

Upazila roundup

KHAGRACHARI

Property worth Tk one crore gutted

Mar 8: Properties worth about Taka one crore were completely damaged when a devastating fire engulfed a big market at Ramgar Bazar in Sadar upazila recently reports UNB.

About 100 shops were gutted in the fire which is believed to have originated from a stove.

The fire started at 11 in the morning and quickly razed through the row of thatched shops in the busy market sending panic stricken shopkeepers and buyers rush for safety.

Security forces and villagers fought for two hours to put out the fire.

It may be mentioned that there are no Fire Brigade services in the area.

MAIZDEE COURT

Printing of note books unabated

Mar 8: Unabated printing of substandard note books is deteriorating the scholastic aptitude of the students in the district, reports UNB.

It has been alleged that despite government restrictions on publishing note books, a competitive market has emerged as a secret supplier of note books, guardians complained.

In Chaumuhuni, the business has been flourishing with new printing press and publication agencies solely engaged for the purpose.

Students are becoming dependent on these note books which are limited and selling secretly.

The law enforcing agencies recovered these banned books several times, it is learnt.

SIRAJGANJ

Girl hit by car, succumbs to injuries

Mar 8: A 7-year old girl, hit by a private car on the Dhaka-Bogra Highway Tuesday, succumbed to her injuries at the Sirajganj General Hospital the next day, reports UNB.

Shahana Khatun, daughter of a day labourer Goner Ali, was trying to pluck a flower at the road side when she was hit by the speeding car.

The accident occurred near her village at Kutirchar Bandraghat under Kamarkhand upazila at about 8.30 am.

SATKHIRA

Violence at JP meeting protested

Mar 8: Jatitya Party brought out a procession here Wednesday in protest against the violence at the Saturday's JP meeting at Sayedabad in Dhaka, reports UNB.

The processionists including former MPs paraded the main thoroughfares of the town chanting various slogans, blamed BNP government for creating a reign of terror to foil the meeting.

Later a rally was held on the court premises in which district unit leaders slated the government for police excesses in the meeting venue and called up on all to launch movement against the BNP hooliganism in the country.

They said in a democratic atmosphere every one has right to organise a public meeting to ventilate their demands and seek public support. They demanded immediate release of Ershad and other party leaders.

BARISAL

186 trawlers to be distributed among fishermen

Mar 8: The National Fisheries Cooperative Society will distribute engines, trawlers and fishing nets involving an amount of Taka 112 crore among the fishermen of 5 southern districts under post cyclone rehabilitation programme, reports UNB.

The society will distribute 62 trawlers in Bhola district, 32 in Barisal, 30 in Pirojpur, 32 in Patuakhali and 30 in Chandpur, the sources said.

Besides, 800 trawlers will also be distributed among the fishermen of the coastal areas of Greater Chittagong and Noakhali districts.

According to Society sources, this programme will be implemented with the financial assistance of the government of Japan and Bangladesh.

FENI

198 degree examinees expelled

Mar 8: A total of 198 degree examinees were expelled from Feni Government College Centre for adopting unfair means from February 10 to 27, reports UNB.

About 1,389 students including 211 girls are taking part in the degree examinations at this centre under Chittagong University.

A young man of 30 was crushed under the wheels of the bus while he was travelling in at Mohipal on Feni Bypass Highway on Monday.

He was identified as Taher of Charipur village of Sadar upazila of the district.

According to the police, when the bus reached Mohipal the victim suddenly fell from it and got crushed under its wheels. He died on the spot.

Police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to escape.

PATUAKHALI

Mosque-libraries in union level

Mar 8: The district branch of the Islamic Foundation has set up 189 mosque-libraries at the union level in six upazilas of the district.

The foundation has also made available to these libraries a large number of books.

Foundation sources said, they have set up the libraries to promote reading habit among the people and help them update their information about Islam and the Islamic way of life.

Local people said they would now get ample facilities for reading to enrich their knowledge.

