

Upazila roundup

BARGUNA

**Dacoits rob
Tk 12,000, goods
worth Tk 50,000**

Apr 10: Armed dacoits raided a house at Chamupara village in Amtali upazila early Thursday robbed cash 12,000 including goods worth Taka 50,000 and injured one of the inmates seriously, reports UNB.

The dacoits numbering about 12, on entering the house of Nikunja (30), tied up the inmates and hit Nikunja with a dao when he tried to resist.

Nikunja was rushed to Patharghata Health Complex in a critical condition. He was stabbed on the face at several points, hospital sources said.

A case has been filed with Amtali police. Police visited the spot but none has been arrested yet.

MANIKGANJ

**3 pipe guns
recovered**

Apr 10: River traffic police recovered three country made pipe guns at Aricha Launch Ghat in Shibhalaya upazila on Sunday night, reports UNB.

Acting on tip, a contingent of police raided the area and recovered the arms. The miscreants sensing the arrival of police managed to escape leaving behind the guns.

Mentionable that the miscreants are active in the launch ghat and incidents of hijack and loot are on rise here for a long time.

A case has been filed with the Shibhalaya police.

SATKHIRA

**Young housewife
beaten to death**

Apr 10: A young housewife (20) was allegedly beaten to death by her husband at Bhalrabnagar village in Shyamnagar upazila on Monday, reports UNB.

According to police, the victim Selina's husband Zahangir Hossain has been demanding 10 bighas of land as dowry from his father-in-law Abdur Gafur of same village since their marriage. Later, he was given six bighas of land.

But Zahangir was not satisfied with the land. In order to grab the rest land he was torturing his wife every now and then.

At last the greedy husband on holy Eid-ul-Fitr day started putting pressure on his wife for the land. When Selina refused to go to her father for the purpose, he became furious and beat her mercilessly. As a result, Selina died on the following day.

A case has been filed with Shyamnagar police.

JAMALPUR

**Tk one cr property
gutted in fire**

Apr 10: Property worth about Taka one crore was burnt to ashes in a devastating fire at Tamaitola area in the town Monday night, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the fire originating from a shop soon engulfed the adjoining areas and gutted 50 shops and godowns.

Fire servicemen from Jamalpur rushed to the spot and after frantic efforts brought the fire under control. Later Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare Serajul Hoque visited the spot.

The affected businessmen have urged the government to provide financial assistance for their early rehabilitation.

COMILLA

**Re-excavation of
canals in progress**

Apr 10: Re-excavation of seven canals in seven upazilas of the district is progressing fast, reports UNB.

According to official sources, half of the work would be done through voluntary labour and the another half under Food for Works Programme.

About 406 metric tons of wheat have been allotted for the successful implementation of the programme. The total length of the canal taken up for re-excavation is about 25.26 kilometres. With the implementation of the programme, about 17,000 acres of land will get irrigation facilities, the sources added.

The canals are Lotshar Daracho Canal (5.03 km) in Laksham, Ladatopa-Chawkwarta Canal (1.81 km) in Nagalkot upazila, Gungur Canal (4.57 km) in Sadar, canal stretching from Alipur P/B to Bagmara-Kalabag Bridge (3.75 km), Burinadi Canal (3.08 km) in Muradnagar upazila, Motop Canal (2.25 km) in Daudkandi upazila, Bamershar-Alshahab Canal (5.00 km) in Debidwar upazila.

COX'S BAZAR

**Businessman
trapped in
quicksand,
dies**

Apr 10: A young businessman died on Thursday when he was trapped in the quicksand at the sea-beach here, reports UNB.

Amir Hossain, 24, who came here with a picnic party, was having bath at the beach when he was caught in the quicksand and subsequently swept away by the tide.

His friends recovered his body.

HABIGANJ

**6 get life-term
for killing
minor girl**

Apr 10: Six people were awarded life-term for killing an eight-year old girl, court sources said here on Wednesday reports UNB.

The convicted persons are: Badsha Miah, Yeakub Miah, Noor Miah, Nurul Haque, Shaif Ullah and Edris Miah of village Krishnapur in Madhabpur upazila.

