

Upazila roundup

SATKHIRA

AL thana unit formed

From Our Correspondent

Apr 24: The biennial conference of Awami League, Kaliganj Thana Unit was held at local auditorium recently.

Sk Nasir Uddin presided over the function while Syed Kamal Bakht, President, Satkhira District Awami League and Sk. Abu Nasim Motin were present as chief and special guests respectively.

Mozahar Hossain Kantu and Waheduzzaman spoke on the occasion.

A 39-member executive committee headed by Sk. Nasir Uddin as President and Advocate Mobarak Ali as General Secretary was also formed in the conference.

GAIBANDHA

Re-excavation of canal going on

From Our Correspondent

Apr 24: Re-excavation work of seven canals under Food for Works Programme has been going on in seven upazilas of the district.

For the implementation of the programme government allotted 400 metric tons of wheat.

The programme included Nachni Ghagga Canal under Sunderganj Upazila, Tattir Char Canal under Sadullapur Upazila, Nagorer Khari Canal under Gobindaganj Upazila, Mahdipur Nalia River under Palashbari Upazila, Taglai river under Fuichari Upazila, Kalapani Canal under Shaghata Upazila and Pulbandi Ghagga Canal under sadar upazila.

With the implementation of the plans irrigation network could be extended in remote areas.

MAGURA

Course on HYV farming ends

Apr 24: A three-day long training course on High Yielding Variety (HYV) paddy cultivation was held here at the zila parishad auditorium recently, reports UNB.

The training was jointly organised by Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Magura District Agriculture Extension Department.

A total of 30 ideal farmers and five block supervisors from different parts of the district attended the training course. Agriculture specialists imparted the training.

M A Rouf, Additional Director of Jessore Regional Agriculture Office formally inaugurated the training course while Abul Hossain Molla, Deputy Director of Magura District Agriculture Office presided.

JHENIDAH

One killed, 11 injured in road mishap

Apr 24: A passenger bus hit a roadside tree on Kaliganj Jhenidah road at Baluhar square in Kotchandpur town of the district, killing a man and injuring 11 others, on Wednesday, witnesses and police said, reports UNB.

The Kaliganj-bound bus met with the accident due to rash driving. Abdullah (38), watchman of a hatchery project in Baluhar, died after being knocked down by the bus when he was repairing his bicycle at a roadside shop.

His body was sent to Kotchandpur hospital morgue for autopsy.

The injured were also admitted to Kotchandpur hospital. Driver of the bus fled scene immediately after the accident.

FENI

Mushroom growth of clinics

Apr 24: Most of the pathological, X-ray and private clinics in the district town have been working without any approval of the government, reports UNB.

Civil Surgeon Office sources said at least 17 pathological, X-ray and private clinics have been working in the town without any valid documents.

The clinics were allegedly charging much money from the patients. The service quality of the clinics was also said to be low standard. Some of them have no qualified doctors at all.

The clinics often give faulty diagnosis causing much sufferings to the patients.

Local leaders urged the authorities to take necessary steps in this regard.

COMILLA

One gets life-term for killing wife

Apr 24: A man was awarded life imprisonment for murdering his wife at village South Syampur in Burchang Upazila of the district, reports UNB.

District Additional Sessions Judge Nurul Wadud found Abul Kashem guilty of killing his wife Monowara Begum and sentenced him for life on April 13. He was also fined Taka 2,000 or in default to suffer rigorous imprisonment for six months.

According to prosecution story, Monowara was strangled to death and her body bore several marks of torture.

Police chargesheeted against Kashem, his parents Abdul Husq and Rafia Begum and brother Abul Hashem. Kashem was convicted and three others were acquitted of the charge of murder.



GOPALGANJ: A drought-hit paddy field of the district.

—Star photo

Drought on, prices of essentials up

Farmers face acute fund crisis

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Apr 24: The drought situation has further aggravated in all the nine upazilas of the district as hot spell is on.

Besides, drying up of streams, canals and other water bodies much earlier, under ground water level registered a fall turning more pumps, out of service, farmers said.