FARIDPUR

Dacoity at residence of foreign national

Mar 8: Seven armed dacoits looted a video camera, cash Taka 3,000 and two gold rings from the residence of a Norwegian national at Badarpur, outskirts of the town Tuesday night, injuring the foreigner and his night guard, reports UNB.

Foreigner Aage Bakken along with the advisor of Local Government Engineering Bureau was shifted to Dhaka by helicopter and then flew to Bankok for treatment.

Night guard Ranjan (38) was admitted to Faridpur General Hospital.

According to police, dacoits stormed the house at about 2 am, fastened the guard and beat him mercilessly. When Bakken came out to rescue, the dacoits also injured him by ransack.

The dacoits decamped with the booties, firing three rounds of bullets and blasting bombs.

Police Super visited the spot the following morning.

JHENIDAH

10-day eye camp concludes

Mar 8: A 10-day eye camp in the town here treated over 3000 patients since February 10. Of them, 220 cataract patients were operated upon, reports UNB.

Dr Mizanur Rahman, Dr Abdur Rab and Dr Bahauddin Malik of BNSB, Khulna conducted the operations.

A total of 275 volunteers from 19 organisations served the patients in the camp held at the Primary Training Institute.

The camp was assisted by the Red Crescent Society, Modern Research Laboratories Ltd and Rotary Club of Jessore.

BRAHMANBARIA

Discussion on Language Movement

Mar 8: A discussion on the 40th year of the Language Movement and our Liberation War organised by Brahmanbaria Shahitya Academy was held at its premises recently, reports BSS.

Noted journalist and leader of Sammita Sangskritik Jote Mr Fayez Ahmed was the chief guest at the discussion. Presided over by Prof Shantanu Kaiser, the discussion was addressed among others by Prof AKM Harunur Rashid, Advocate Abdus Samad, Advocate Abu Taher and Mr Joydul Hossain, Secretary of Shahitya Academy.

The discussion was followed by a cultural function and staging of a drama 'Royal Bengal Tiger'.



SYLHET: Demonstration of solar power system held at Biswanath upazila headquarters recently — Star photo

Pests damage sugarcane

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Mar 8: The sugarcane plants on a vast tract of land have been severely attacked by pest in different upazilas of Greater Dinajpur district.

It is learnt that most of the pest infested fields have been turned yellowish and the pests are causing havoc to the adjoining fields.

When contacted one ACDO of the Scabganj told this correspondent that necessary measures had been taken in this connection. He also said, that the roots of the plants were rotten by the stagnant waters caused by the last flood.

However, on sugarcane farmer of Mangalpur informed that due to high price of spray machine and non-availability of pesticides, growers could not take proper measure. He also informed that pesticides taken from mills on credit last year at the time of plantation were adulterated.

Many of the sugarcane growers under Panchagarh Sugar Mills Zone Area complained that CDA's do not come to the fields or give the necessary instructions.

It may be mentioned here that a total of about 50,000 acres of land has been brought under sugarcane cultivation in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Scabganj Sugar Mills Zone Area. Of them, 10,000 acres have been brought under the direct supervision of the mill area. Last year, the planting area was about 45 thousand acres of land in the sugar mills zone area.

From Our Correspondent

Shortage of sixteen metric tons of foodgrains in Haripur Local Supply Depot under Thakurgaon district was detected after a physical verification by the District Anti-Corruption Department.

Acting on a secret information, police caught red-handed a driver and three other helpers at the time of loading 109 bags of wheat in side the godown recently. The truck bearing No Rangpur DAA-09 also been seized.

In collaboration with the Upazila Food Controller, the Officer-in-Charge of Haripur Local Supply Depot issued three DO against the names of three mills as Pally Rationing wheat for crushing which were false and the millers did not

know about the allotment. The Assistant Controller of Food, Thakurgaon visited the spot.

A case of misappropriation has been started with the Haripur police station in this regard.

Poura area lack basic amenities

The inhabitants of Phulbari Pourashava area have been facing with a host of problems which includes deplorable condition of roads, inadequate street lights, absence of proper drainage system, shortage of accommodation, lack of proper sanitary arrangement, mosquito menace, frequent power failure and housing.