The prosecution story, in brief, was that on 8.12.88 the convicted people attacked the house of Golap Khan of the same village following a land dispute. In absence of Golap they beat up his wife Jahura Khatun and daughter Halima Khatun (8) mercilessly. As a result, Halima died on the spot.

A case was lodged with Madhabpur thana and police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against eight people.

After examining the witnesses and records, the Additional District and Sessions Judge convicted six persons and acquitted two others recently.

Meanwhile, District and Sessions Judge, Zahurul Islam convicted one Altav Uddin of village Shaiba in Nabiganj upazila for murdering one Mayna Miah and sentenced him to suffer life term recently.

KUSHTIA

**Discussion meet
on World Health
Day held**

Apr 10: A discussion meeting was held Tuesday at the office premises of the Civil Surgeon to mark the World Health Day.

Dr. Mozharul Hannan, Civil Surgeon, Kushtia presided over the meeting. Syed Halif Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner was present at the function as chief guest.

Mr. S.M. Kausar, President of Kushtia Press Club, Mr. Abu Sharif, Administrator of Kushtia Paurashava and Dr. Mosharrar Hossain, among others discussed various aspects of the significance of the observance of the day.

The chief guest distributed prizes among the healthy children. A seven-month-old boy Pranon Chowdhury won the first prize.

BOGRA

**Kidnapped girl
rescued**

Apr 10: Police rescued a teenaged girl of village Deogram in Kalaloo upazila Thursday who was allegedly kidnapped by a local young man a month back, reports UNB.

It has been alleged that the accused Rafiqul Islam, son of Niamat Ali of the village took Baby out of the house on February 27.

Soon after the incident Baby's father, Abdus Samad of the same village lodged a case with the local police.

Her whereabouts could not be traced till police rescued her. She was with the accused at that time.

GAIBANDHA

**Peasants demand
requisite fuel
at normal price**

Apr 10: Hundreds of peasants of the district brought out a procession protesting the short supply of fuel and its abnormal price.

The processionists paraded the main streets of the town and later gheroned the office of the Deputy Commissioner demanding adequate supply of fuel at normal price.

It may be mentioned here that the scarcity of fuel had been prevailing in the district for several weeks which was hampering the irrigation of the vast tract of lands.



PABNA: Igor A Saprykin, Charge d'Affaires, Russian Federation in Bangladesh is receiving a bunch of flowers from Lion Dr. Mosharrar Hossain, President, Pabna Pioneer Lions Club during his visit here recently. — Star photo

**Drought damages 25 pc crops in
Jamalpur, Sherpur, Sirajganj**

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Apr 10: The standing crops including the IRRI-boro paddy have been seriously affected by the prolonged drought throughout Jamalpur and Sherpur districts.

Boro paddy is usually harvested in the months of Chaitra and Baishak in the low lying areas of the two districts. The areas are: Shartshabari, Madarganj, Melandah, Dewanganj, Bakshiganj, Islampur, Jamalpur Sadar, Sribordi, Srepcur Sadar, Jhenigati, Nalitabari, Nakla and Hahaughat upazilas. But the drought has caused substantial damage to the standing boro paddy in these areas.

According to unofficial source, boro was cultivated on about six lakh acres of land in these two districts this year but due to prolonged drought, production shortfall would be 20 to 25 per cent as apprehended by the farmers.

On the other hand, a vast tract of land which were prepared for aus and aman cultivation have been lying vacant for want of rain.

It may be mentioned here that Dist Agriculture Department under took an ambitious programme to cultivate aus and transplanted aus on about 1.10 lakh acres of land this year. But the seedlings have been sown on five per cent of land.

Jute cultivation
It would be difficult to achieve the target of jute cultivation due to drought and non-availability of seeds. So, the farmers of the districts are likely to be affected by the drought.

Betelnut is another cash of the districts but the drought has already damaged 60 per cent of the betelnuts.

Sugarcane and other kinds of vegetables are dying for want of rain. Mangoes, melon, sweet potato which are used as substitute of rice and wheat have been damaged severely by the persisting drought.

The underground water level of the districts has further fallen down leaving the hand shallow and deep tubewells have become inoperative.

