a large areas will be damaged by water logging it is felt.

## Tk 50 lakh for cyclone affected people

RANGAMATI, Sept 13: About Tk 50 lakh and 2706 bundles of corrugated iron sheets (CI sheet) have been allocated for 6,353 families who were affected by April 29 cyclone at Khagrachari Hill District, reports UNB.

According to official sources, one bundle of CI sheet and Tk 500 in cash, are being distributed to 2,706 worst affected families while Tk 1000 in cash is being given to 3647 partially affected families in eight upazilas of the district.

Shamsul Karim, the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari Hill District said that the upazila-wise breakup of relief in cash and kind are: Sadar

upazila—600 bundle CI sheet and Tk 8.5 lakh; Panchart—140 bundle CI sheet and Tk 1.92 lakh; Dighinala - 253 bundle CI sheet and Tk 7.25 lakh; Rangarh - 602 bundle CI sheet and Tk 5.59 lakh; Manikchari - 251 bundle CI sheet and Tk 2.90 lakh; Mohalchari - 86 bundle CI sheet and Tk 1.93 lakh; Matiranga-1000 bundle CI sheet and Tk 20 lakh and Luxmichari - 74 bundle of CI sheet and Tk 1.90 lakh.

The distribution of relief in cash and kind is under way, he said.

Meanwhile, a union council member of Tintahar union of Manikchari upazila was allegedly assaulted by some cyclone affected villagers. Police said, the villagers got enraged when they saw their names excluded from the relief-list.

The members Safar Ali is now under treatment at Manikchari upazila health complex, Manikchari police said.

## Tribal refugees urged to return home

Abul Hannan was arrested a few days ago in connection with a murder case.

During the hartal hours all transports remained off the streets and shops shuttered down.

To solve the unemployment problem a huge quantity of rice and wheat has been sanctioned against uplift project under the Food and Works Programme. But massive irregularities and misappropriation have hampered the scheme.

The villagers are selling their poultry birds and other movable property to meet their daily requirements. The price of land has also declined for want of purchasers. The money lenders have seized the opportunity thus grabbing the land of the poor people in rural areas.

RANGAMATI, Sept 13: Local government chairman Samiran Dewan has urged the tribal refugees to return home immediately without falling prey to conspiracies of some vested quarters, reports UNB.

Since the cultivable land in proportion is meagre, shortfall in output of foodgrains is a regular feature in the district.

Besides, hundreds of acres of cultivable land are being eroded by the rivers Padma and Gorai every year. As a result, the number of landless people is increasing alarmingly.

The farmers having a few acres of land cannot cope with the rising prices of agricultural inputs. They cannot buy fertilizers, seeds, pesticides and bullocks mainly due to poverty, it is learnt.

They are also deprived of irrigation facilities. Above all, they cannot get fair prices of their produce. Consequently they are forced to sell their land for sustenance.

The educated unemployed persons are also on the increase giving rise to social unrest since there is little scope for employment in mills and factories.

## Erosion takes serious turn in Munshiganj

From Our Correspondent

MUNSHIGANJ, Sept 13: Erosion has taken a serious turn in the district with the onset of monsoon.

A large portion of Munshiganj-Mukterpur road, Katakhal-Lanchughat road, Hatlaxmiganj, Sreepali-PTI road and Islampur road within the municipal area has already been engulfed by the Dhaleshwari river and the adjacent areas are feared to be eroded very soon.

Besides, Hasani Bazar and Tahsil office, a large portion of 500-year-old Digirpar Bazar and Digirpar upazila office under Tongbari upazila has also

been engulfed by the mighty Padma.

Eight villages in Tongbari, hundreds of dwelling houses and crops on vast tract have been devoured by the Padma causing immense sufferings to the villagers who are virtually turning pauper as they are losing their hearths and homes.

The Mukterpur ferryghat, Munshiganj bus stand road and Katakhal launch ghat of Sadar upazila have been seriously affected. Munshiganj district needs emergency protection from erosion of the Padma and Dhaleshwari, local elite feel.

## Notes from Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Sept 13: Police seized nine bales of polyester cloths worth about Tk 5 lakh Tuesday from Baitail, three miles away from here, reports UNB.

Police seized the cloths suspecting that those were intended to be smuggled out to India and also arrested the two owners named Shamsul Huq and Abdul Gofur.

Acting on a tip, police stopped the truck and seized the cloths. But the owners claimed that they unloaded the cloths at Baitail to take to Poradah cloth market for sale.

A case has been registered with local police in this connection and investigation is going on.

### 360 ticketless passengers held

Poradah railway police have arrested 360 passengers travelling without ticket during the last week and filed cases against them in the court of Upazila Magistrate, reports UNB.

According to railway sources, the operation that began recently has yielded a good result. Tickets are now being sold increasingly in the station counter due to action taken by the authorities.

After the drive Poradah railway officials are selling tickets amounting to Tk 25,000 per day whereas daily sale proceeds was Tk 4 to 5 thousand per day earlier.

In the same manner, daily sale proceeds in Mirpur railway station has increased to Taka 6,000 in place of Taka 500.

Daily sale proceeds in Ilalasa railway station have increased to Taka 5,500 in place of Taka 2,000, it was learnt.

### Adulterated foodstuff

Adulteration of foodstuff is rampant in almost all hotels and restaurants of the town with the law enforcing agencies remaining indifferent, consumers alleged.

Due to consumption of adulterated foodstuff, town dwellers have been suffering from various stomach ailments. Skin diseases have also broken out in an alarming proportion in the area, doctors said.

Patients with skin diseases have been pouring into their chambers in large numbers everyday, they said adding pure edibles like milk, ghee, mustard and soybean etc are hardly available in the market.

It is alleged that the local Pourashava and upazila sanitary inspectors hardly perform their duties. Some vendors are found selling adulterated foodstuff in front of schools causing stomach ailments to the school children.

### Unemployment

The number of landless and unemployed people is gradually increasing in all the six upazilas of the district.

According to a local survey, the total population of the district is over 12 lakh, of them, 60 per cent depend on agriculture, 10 per cent on different occupations and 30 per cent are unemployed.

Among the farmers, 50 per cent are landless, 30 per cent with a few acres of land and the rest 20 per cent can be classified as land owners.

Since the cultivable land in proportion is meagre, shortfall in output of foodgrains is a regular feature in the district.

Besides, hundreds of acres of cultivable land are being eroded by the rivers Padma and Gorai every year. As a result, the number of landless people is increasing alarmingly.

The farmers having a few acres of land cannot cope with the rising prices of agricultural inputs. They cannot buy fertilizers, seeds, pesticides and bullocks mainly due to poverty, it is learnt.

They are also deprived of irrigation facilities. Above all, they cannot get fair prices of their produce. Consequently they are forced to sell their land for sustenance.

The educated unemployed persons are also on the increase giving rise to social unrest since there is little scope for employment in mills and factories.

## Drivers violate traffic rules

NARAIL, Sept 13: Random violation of traffic rules in the town have been causing serious traffic jam and frequent accidents, reports UNB.

Informed sources said trucks, buses and rickshaws are parked here and there on the main roads blocking vehicular movement.

It is alleged that negligence of traffic police on duty often causes jam as they stop the vehicles in the middle of the roads to take toll from the drivers.

Driver of the vehicles allowed the passengers to travel on the roof and resort to rash driving ignoring the government restrictions. Goods are also carried on the roof of the vehicles.



DIGHIRPAR (Munshiganj): A village threatened by the mighty Padma. —Star photo