The town is being expanded with the increase of population but the Pourashava authorities fails to provide with minimum civic facilities to the town dwellers.

Most roads in the Pourashava area are narrow and uneven. Cracks and potholes have developed at many points. Even after slight rainfall these roads become muddy and slippery. Rainwater remains stagnant on the roads causing difficulties to both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Moreover, the road-side ditches remain filled with filth and garbage are not cleaned regularly which has gradually turned into the mosquito breeding centres.

Absence of proper drainage system is another problem for the people of the town.

New ferry ghat

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 8: A new ferry ghat at Noleia, 5 km off Bhuapur, was opened to traffic on Thursday, reports UNB.

The ghat was completed last year but could not be made operational following protest and obstruction from the local people.

Sirajganj Launch Owner's Association said the protest from the people against the new ghat came as they feared to lose jobs and business with the closure of the terminal at Bhuapur.

Noleia Ghat was set up in the midway to Bhuapur due to the emerging chas that was blocking riverine traffic on the route.

Firewood use in Sirajganj, Dinajpur brickfields rampant

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 8: Despite government ban, rampant felling of trees in northern districts of the country ecological imbalance.

It is observed that felling of trees have been rampant in 16 northern districts to meet the necessity of firewood for domestic use and in the brick-fields as well. In the local markets firewoods are sold at the rate of Taka 60 to Taka 80 per maund.

Use of firewood has been banned in the brick-fields. There are about 700 brick-fields in 16 northern districts with double and single burners. More than 2000 maunds of firewood are required for a single burner brick-field. In case of double burner the quantity stands at double.

The brick-field owners are not interested to use coal in the fields because coal is sold on cash payment. Huge quantity of coal are remaining unsold in 12 depots.

On the contrary, firewoods are collected on credit and at a cheaper rate.

When contacted, some brick-field owners told this correspondent, that open

burning of firewood could be done after 'managing' the administration and law enforcing agencies.

But local administration sources said that firewood are used in the brick-fields very secretly and when this correspondent visited, piles of coal are observed in the brick-fields.

Other than firewood, bamboo roots are also used as fuel in the village areas of Sirajganj district. As a result, growth of bamboo clusters are decreasing at a threatening rate.

Such continuous felling of trees and bamboo roots cause ecological imbalance and the northern region of the country is threatened by desertification.

Our Correspondent from Dinajpur adds: Rampant use of firewood despite government ban in brick-field of the district of Dinajpur has been going on unabatedly hastening the process of deforestation.

Brickfield-owners are allegedly using trees as fuel although coal is available in the local depots. There are about 75 brick-fields in the district.

Besides, bamboo roots are also being used as fuel for burning bricks. Age-old Shal, Shegun, Mehogini, Argun, Babla and other fruit-bearing trees on both sides of Dinajpur-Parbatipur, Dinajpur-Scabganj, Dinajpur-Phulbari, Parbatipur-Saidpur, Dinajpur-Thakurgaon and Parbatipur-Barapukuria highways are being felled. Date-trees are being chopped

down indiscriminately to feed brick-fields affecting production of molasses here. Date-trees juice is extracted during the winter season.

According to Forest Department, Arjun trees grown abundantly and widely used as herbal medicine for heart ailment, showed a marked decline in the district because of indiscriminate cutting of trees.

According to another report, poverty has forced many a villager to sell his fruit-bearing trees to brick-field owners. Meanwhile, environmentalists have expressed concern at the felling of the trees which affecting the ecological balance in the district.

Notes from Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 8: A meeting of the executive committee of the United Communist League, Satkhira district unit held at the local party office with Advocate Mostafa Lutfulah in the chair.

Azizur Rahman, Central Committee Member of UCL, Surat Ali and Kamal Hossain spoke on the occasion.

Body recovered

A decomposed body of an unidentified old woman (60) was recovered by police from village Rahimabad under Tala upazila of the district recently.

It is reported that the local people could identify the woman. Some villagers told this correspondent that they found her begging in the locality.

The body was sent to the Satkhira hospital for post-mortem.