According to official sources, there are 302 deep tubewells, 5,000 shallow tubewells, 320 power pumps and 2,000 hand-driven tubewells in the district.

According to preliminary report, at least 25 per cent of these have already gone out of order and another 25 per cent are on the way of inoperative due to fall of water level causing damage to standing boro crop for want of irrigation.

Agriculture Extension Department informs that aus cultivation target was fixed at 2,10,000 acres but it has cultivated on 1,22,000 acres. Of the cultivated land, 15,000 acres under High Yielding Variety and 1,07,000 acres under local variety.

Jute cultivation target was fixed at 46,488 acres but local variety of jute has been cultivated on 13,800 acres.

A vast tract of land prepared for cultivation of aus and jute has been lying fallow for want of rain. The sowing of aus and jute seeds has not been possible due to continued drought.

The standing kaun crop in char areas of the district has completely been damaged due to prolonged drought.

Rainfall at this stage can at best facilitate partial recovery of IRRI-boro crops.

Meanwhile, a silent famine like situation is persisting in the district as there is no work in the field and prices of rice and other daily necessities have shot up. Moreover, small farmers are now getting exhausted by the high prices of fuel. Due to drought, people by this time have started selling cattle, utensils and other belongings to arrange money to buy diesel.

Out break of diarrhoea and chicken pox is reported from

various parts of the districts. Scarcity of pure drinking water adversely hit the rural people.

Gopalganj

Our Correspondent from Gopalganj says: The standing crops on a vast tract of land are being dried up due to continuous drought in the district.

The hot spell that has been blowing over the district has further aggravated the situation.

A large number of deep, shallow tubewells and other pump machines have become inoperative due to fall in ground water level. Most of the hand tubewells are not working properly for which the residents have been facing drinking water crisis.

Magura

Our Magura Correspondent adds: Standing Aman crops have been damaged by drought in four upazilas of the district, official sources said.

According to the local Agriculture Extension Department,

a total of 35,081 acres of land had been brought under paddy cultivation in Sreepur, Salikha, Mohammadpur and Sadar upazilas during the current season.

Of this, crops on about 10,000 acres have been dried up resulting in the shortfall of production by over 20 per cent.

Besides, a total of 78,725 acres of land prepared for Aus, broadcast Aman paddy and jute cultivation have been lying fallow due to the absence of rain.

The sowing of Aus and early Aman seedlings has also been halted due to continued drought.

According to Agriculture and Public Health Engineering Departments, the underground water level in four upazila of the district have been falling down rapidly rendering many deep and shallow tubewells inoperative.

About 60 per cent of ponds, beels, and dighies as well as rivers like Modhumoti, Gori, Nabaganga, Kumar, Fatki, Chitra have dried up at different places.

Notes from Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Apr 24: A complicated surgical operation replacing a fractured femoral head in the right hip joint of a person by a prosthesis, an artificial bone, was successfully performed at the Faridpur General Hospital recently, reports BSS.

Dr Monwarul Islam, Orthopedic Consultant of Faridpur General Hospital performed the operation with two of his assistants, Dr Abul Ehsan and Dr Aziz Das in three hour time. It is for the first time that such complicated operation was done outside the Orthopedic Hospital, Dhaka.

Shawkat Osman gets Jasimuddin Padak '92

Faridpur Shahtiya and Sanskriti Umayan Sangstha, a local socio-cultural and literary organisation has decided to confer its annual Literary Award 'Jasimuddin Padak '92' to eminent litterateur Shawkat Osman, reports BSS.

Professor Mian Lutfar Rahman, President of the sangstha told local newsmen on April 14 that Shawkat Osman had been selected for the 'Jasimuddin Padak '92' for his contributions in Bengali literature as well as for upholding the spirit of Liberation War in literary works.

BNSB donates vans to 5 blindmen

Bangladesh National Society for the Blinds (BNSB), Faridpur branch donated five rickshaw vans to five blindmen on April 17 under its Blind Rehabilitation Programme.

At a simple function held at local Shilpakala Academy auditorium Khandoker Mohabb Hossain, President of the central committee of BNSB handed over the vans.

