

District roundup

AGRI-VARSITY

FAO-BAU talk technical coop

Aug 6: A team of FAO specialists led by Dr RS Paroda of the organisation's Regional Office in Bangkok visited Bangladesh Agricultural University on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Dr Paroda was accompanied by Dr Anwar Alam and Dr M Zahidul Haque of the International Jute Organisation.

During the visit he called on Vice-Chancellor of BAU, Prof M Ashraf Ali Khan at his office.

They exchanged views on various aspects of technical co-operation between FAO and the university, relating to improvement of crop production and protection systems of the country, said a press release.

Dr Paroda has also a series of separate meetings with Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Prof M Abdul Haque, Dean of the Faculty on Agricultural Engineering and Technology Prof M Rafiqul Islam Sarkar, Director of BAU Research System Prof Monwar Ahmad and Coordinator of Farming System Research Project Prof S M Altaf Hossain.

They had elaborate discussions on possible areas of mutual co-operation between the two institutions.

SIRAJGANJ

Two crushed under speeding truck

Aug 6: Two children were killed when a speeding truck hit them near Shaktipur bridge on the Bogra-Nagarbari highway in Shajadpur thana on Sunday, reports UNB.

Abdul Azz (10), son of Saber Ali, and Romisa Khatun (8), daughter of Abdul Quddus of village Shaktipur, died instantly after the Bogra-bound truck hit them from behind at 8:30 am, witnesses and police said.

The bodies were brought to the General Hospital here for autopsy.

The driver fled with the truck. A case has been filed with the Shajadpur police.

MANIKGANJ

Help not yet provided to flood victims

Aug 6: More than 12,000 people were affected, crops on 15,000 acres of land inundated and about 2,000 houses damaged by flood and erosion in six thanas in the last two months, official sources said.

According to the estimate, 32 unions out of 65 in Daulatpur, Harirampur, Shibolay, Shaturia and Sadar thanas were affected by the flood. It said about 100 kilometre roads were damaged and eight bridges and culverts were washed away.

Daulatpur, Shibolay and Harirampur were badly affected by the flood and a major portion of the most affected Bachamara Union were inundated and 80 per cent of the crops, mainly ground nut, were damaged.

Residents of the Bachamara union told UNB that they have not received any house building grants either from the government or from any NGO, to rebuild the dwelling houses, markets, high schools, college, and other institutions. However, an official of the district administration admitted that they could not provide the flood affected people with house building grants.

Meanwhile, according to District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer A S M Abdul Awal, the government has distributed some relief materials.

NAOGAON

Patishar to hold Tagore's 51st death anniversary

Aug 6: The 51st death anniversary of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore will be observed at the historic Patishar village in Atrai thana on August 6, reports UNB.

Various socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes including holding of seminar, musical soiree, recitation of poems and dramas to mark the day. Eminent artists and Tagore fans will take part in these programmes.

The district administration will publish a souvenir, highlighting the Patishar village where the poet composed several of his poems including 'Chaitali', 'Duranta', 'Asha' and 'Purnima'. Tagore had depicted the scenic beauty of the village Patishar in these poems.

It may be mentioned that Patishar, a small village, is replete with memories of Rabindranath where the great poet had visited several times and lived in the village in 1890, 1896, 1896, and 1937 with his wife.

BARISAL

BKB to give Tk 84.3 cr agri loan

Aug 6: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Barisal region, will disburse Taka 84.34 crore as agriculture loan among the farmers of eleven southern districts during the 1993-94 fiscal year, reports BSS.

The districts are Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Rajbari and Shariatpur.

According to an official source, Tk 50.45 crore will be distributed as short-term crop loan for the cultivation of aus, aman, potato, boro, banana, betel-nut, guava, vegetables, and Tk 33.95 crore as medium and long-term loans for the purchase of cattle, shrimp cultivation, poultry farming, pisciculture, cottage industry and purchase of agriculture equipment.

Another report says, Telegraph and Telephone Board, Barisal zone collected a sum of Tk 14,18,78,254 as revenue from the subscribers in eleven southern districts under the zone in 1992-93 fiscal year.

The board has listed 4,793 telephones for disconnections for non-payment of the arrears dues in the zone, an official source said.



It is not a picture of flood. A man and a boy bringing Indian goods in polythene bags from Tripura by a raft through a river in Peni. Smugglers use various techniques to bring the contraband goods. — photo by A K M Mohsin

Govt to do every thing for flood affected people

MOULVIBAZAR, Aug 6: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said that the present government's efficient handling of the recurrent floods was another success story of the welfare oriented BNP government, reports BSS.

He said it was also unprecedented that despite repeated floods not a single person had died of starvation.

The minister was addressing separate public meetings in the flood affected areas of Fatehpur, Munshibazar, Tengabazar under Rajnagar thana of the Moulvibazar district on Wednesday.

Rajnagar is among the worst affected thanas of the greater Sylhet district where most of the areas are still under flood waters.

The Finance Minister said in spite of the resource constraints, the present government would do whatever was needed to mitigate the sufferings of the flood affected people. He assured the people that all steps were being taken to permanently solve the recurrent flood problem of this area.