60 pc ponds, canals dried up
About 60 per cent of the ponds, canals and beels have completely dried up bringing irrigation in paddy fields to a standstill. At least 265 tubewells have gone out of order last months.

The farmers of some villages have closed down the IRRI schemes and cutting the sun-burnt crops and using those as fodder.

Due to abnormal fall in water level, the ferry services in the districts have facing very much difficulties to transport vehicles and passengers.

Meanwhile, serious food problem has been persisting all over the Jamalpur and Sherpur districts. The government has yet to start open sell of rice and wheat which is a urgent need.

The prices of daily necessities have also shot up at different markets of the districts creating hardships to the common people.

Heat wave paralyses normal life in Rajshahi
Our correspondent from Rajshahi says: The hot spell that has been continuing for the last few days in Bajshahi virtually paralysed the normal life.

The local Meteorological Office recorded average 38 to 39 degrees Celsius temperature in last week.

The roads of the city are almost deserted as people prefer to stay at their homes. The officials could not do their normal duties as the hot spell continued throughout the day. Most of the rickshaws went of the roads.

The attendance of the students in the educational institutions was not normal and classes were suspended owing to excessive heat particularly at noon.

The business transactions of the metropolitan city are being hampered as most of the shops remained closed at noon.

On the other hand, the road-side vendors of cold drinks, sarbat and green coconut are making brisk business as thirsty people rush to these vendors.

Moreover, frequent power failure and scarcity of drinking water have aggravated the situation.

Child labourers
About 20,000 child labourers are at present engaged in different jobs here to help their destitute families.

The minor boys are working in restaurants, furniture shops, welding shops, motor and rickshaw garages. These children are also pulling rickshaws and working servants in houses. The under-aged boys and girls come to the city from the poverty-stricken families of the rural areas who are compelled to take such odd jobs.

This class of child labourers have to work from dawn to dusk for the nominal remuneration.

Expressing concern over the increasing number of child labourers, a social worker of the locality said that repeated floods, cyclone, drought and other natural calamities have been making the marginal and landless farmers as destitutes.

These children are found residing at railway stations and abandoned places after their day's work.

Some of them are found in unlawful activities engaged by unscrupulous businessmen and smugglers.

According to International Labour Law, children below 15 years are not allowed to engage in hard work.

Jahangir Alam son of Abdus Saiter, a retired peon of Rajshahi University told this correspondent that he is working as newspaper hawker to extend financial help to his family. Jahangir was a student of class four last year but he had to stop his studies to earn for his family.

Sirajganj
UNB from Sirajganj adds: The IRRI-Boro crops on vast tract of field in 16 northern districts are threatened due to unprecedented drought, erratic power supply, scarcity of fuel and other agricultural inputs.

Most of the fields rapidly dried up and the paddy plants gradually turned yellowish due to want of water.

According to district extension department about 2.29 lakh acres of land have been brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation in the district during the current season. Of them, only 75 thousand acres are out of irrigation facilities. The rest of the land have been brought under irrigation by various pumps.

But due to frequent power failure and load shedding the power pumps operated by electricity most of the time plying idle.

On the other hand due to the scarcity and high price of fuel most of the farmers could not operate their pumps.

In addition, scarcity of fertilizer and pesticides compounded the problems.

Baghabari oil depot sources said, they are getting 33 per cent less supply from Fatullah and Godnail as transportation has been hampered due to heavy siltation in the river.

**Dacoits abduct
girl, loot
valuables**

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 10: Armed dacoits injured 15 people, abducted a young girl and looted valuables worth about Tk one lakh from a house in Kamarband upazila of the district today, police said, reports UNB.

Dacoits numbering about 20 forced into the house to Shukta Munshi at Motnakandi village of the upazila, beat up the inmates and decamped with Tk 10,000 in cash and goods worth about Tk 70,000.

Responding to the hue and cry raised by the inmates, the villagers resisted the dacoits. The encounter left at least 15 people injured.

The dacoits took with them Munshi's young daughter Dhubila Begum (20). She was later found near Ichhamati river in a critical condition and was admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital.