Speaking on the occasion Khandoker Mahub said donation aimed at providing economic support to the blind.

Each van costs about Taka five thousand. The function was presided over by Mr Feroze Rahman, President of the local branch of BNSB.



THAKURGAON: The organised landless group members of Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDERS) handed over a 500-year old statue of God Vishnu to the local DC which they found during reexcavation of a pond in Barogaon union under sadar upazila of the district recently.

—Star photo

Diarrhoea situation alarming in Pabna, Chandpur

PABNA, Apr 24: Diarrhoea claims seven lives and attacks 84 people in two upazilas of the district in last 24 hours, reports UNB.

Of the victims, two died in Sathia upazila and five in Chatmohar. Those who died in Sathia were identified as Shimal (5) and Nabirun Dewan (45). Identity of the victims in Chatmohar could not be known immediately.

Control room sources said, 12 government medical teams are working round the clock in two villages of Sathia and four villages of Chatmohar.

Scarcity of pure drinking water has been attributed to the outbreak of the water-borne disease.

A report from Chandpur says: Five people died of diarrhoea and about five hundred others were attacked by the disease in seven upazilas of Chandpur district during the last few days.

The badly affected areas are

Chandpur, Haimchar, Faridganj, Hajiganj, Kachua and Matlab.

Civil surgeon office said, measures have been taken to check the disease. Forty medical teams have been working in the affected areas.

Every day about one hundred diarrhoea patients are being treated at Matlab ICDDR Centre, the source said.

The paucity of pure drinking water in rural areas is stated to be the cause of the disease.

Diarrhoea death toll in Barisal now 234

Another report from Barisal adds: Overall diarrhoeal situation in the southern region of the country remained unchanged.

Official sources said, 234 people died and about 16,000 were affected till Wednesday in the region.

Districtwise death and af-

Fish supply falls as piracy increases

PIROJPUR, Apr 24: Fish supply has drastically fallen in Parerhat bazar, a wholesale fish market of the district for sometime past, reports UNB.

Sea fish and various other local variety of fishes are generally accumulated and sold in the bazar, an important centre in the southern region.

Traders from various parts of the country have their local agents here for procurement and supply of fish to their desired trade centres.

But according to local traders, due to increased activities of the pirates in the sea and its adjoining areas, fishing in the Bay has been facing a serious setback resulting in huge short supply of fish resources in the market.

Local people said, about 10,000 fishermen in Pirojpur region are engaged in fishing. But in recent days many fishermen have abandoned sea fishing for fear of pirates.

According to sources, there are more than 2000 trawlers and 5000 fishing boats in the region for fishing in the Bay. But now most of the boats and trawlers are lying idle owing to rampant attack by the pirates and outlawed underground ac-

tivists. Meanwhile, the fish population of the region particularly local varieties have again been attacked by ulcerative diseases, the traders informed.

Traders urged the authorities to ensure security for the fishermen in the Bay and spray lime water in affected water-bodies immediately.

BAVS stops programmes, 400 docs jobless

BARISAL, Apr 24: About 400 doctors became jobless as the Bangladesh Association for Voluntary Sterilisation (BAVS) stopped its programme in 13 districts of the country, reports UNB.

According to sources the funding agencies stopped their financial assistance following allegations of irregularities, nepotism, corruption and negligence by members of the BAVS committee and employees.

Fenchuganj Fertilizer Factory Closure plan protested

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 24: Different organisations have strongly protested the recent decision of the government regarding the closure of the Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory at Fenchuganj.

The organisations holding meetings and processions every day in this district town expressing resentment of the people over the decision.

The All-party Action Committee, Sylhet organised a

meeting at the Sylhet Central Shahid Minar in this connection on April 19 noon. After the meeting a procession was brought out which went to the office of the Deputy Commissioner and handed over memorandum to the DC in protest against the government decision.

The processionists also demanded for immediate renovation of the Natural Gas Fertilizer Factory a subsidiary of BCIC.

On the same day the Greater Sylhet People's Demand Council, a non-partisan and welfare organisation also organised another protest meeting at the Court Point area to lodge the resentment. It also called upon the government for immediate withdrawal of the closure decision. The organisation will chalk out new programmes if they fail to realise the demand.

