

Upazila roundup

SATKHIRA

Pledge to fulfil aspiration of people

From Our Correspondent

Mar 11: An independent and bold weekly Kafela of Satkhira has become a daily in the month of February after 23 years of its existence.

For a long time this district was waiting for a daily newspaper to portray the woes of the people of this district.

The Kafela has come out with the pledge of fulfilling this aspiration of the people of this district by publishing an independent, bold truthful and informative news and views.

A daily with different ideas, it is now publishing regularly from Satkhira to inform the people about Flora and Fauna of the Sunderbans and nearby regions.

BRAHMANBARIA

Museum, archive to be set up

Mar 11: A meeting of the elite of the town held at the local Public Library Hall recently decided to establish a museum and archive at Brahmanbaria, reports BSS.

The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Khabiruddin Ahmed, presided over the meeting. Begum Asia Rahman MP, Syed Emdadul Bari, President, Brahmanbaria Bar Association, Advocate Syed Serajul Islam, Mohammad Musa, Secretary of the Public Library, Mr Joydul Hossain, General Secretary, Brahmanbaria Shahitya Academy and Mr. Zahurul Haq Zahar spoke on the occasion.

The meeting unanimously decided to establish a museum and archive to preserve the historic relics, records and documents of the cultural heritage of the district.

MAULVIBAZAR

No step to develop hats taken

Mar 11: A huge amount of revenue is being collected annually from over 300 hats and bazars of the district but no effective measures have been taken for their improvement so far, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that tolls are being collected by most of the "ejaradars" at a higher rate than fixed by the government. They collect tolls from the shopkeepers at their will.

The markets set up at local initiative continued to grow and expand even beyond the capacity for management only to cope with rising population. Shopkeepers and vendors are now ruling the roost occupying most space making it difficult for shoppers to move about. Illegal possessions despite objections have worsened the plight of the shoppers.

In the absence of drainage, most of the hats go under knee-deep water even after a moderate downpour. No sheds were raised to protect people from sun and rain. Consequently, the shoppers as well as the shopkeepers get swamped in mud and water.

Local people demanded immediate remedial steps to help them out of this plight.

CHITTAGONG

Need for mass participation in uplift plans underscored

Mar 11: Planning Minister A M Zahuruddin Khan on Tuesday stressed the need for mass participation in development programmes in order to make them successful, reports BSS.

He said poverty could be removed through spontaneous participation of the people in all sorts of development activities taking place in their respective areas.

Inaugurating about 3 km Bamankhali Khal reexcavation project at Charati under Satkhira upazila here the minister said, reexcavation of canals was a part of development activities directly involving the rural people.

The function presided over by UP Chairman Noor Mohammad Chowdhury was addressed by Shahjahan Chowdhury MP, Jamaat leader Moulana Mominul Haq Chowdhury, Deputy Commissioner A R Khan, Chittagong City BNP General Secretary Ekramul Karim and local leader Helal Humayun.

Bamankhali khal when re-excavated will facilitate irrigation, of about 1,000 acres of land, from which over one crore maunds of paddy could be produced in a season.

The Minister called upon all to participate in the canal digging programme in the greater interest of the country.

HOMNA

Utilisation of local resources stressed

Mar 11: Commerce Minister M K Anwar on Tuesday said the present government was determined to strengthen the local government structure at lowest level for better utilisation of local resources in the nation building activities, reports BSS.

He was addressing as chief guest the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected union parishad chairmen and members under Homna Upazila auditorium here.

The Minister underscored the need for motivating people in production oriented activities initiated by Saheed President Ziaur Rahman and local leaders could play vital role in the process.

Mr Anwar said the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was promise bound to implement the fundamental rights of people gradually because people were the main source of power. He urged the newly elected chairmen and members to work untidely to built a happy and a prosperous nation in a democratic atmosphere.

The oath was conducted by Hedayatul Islam Chowdhury, Deputy Commissioner of Comilla. Among others, UNO, Homna, one newly elected chairman and local leaders addressed the function.