A case had been registered with Tala thana in this regard.

One slaughtered to death

One Saicha Khatun (60), second wife of Elahi Biswas of village Dhulunda under Tala upazila was slaughtered by a group of miscreants recently.

According to a report, a group of miscreants slaughtered the victim with sharp dao while she was sleeping at the verandah of her residence. The cause behind the murder could not be ascertained.

The body was sent to the Satkhira hospital for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Tala thana in this regard.

Gold worth Tk 1.20 lakh seized

Bangladesh Rifles recovered 20 tolas of gold worth Taka 1.20 lakh from the possession of one Yusuf Ali Dalal of village Bhadiali under Kalaroa upazila of the district recently.

It is gathered that while Yusuf Ali, was going to cross the border — by a bicycles the BDR personnel of Kakkdanga BOP caught him redhanded near at village Kakkdanga and recovered 20 tolas of gold from his possession.

Later, he was handed over to police.

A case was lodged with Kalaroa thana in this connection.

One kidnapped by miscreants

One Arshad Ali (40) of village Bhomra under Sadar upazila was kidnapped by a group of miscreants recently.

According to police sources, the victim went to his paddy field on the day of occurrence and since then he had been missing.

A case was lodged with Satkhira thana in this regard.

1051 mosques in dilapidated condition

More than 1051 ancient mosques built in many places of the district are now in a dilapidated condition for a long period.

It is learnt that mosques were built by Sultans and Kings including Kothabari Mosque under Kalaroa upazila, Tentulla Mosque under Tala upazila, the Sultanpur Mosque, the Banshadar Bazar Mosque all constructed during the Mughal period are now on the verge of collapse.

Local people urged the Department of Archaeology should preserve these mosques for the historical interests.

One pistol, pipe-gun recovered

Debbhata thana police on receipt of secret information recovered one country made pistol, one pipegun and two cartridges beside the play ground of Subarnabad Primary School recently.

Tk 18.65 lakh smuggled goods seized

COMILLA, Mar 8: Bangladesh Rifles of 29 Battalion here seized contraband goods worth about Taka 18.65 lakh and arrested 10 people in connection with smuggling during the last month, reports UNB.

Goods worth about Tk 18.03 lakh were seized while being smuggled into the country and goods worth about Taka 61,931 seized while being smuggled out to India.

At least 128 cases were filed with different police stations in this connection during the period.

According to BDR sources, the goods which were smuggled into the country included Indian sarrees, lungis, blouse pieces, cycle and motor parts, medicines, sugar, onion, turmeric, blackpepper and luxury items.

40 fishermen hurt in clash with rivals

HABIGANJ, Mar 8: At least 40 people were injured, 10 of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups of fishermen in Baniachong upazila of the district on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash ensued over the catching of fish in Jamuna Beel, near the Palaria village. Both the groups used lethal weapons in the clash.

The seriously injured were admitted to Habiganj Sadar hospital and the rest were released after first aid.

A case has been lodged with local police.

A cultural competition was held here at the local Islamic Foundation auditorium on Monday.

Organised by the local branch of the Islamic Foundation, it was participated

by about 300 students from different schools and madrasahs competing in recitation from the holy Quran, Hamd, Nath and essay writing.

Prizes were awarded to 51 students by Habibul Matin, Deputy Director of the Foundation.

BSF men remove houses from zero point

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) removed 22 dwelling houses from Bala border area of the district after official level discussion in Agartala on February 26 and 27.

BSF built these houses in the area some days ago.

The Deputy Commissioner of Habiganj, Shah Alam led the 8 members Bangladeshi team while the District Magistrate of West Tipara J P Gupta led the Indian team.

Divorce in rural areas increasing

PABNA, Mar 8: Non-payment of dowry, polygamy and immoral activities have broken off more than 50,000 marriages in 18 upazilas of the district during the last three years, reports UNB.

In most cases, lower class womenfolk were the worst sufferers. Due to non-registration of the marriage deeds, oppressed women did not get the legal protection.

Most of the marriages were conducted without any registration due to the ignorance of the illiterate people and neither they were ever aware of the legal aspect and benefit of registered marriages.