A half-day hartal was also observed in Sylhet town on April 20 at the call of the Sylhet district unit of Jamat-Islami to press home the demand.

20,000 inhabitants facing problems

DINAJPUR, Apr 24: The residents of the Housing Estate located in the outskirts of the town are suffering from multifarious problems, reports UNB.

Scarcity of drinking water, lack of conservancy service and unhygienic atmosphere of the estate made their life miserable.

About 20,000 people are living in 1880 brick built houses of the estate.

The Housing Estate authorities took all preparations for setting up pipelines to ensure supply of pure water in 1960. But due to some unknown reasons the work remained unfinished till now.

Besides, a 1500 gallon overhead tank was constructed by the authorities at a cost of Taka 8 lakh during the period. But the tank is lying inoperative due to lack of maintenance.

However, the Public Health Engineering Department sources said work on setting up of the pipelines was completed in 1984 and the installation of water pump and that of overhead tank was handed over to the local municipality.

But the municipality reportedly could not restore the internal pipeline connection for want of fund. Hence, the over-head tank built for the housing estate are now using for other areas of the town.

Delay in completion of pipelines has led to missing of a large number of pipes worth about Taka 8 lakh. Five high officials were reportedly convicted for the incident. Later, 60 per cent of the lost pipes were recovered.

About 1800 sanitary latrines of the estate have been converted into service latrines

Kneedeep water in rivers

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Apr 24: Water levels in the rivers Mohananda, Padma, Pagla and Punarvabha have fallen to the kneedeep level bringing the river communication to a halt, reports UNB.

Out of 60 miles of rivers, Mahananda alone comprises 30 miles, Pagla 17 miles, Punarvabha 8 miles and Padma 5 miles, which are rapidly losing navigability due to emergence of shoals.

Mohananda, which is the only river connecting the five upazilas of the district, has been receding fast and sunbaking numerous shoals hampering navigation and irrigation. The water level of Pagla also has been falling rapidly affecting navigation and irrigation on thousands of acres of land in Shibganj upazila.

Besides, Farakka Barrage has been continuing to affect the normal flow of the Padma which has dried up in several points.

More than 10 lakh maunds of watermelon were expected to be produced in 16 northern districts of the country during

the current season. Official source said, about 5,050 acres of land have been brought under watermelon cultivation in these districts this year.

Districtwise target of production and cultivation breakup are: Chapainawabganj — 80,000 maunds on 400 acres of land, Rajshahi — 64,000 maunds on 320 acres, Naogaon — 60,000 maunds on 300 acres, Natore — 80,000 maunds on 400 acres, Sirajganj — 30,000 maunds on 150 acres, Pabna — 20,000 maunds on 100 acres, Jatpurhat — 1,00,000 maunds on 500 acres, Bogra — 60,000 maunds on 300 acres, Gaibandha — 70,000 maunds on 350 acres, Lalmonirhat — 50,000 maunds on 250 acres, Kurigram — 30,000 maunds on 150 acres, Nilphamari — 40,000 maunds on 200 acres, Rangpur — 70,000 maunds on 350 acres, Panchagarh — 60,000 maunds on 300 acres, Thakurgaon — 70,000 maunds on 350 acres of land and Dinajpur — 1,50,000 maunds on 750 acres of land.

MALJEE COURT Settlement Officer commits suicide

Apr 24: Torajuddin (35) Assistant Settlement Officer of Porshuram upazila of Feni district allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling of his residence here, reports UNB.

He was living at his village Lakhminarayampur of sadar upazila. A letter has been recovered from his room where he hinted about his family trouble.

Another report from Brahmanbaria adds: Joti Rant Dev daughter of Subju Kumar Dev of Kaimpur village in Kaaba upazila is yet to be traced out even after five months of her missing.

She was allegedly kidnapped by some miscreants on November 15 last year.

Police has arrested two people in this connection. Family sources, however, alleged that the main culprits were yet to be rounded up and they were moving freely.