MAGURA

Tk 30 lakh for extension of water supply

Mar 11: Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) has sanctioned over Taka 30.23 lakh for extending the water supply lines in Magura and Narail district towns, reports UNB.

While talking to UNB, the Executive Engineer of PHE, Magura Division, said out of the total allocation, Taka 18, 27, 714 has been earmarked for pipe, line extension work at Magura town and the rest Taka 11, 95, 889 for Narail town.

Extension and construction have already got under way and the work is expected to be over by June, he added.

RANGAMATI

Tk 10 cr timber damaged or smuggled

Mar 11: About Taka 10 crore timber are being either damaged or smuggled out from here as their extraction is delayed due to fund constraint, reports UNB.

Divisional Forest Officer Golam Habib said over two lakh cft of teak along with other valuable species of trees were uprooted and broken by the last year's devastating cyclone in different plantations of Chittagong South Division.

Only 6,000 cft of timbers could be extracted from the damaged plantations so far. The extraction process got hampered due to fund shortage, the DFO said.

The April 29 cyclone uprooted, broken and felled on a massive scale tree plantations of different breeds raised between 1918 and 1948 in the Karnafuli Range as well as few plantations raised between 1883 and 1952 in the Kaptai Range.

Quality teak of Burma origin planted in this division were also damaged on a large scale. Other species damaged included Garjan, Gamor, Jarul, Champaful etc.

The DFO said, to avoid further destruction of these timbers, arrangements should be made immediately to remove the timbers and prevent them from getting lost.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ

Indian trafficker arrested

Mar 11: An Indian trafficker was arrested Saturday by BDR at Singora in Shibganj Upazila and three Bangladeshi women were recovered from this hideout before being allured to India for immoral traffic, reports UNB.

The recovered women are Shefali Akhtar, 24, of village Prashadpur, Marjina Akhtar, 24, of village Baribangipur and Rabeha Khatun of village Hokna Rohanpur of Gomastapur Upazila of the district.

According to BDR sources, the said women were recovered from Singora village where they were dumped by the Indian national Md Sekandar Ali for trafficking to India. Sekandar allured them on the promise that they would be given better jobs there.

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

Eight NGOs cheat 50,000 jobless men, women

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Mar 11: Some Non-Government Organisations (NGO) collected over Taka 10 crore in the name of employment from the jobless youngmen and women of all the seven upazilas of the district and later disappeared during the recent times.

Eight NGOs started their programmes in different parts of the district and all the organisations disappeared after realising the above mentioned amount from the jobless persons of the area. About 50,000 jobless youngmen and women were cheated by the so called NGOs.

The eight NGOs who started work here were identified as Agro-Fisheries, Socio-Economic Development Organisation, People Economic Development Organisation, Bangladesh Gano Biddalaya Mission, Bangladesh Rural Development Organisation, Unemployed Rehabilitation Programme, Ahad Samaj Unnayan Sangstha and SIDA. These organisations set up

branch offices at different locations of the district and published advertisement for recruitment of staff. The organisations realised security money from the intending candidates.

Agro-Fisheries started work with its office at local Nayapara Road of the town and advertised for recruitment of staff at union, upazila and district level. Soon, the organisation recruited a large number of people and took security be amount from each candidate. But after few months, the activities of the organisation found suspicious. One day, the job seekers gheraoed the district office of the organisation and demanded the security money back. The organisation arranged time for repayment of money and one day they were found missing.

One of the deprived job seekers informed this correspondent that he was appointed after depositing Taka 8,000 as security money. He further informed that he did

not get any salary during the tenure of his six months service.

All such NGOs set up their branch offices for implementing different purposes like women rehabilitation, small poultry farm, project for destitute women, fish cultivation, agri-rehabilitation and interest-free small trading loans. The NGOs recruited large number of employees to cover up the programmes from village level to district level. Soon after the collection of the entire money, all the NGOs disappeared without notice. About 50,000 jobless youngmen and women were deprived by the so called NGOs.