Road in bad condition

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Apr 10: Kushtia-Poradah Road has been lying in very bad shape causing untold sufferings to the travelling passengers on this road.

This 9-mile road was metalled in the year 1962 but for want of proper repair and maintenance the road has become dilapidated.

Innumerable potholes have developed on this road which are creating obstacles for the movement of vehicles. The Transport workers said that plying of vehicles on this road means damaging of vehicles and it is full of risk.

Owners of vehicles said that their repeated appeals for repair of the road had gone in vain. They maintained that damage of vehicles not only causes loss to them but also affects the country's foreign exchange because the parts of the vehicles are imported.

The Zila Parisad is the authority to maintain this road but the parisad is yet to take any urgent measure to repair the same and make them worthy of plying vehicles.

Cultivation of boro paddy in Kushtia district is likely exceed its target. Informed source said that about one thousand acres of land in Molar Beel area in Bheramara upazila which remained fallow so long has been brought under boro cultivation and it has been turned into a granary with the installation of 52 shallow tubewells and bumper boro crops are expected this year, in the area.

Similarly, other fallow lands have been turned into cultivable and brought under boro area.

Untimely rain and drought could not affect the area as shallow tube wells function very well, the sources said.

**Govt urged to stop
production of
polythene bags**

BORGUNA, Apr 10: Local people have urged the authorities to impose restrictions on establishment of polythene manufacturing factories to prevent environment pollution, reports UNB.

A survey conducted by the local clinic reveals that over the recent years many factories were established to manufacture polythene bags here.

The bags are thrown here and there blocking drains polluting the environment and causing health hazards.

Forest resources in the district are on the verge of extinction as brickfield owners are using trees as fuel for burning bricks.

All the 75 brickfields in the district have been using a large quantity of firewood due to alleged scarcity of coal.

The daily requirement of all the brickfields are over one lakh maunds, while doubles when brick burning goes in full swing between December and April every year.

Firewood is now being sold between Taka 60 and Taka 70 per maund in the market.

It is reported that indiscriminate felling of trees by traders in collaboration with some unscrupulous officials have turned the forest almost deserted threatening ecology.

Besides, fruit trees like palm, mango, litchi, jackfruit and other local varieties like goal and gajate are being felled indiscriminately causing loss of fruit bearing trees in the district.

While taking to UNB the brickfield owners said they were forced to use wood as fuel since neither coal nor any other alternative was available for use in brickfields.

But the officials claimed that supply of coal was adequate. Brickfield owners use wood as it is comparatively cheaper, they said.

Experts said the problem could have been overcome if arrangements could be made for the supply of LP gas to the brickfields.

Rejoinder: Brigadier (Retd) Nurul Islam Lasker, DG, Fire Service and Civil Defence claims that the department has latest fire fighting equipment and the total fire incident will be 4605 in the recent story under heading 'Modern fire fighting equipment needed'

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Apr 10: The Muslims of the district celebrated the holy Eid-ul-Fitr with great enthusiasm and religious fervour.

Thousands of Muslims gathered at different Eid congregations in and around the town where they exchanged greetings embracing each other in the traditional Islamic way.

The main Eid Jamaat of the town was held at Old Town Eidgah Maidan. Jamaats were also held at Newtown Eidgah Maidan, Munshipara Eidgah Maidan, Harikeah Eidgah Maidan, Khaliganj Eidgah Maidan, Kathalbari Eidgah Maidan, where hundreds of people attended.

In all the congregations, special prayers were offered for peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

Improved diet was served to the orphans and inmates of the jail while special diet was given to the patients of the local hospital.

In the evening, the private and public buildings of the district town were illuminated by the coloured bulbs showing the symbol of Eid Mubarak.

Everybody enjoyed the festival as whether was favourable.

Our correspondent from Maulvibazar reports: Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated throughout the district with due religious fervour.

Special munajats were offered in Eid congregations seeking divine blessings for peace, progress and solidarity

of the Muslim Ummah.

The main Eid congregation was held at the local Eidgah Maidan near the shrine of Hazrat Syed Shah Mustafa (R.A.).