Added to the problem is the demand of higher charges by the marriage registrars in the remote areas, villagers alleged.

While expressing their opinion on the matter some young educated villagers urged the government to take measures for ensuring the registration marriage deeds with desirable amount of fee for sake of the poor people.

Besides, defying the government restriction, many people marry more than once in far flung areas without the written permission of their first wives.

A survey showed that marriage in the rural areas often fail to ensure the rights of a wife due to the absence of legal protection provided in the deed.

As a result, divorce has become a common feature in the rural areas. The victims mostly live in utter despair, sometimes forcing them to indulge in immoral activities to earn their livelihood.

A sum of Taka 1,30,51,000 was distributed among 285 farmers of the district as crop loan during the current intensive rabi crop cultivation programme.

The loan was disbursed through the branches of Rajshahi Krishi Unayan Bank (RKUB), Sonali Bank, Janata Bank and Agrani Bank.

Money lenders take higher interest rate

BORGUNA, Mar 8: Money lenders cashing in on the miseries of small farmers and traders of the district charging exorbitant interests on the money lent to their helpless borrowers, reports UNB.

According to sources, the unregulated rates of interest are Taka 20 to Taka 25 per cents varying with the nature of business transaction. The method of lending is so tricky that he borrowers have no way out to escape from the clutches of these money lenders.

These lenders very often advance money against standing crops in such a way that the growers are made to hand over their almost entire crops against nominal borrowings. As a result, the peasants never enjoy the fruits of their labour since the very method of borrowing put them at the mercy of their lenders.

The money lenders are not registered. So they have not to pay any income tax. They have only to count interest. Their illegal business has rendered hundreds of peasants and small traders loose their ancestral lands, homes and movable properties.

Another UNB report adds: Hundreds of landless people are pouring into the district headquarters and its surroundings in search of employment, food and relief materials.

Most of them are verging on starvation due to lack of employment opportunities. Some have started begging door to door.

The Food for Works Programme (FWP) has failed to check the sharp rise of landless people in the district, it is alleged.

Chandpur Hospital beset with problems

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Mar 8: Chandpur modernised hospital is beset with problems including shortage of medicine, bed, food and inadequate number of doctors, nurses and staff.

The hospital has only fifty beds which is quite inadequate to meet the needs of twenty lakh people of the district. Sometimes the number of admitted patients stands double of the seats. The patients are compelled to stay on the floor of the hospital. Cardiology, Medicine, Blood, Eye, E.C.G. Child departments are without doctors for a long time.

Besides, due to shortage of doctors many other important departments cannot be run properly. The existing doctors cannot cope with patients coming to the hospital everyday. Water supply in the hospital is not sufficient. Water supplied from a deep tubewell, contains iron.

Many important instruments of Dental Department remains out of order for a long time. The hospital has only one ambulance which has been lying out of order for a long time. As a result removal of serious patients to Dhaka for better treatment is being hampered.

Indoor-patients suffering from contagious diseases are accommodated in general ward in the absence of an isolated ward. There is no children ward in the hospital.

Some common tablets and capsules are available for indoor and outdoor patients.

The poor patients are to purchase medicines and other goods from the markets. The hospital is lacking sanitation. The hospital has not been renovated since its inception.

It is reported that food supplied to the patients is quite insufficient. Nurses, ward boys and sweepers are inadequate. Doctors, nurses staff cannot be accommodated due to shortage of residential accommodation.

People urged the Government to turn the hospital into hundred beds hospital to meet the growing need of the district.

No gate or guard at rly crossing

MAJDEE COURT, Mar 8: Public safety is at total risk as there is no gate or any guard at Lakshinarayanpur Railway Crossing near here, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that the railway crossing situated between Majde Court and the railway station of Noakhali district remains open to free flow of traffic making it susceptible to any kind of accident any time.

People complained that despite repeated requests for setting up safety measures at the crossing, no action has yet been taken.



SIRAJGANJ: The owners of brickfields collect huge quantity of firewood from various places for use — Star photo