One Gramin Health Organisation set up their office at Station Road in Melandah and collected Taka 5.00 per head in rural areas for free treatment. A reliable source disclosed that the office collected Taka 15,000 in this way. Ultimately, they also disappeared from the scene.



CHAPAINAWABGANJ: The farmers are preparing lands for planting IRRI-boro paddy in Barendra Project area. — Star photo

Barendra Project farmers more enthusiastic this yr

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 11: The farmers of the Barendra Project area are cultivating IRRI-boro paddy with much enthusiasm this year.

The use of deep tubewells in 15 upazilas of Barendra Project is expected to be increased by 60 to 70 per cent this year.

The government decision to sell the tubewells to the farmers has created much enthusiasm. It can be mentioned here that the government decided to sell the deep tubewells as Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporations (BADC) had been facing losses in rental system of the tubewells.

Later the programme proved inadequate. So, the concerned ministry again decided to let out the deep tubewells. On the otherhand,

the project authority has taken measures to provide irrigation facilities to farmers on instalment payment basis if needed.

Out of the total 2882 deep tubewells under the projects, the farmers have hired as many as 1660 deep tubewells. It is expected that 1900 deep tubewells are likely to start functioning by the last part of March.

It is learnt that only 800 to 900 deep tubewells were used in last two years and around 20 acres of land could be irrigated by a deep tubewell. But this year, a deep tubewell is expected to irrigate 25 to 30 acres of land. As a result, a vast tract of land will get irrigation facilities.

The farmers of the project are unwilling to use the Chinese irrigation machine for

various reasons. A total of 633 such deep tubewells were allocated for the project.

The farmers informed that the Chinese machines consume more fuel though it is assembled with latest technology. Apart from that, the machines can not be repaired by the local mechanics.

There are 147 Lister, 184 Ruston and 100 VM irrigation machines in the project area which are being used amidst various mechanical trouble. The spare parts of the machines like diesel filter, piston ring, bearing, plunger, nogel and others are not available in the market and also in the local store of the BADC. These are available only in the Central store of the BADC. Sometimes, the staff of the central store of BADC do not respond in time.

Shallow tubewell engine

70 pc on use in country boats

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 11: At least 70 per cent shallow tubewell engines meant for irrigation purposes are being used in the country-made boats hampering irrigation in the Rajshahi, Natore and Naogaon districts.

The trend of using shallow tubewell engines for the non-irrigation purposes has increased day by day and consequently agriculture production has dropped in the district during last few years.

The Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation sources said that the shallow tubewell engines were sanctioned for agriculture purposes and rules have now been relaxed. The sources further said

70 kancha houses gutted

KUSHTIA, Mar 11: At least twenty persons were injured, five of them seriously in a devastating fire at Millpara Char area in front of Kushtia Rail Station yesterday, reports BSS.

Over seventy kancha houses were burnt to ashes in the fire. Fire Service personnel brought the fire under control. The Deputy Commissioner visited the place and arranged some emergency relief measures.

that there was a marked increase in the supply of engines in the market.

The Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank sources said that they were aware that the shallow tubewell engines had been used for the country made boats, rice and flour mills.

They said that they had already started cases against some owners of engines for non-payment of bank loans granted for the purchase of shallow tubewell engines.

Adulterated food stuff

Adulteration of food-stuffs is rampant in different parts of the district. Due to consumption of adulterated food-stuffs various stomach ailments and skin diseases have registered alarming rise in this area. Doctors said, patients with gastro-intestinal complications are pouring into their chambers in large numbers.

Adulterated goods are being sold in the markets freely. Pure goods like milk, ghee, butter, oil are hardly available. Besides, some vendors are found selling adulterated foods in front of schools. As a result, the school children have been suffering from diseases. It is alleged that a section of unscrupulous milk vendors

Note books on open sale

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Mar 11: The sale of note books is going on unabated at Dinaipur district headquarters and its adjoining areas.

Note books are being sold in most of the bookshops at Dinaipur and different upazila markets despite government ban. It may be mentioned here that the government had imposed ban on publishing and selling note books upto class eight in order to discourage the dependence of the students on prepared answers.