The Muslims especially the young boys and girls were found very cheerful who wore new dresses exchanged Eid greetings with their relatives and other local known people.

Home-made sweets and other delicious foods were prepared and served to the visiting guests on this biggest ceremony of the Muslim community.

**Diarrhoea claims
8, attacks 200
in Bogra**

BOGRA, Apr 10: Diarrhoea claimed at least eight lives and attacked another 200 people, most of them children, during the last week in five upazilas of the district, reports UNB.

According to unofficial sources diarrhoea broke out in Sadar, Kahlool, Sonatola, Shibganj and Shariakandi upazilas of the district.

However, the Civil Surgeon confirmed that only 50 people were attacked by diarrhoea in three upazilas of the district and there were no loss of lives.

**Postponement of
electrification
plan protested**

JAMALPUR, Apr 10: Several thousand people demonstrated at the Madarganj upazila headquarters against sudden postponement of long-awaited electrification programmes scheduled to begin there, reports UNB.

The two-hour-long demonstration from 12 noon was followed by a protest meeting presided over by Advocate Mojammel Haq and addressed, among others, by Awami League leader Mirza Azam, MP.

The Power Development Board (PDB) has taken up the project for electrification of Madarganj, one of the 13 upazilas of the country still outside the power supply network, following persistent demand from the local people.

Witnesses said when the enlisted contractor went to start implementing the project this morning, PDB engineers informed that they had been instructed not to begin the work.

Sources said PDB enlisted the upazila for electrification this year under the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Speakers at the meeting blamed an influential BNP leader for the postponement of work on the project.

They said the local people had been demanding power supply for the last five years. They also held a press conference in Dhaka in support of their demand.



RAJBHARI: Mosquito menace in the district has assumed in an alarming proportion causing untold sufferings in the dwellers. There are ditches at town area which are filled with waterhyacinths act as breeding centre for the mosquitoes. — Star photo

**Storm affects 50 pc
mango production**

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Apr 10: About 50 per cent of the mangoes in the district have been damaged by the heavy hailstorm during the last few days.

It is learnt that consecutive hailstorm throughout the district have largely affected the mango sprouts. The worst affected areas are Mobarakpur, Dalpukuria, Shahbajpur, Kansal, Runlithi, Moharajpur, Malikpur and Ranbari.

According to farmers, the production of mango in the district will come down to 40,000 metric tons. It can be mentioned here that 80,000 metric tons of mango are produced here every year. The amount or loss is likely to stand at Taka 40 crore.

The on-going heat wave is also affecting the mangoes of the district. Huge quantities of mango sprouts have been dropping every day.

It can also be mentioned here that the district produces mangoes worth about Taka 80 crore every year. About 30,000 people of the district earn their livelihood from the mango cultivation.

FWP schemes
The Food for Works Programmes in the district are greatly hampered due to shortage of wheat in the local godowns.

**Condition of two
student leaders
deteriorate**

GAIBANDHA, Apr 10: Condition of two student leaders seriously injured in a bloody clash here Tuesday last deteriorated further, reports UNB.

Shaheen and Sohel were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital after being allegedly beaten severely by police.

According to police, they were injured in a clash between two groups of youths in a shop of one Sawkat member at bus stand area of the town of April 7 at about 8 pm.

Police rushed to the spot and arrested injured Sohel and Shaheen.

Local people alleged that police beat the student leaders mercilessly after taking them to the thana.

About 4,421 metric tons of wheat were sanctioned for the 70 schemes in five upazilas of the district. It is learnt that only 1059 metric tons of wheat have reached here till last week of March.

Only 28.5 per cent works have so far been completed. The work of the projects will continue up to next month but due to shortage of wheat in the districts.

The district Food Officials disclosed that there are only 500 metric tons of wheat in the godowns.

The concerned authorities have been urged to supply wheat to continue FWP schemes.

**Tk. 1.50 crore
Property gutted**

RAJSHAH, Apr 10: About 150 houses were burnt to ashes in two separate devastating fire incidents in Nimpara and Chamta villages of Charghat upazila of the district recently, reports UNB.

The damage estimated at Taka 1.50 crore. The cause of the fire was not known.