It is learnt that some unscrupulous traders are publishing sub-standard note books with fake name and address. These note books are full of errors and distortion of facts.

Some guardians alleged that these books are being sold at an exorbitant price in different markets of the district. It is further informed that most of the owners of the book-stalls do not sell text books without notes.

Local students and guardians have urged the concerned authorities to take stringent action against these illegal sale of note books.

Child marriage

The number of child marriages has been increasing in the district of Dinaipur. The cases of divorces are also increasing due to early and illegal marriages.

According to reliable source, about 3,000 divorce cases were filed during the last two years in 13 upazilas of the district.

The underaged women are the worst victims as their husbands divorce them for non-payment of dowry.

It is alleged that there are some so called marriage registrars who have got no licences are doing such unlawful deeds at a payment of more money.

Despite government restriction on marriage below the age of 18 years, the illegal marriages of the girls are being solemnised by a vested group of people in collaboration with the non-registered persons.

Adulterated edible oil

The sale of adulterated edible oil is rampant in rural areas of the district which is posing a serious threat to the health of consumers.

It is informed that some dishonest traders are mixing bad quality of oil with the mustard oil and are selling those in open markets at a comparatively cheaper rate.

Consumption of these oils causes various stomach ailments like dysentery and gastro-intestinal diseases in rural areas, doctors said.

Local people called up on the concerned authorities for proper checking of foodstuffs in the markets.

Use of solar power stressed

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 11: An exhibition of solar power system was held at Sylhet on March 3 with a target of its extension and marketing throughout the country.

A private firm arranged the demonstration programme at Biswanath upazila headquarters. Mr Shahid Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet was present as chief guest while K B Zaman, General Manager of the firm also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers at a meeting underlined the use of solar power as an alternate and cheap source to energy.

Each solar panel costing around Taka

Oilmen face acute fund crisis

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 11: About 12,000 oilmen of the district have been facing unemployment due to manifold problems including want of running capital.

Meanwhile, a large number of oilmen have closed their 'ghanis' and others are on way to change the age-old traditional profession.

It is gathered that about 2,000 mini oil mills were running in Sirajganj district and about 15,000 oilmen were engaged in producing edible oil. But most of the mills have been facing closure due to shortage of fund.

The rapid extinction of ghanis was attributed to flourishing of a large number of power driven oilmills in different parts of the district including Sirajganj sadar, Ullapara, Belkuchi and Shajadpur upazilas which can produce oil at a lower cost than those of the ghanis owners.

Besides, a huge quantity of imported edible oil including

soyabin and palm oil have flooded the local markets. As a result, ghanis produced oil do not get market and its demand has also come down considerably.

At present, running capital amounting to Taka 2000 is required to run the business excluding cattlehead which pulls ghanis. The poor oilmen can hardly afford to invest the amount as there is no provision for bank loans in this sector of cottage industry.

Some of the oilmen however collect capital from the village money lenders at rate of interest. Such loan at incommensurate rate of interest mean higher cost of production but the return is not in commensurate with the investment because of the above mentioned factors.

Consequently, a large number of oilmen have given up their age-old profession rendering about 12,000 people unemployed.

Prices of essentials up in Pabna

PABNA, Mar 11: Prices of all essentials have shot up in the district over the last fortnight affecting the low-income group of people, reports UNB.

Sources said, triggered by the advent of Ramadan, prices of rice, pulses edible oil, eggs, onion, garlic, chillies and vegetable have gone up abnormally.

Medium and low varieties of rice are selling at Taka 14.50 to 15.00 per kg as against Taka 12.00 to Taka 12.50 earlier. Atta is selling at Taka 14.00 to 14.00 per kg as against Taka 11.30 to Taka 12.00 before Ramadan.

One kg of lentil (masur) is being sold at Taka 30, mustard oil Taka 60, soyabean oil Taka 45 and egg selling at Taka 12.00 per set of four.

Consumers complained that in the absence of any effective market control mechanism, traders are freely trading on the miseries of the people creating artificial crisis in the market.

Substandard life saving drugs have flooded the markets all over the district causing panic among the people who are advised to take such medicines from the dishonest physicians.

It is alleged that many drug

containers including saline and injection are having fungus. The intake of these contaminated drugs have endangered patients lives.

Local people alleged, many drug companies are marketing substandard drugs without obtaining certificate from concerned authorities and they are doing it with attractive publicity.

A section of physicians are also prescribing these substandard medicines for material gains, patients complained.

Allegations said agents of drug companies allure these physicians in different ways to prescribe their products while the quacks in villages prescribe these medicines for being cheaper.

Meanwhile, most medicine shops in rural and urban areas of the district are being run without drug licences, it is learnt.

Knowledgeable circles suggested that no drug should be marketed without certificate from the concerned authorities.

Local elite demanded exemplary punishment to the manufacturers of substandard medicines.

Influential persons grab khas lands, ponds

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Mar 11: Nearly 60,000 ponds, tanks, beels and acres of marshy lands, known as khas lands and vested properties have been grabbed by the influential persons of the localities in 16 northern districts through false and illegal deeds in collaboration with a section of corrupt officials of the Revenue Department.

Consequently, the Fisheries Department could not to implement the pisciculture schemes in these ponds and tanks and Taka 50 crore are being lost every year.

According to a survey report prepared by Fisheries Department and by a NGO

about 27 per cent of the total ponds and tanks are owned by co-sharers, 12 per cent under the category of vested properties and the rest 47 per cent are private properties.

The report said that it was difficult to reform the co-sharers pond because the sharers seldom become united. Besides, most of the tanks falling under the category of vested properties have been grabbed by false deeds and fish cultivation in these ponds was impossible.

Moreover, the local government authorities did not come forward to file cases for the recovery of these ponds from the fake owners.

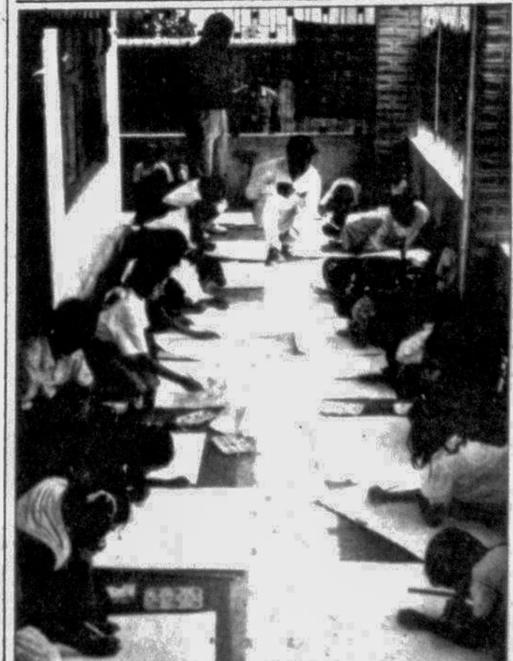
According to an official source, there are 13,827 khas ponds and tanks in the northern region. But following change of ownership through false and forged deeds, there are now only 2,923 ponds and tanks under the category of khas land in 16 northern districts including Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rangpur and Nilphamari districts under Rangpur Zone.

Want of wheat hampers uplift works

RANGPUR, Mar 11: Works on almost 113 development projects taken up under the Test Relief Programme in eight upazilas of the district have remained stop for want of wheat, reports UNB.

The works on these projects were started in last January. District administration and Rehabilitation sources said about 4943 metric tons of wheat were sanctioned for the implementation of these projects. But only 1600 metric tons of wheat were disbursed, due to its scarcity.

Of the total projects, 25 were taken up in Sadar, 20 in Mithapukur, 14 in Pirganj, 12 in Kaunia, 14 in Pirgacha, 13 in Gongachara, 10 in Bodarganj and 5 in Taraganj upazila.



PABNA: On the occasion of 39th anniversary of Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), a poster painting contest was organised among the school students. — Star photo