Rahman distributed cash money, sarees and lungis to the affected people at the six flood

relief shelters under Rajnagar thana of Moulvibazar district.

BNP MP Khaleda Rabbani, AL MP, Azizur Rahman and Special Assistant to the BNP Chairperson Hareesh Chowdhury were with the minister during the visit.

Later in the evening, the Finance Minister reviewed the

latest flood situation of the district at a meeting of the district level officials in the circuit house.

Our Correspondent from Kurigram says: The total number of deaths caused by the floods that hit all the nine thanas of Kurigram district recently rose to 33.

Farmers now need support for agri rehabilitation

BARGUNA, Aug 6: The farmers, who lost their standing crops by the recent devastating floods, now need financial support for their agricultural rehabilitation, reports UNB.

The affected farmers alleged that instead of giving loan to the genuine people the officials of Bangladesh Krishi Bank and other financial institutions of the district were disbursing loans to the non-productive sectors.

A group of rich and middle class land lords are taking loans in "fictitious names" depriving the marginal farmers, they alleged.

The existing rule for advanc-

ing loans to the small and marginal farmers through "pass-book" is not being maintained, they further informed.

Meanwhile, the farmers, including small cultivators in the district received notices from the district administration to clear up loans, land revenue and other union parishad taxes.

Under compelling circumstances, the poor and marginal farmers are to borrow money from the money lenders at a high rate of interest causing deterioration of their pecuniary condition.

The farmers urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and take immediate steps in this regard.

Fish now dear

GAZIPUR, Aug 6: Fish has become a dear item in the local markets despite a large number of water bodies in the district, reports UNB.

Officials sources said there are 19 rivers, 133 canals and 32 large beels covering 1,500 square km of land in the district. But in the absence of concerted effort the bright prospect of pisciculture has been dwindled.

Local people said fish like sharpiti, pabda, bowal, taki, golda shrimp and kal, which were abundantly available in this season, are rarely found in the markets.

Official sources said massive siltation of the water bodies, indiscriminate use of pesticides and rapid growth of population have negated the fish production in the district.

Meanwhile, catching of fish fry by a section of dishonest fishermen by using current nets has aggravated the situation.

Local people have urged the concerned authorities to take up massive schemes to cultivate fish in the waterbodies to meet the protein deficiency in the district.

Diarrhoea claims 10 in M'barazar

MAULVIBAZAR, Aug 6: Diarrhoea claimed 10 lives including a minor girl and attacked 12,059 others in different parts of the district during the last one week, reports UNB.

Unofficial sources reported the death, however, the official sources only confirmed the figure of attack by the disease.

While talking to UNB, district civil surgeon informed that a total of 50 medical teams were working round the clock in the affected areas.

24 cops hurt in road accident

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 6: Twenty-four policemen were hurt when a police van turned turtle after break failure at 5:30 am on Wednesday at Muktarpur on Narayanganj-Munshiganj highway.

Of the injured persons, five are in serious condition. They are Subadar Akram Hossain, constables Ishtiaq Mia, Alauddin, Munir Hossain and A Karim.

Seventeen of the injured policemen have been admitted to the Narayanganj hospital while the rest at Rajarbagh police hospital.

A case has been filed with local thana.

Flood death toll now 5 in B'baria

BRAMANBARIA, Aug 6: At least five people were drowned and crops on thousands of acres of crops damaged in the recent flood that hit seven thanas of the district, reports UNB.

At least 9 lakh people of 97 unions of seven thanas including four wards of the pourashava were affected by the flood.

Standing crops on 95,000 acres of land including aus, among, jute and vegetables were damaged in the devastation.

Introduction of crop insurance demanded

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 6: The farmers of Satkhira have demanded introduction of crop insurance for the development of agriculture.

Natural calamities like drought, flood, tidal wave, cyclone, norwester and pest attack are frequent in Bangladesh. The farmers of the country face hardships following the massive damage of their crops.

According to the agriculture experts, every year over 30 per cent crops valued over Taka 100 crore are damaged by natural calamities in the country. In the backdrop of the massive damage to crops introduction of crop insurance has become necessary to save the farmers of the country, it is felt by the experts.

It has been observed that being frustrated following massive damages to crops by natural calamities farmers rush with their documents for loans to Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and other commercial banks.

The farmers will be in a position to get compensation for their damaged crops if they can insure their crops soon after sowing of seeds in their crop lands.

It may be mentioned here that crop insurance was proved fruitful in Japan, Malaysia,

India and Philippines. Weavers of the district have been facing hard days due to high prices of yarn, dyes, chemicals and other raw materials.

It is feared that if proper steps are not taken in this direction, the handloom cotton weaving industry of Satkhira which earned a country-wide fame will face extinction.

Handloom cotton weaving is a very important occupation in Satkhira. Most of the people of Kaliganj thana are weavers by profession. A large number of people in Kalaroa, Tala and sadar thanas are also weavers. The handloom industries in these areas provide job opportunities to a large number of people. But abnormal prices of yarn, dyes and other raw materials have affected the industry and the weavers quite seriously.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation has raised the prices of cotton yarn to a great extent and the weavers failed to compete with the synthetic products and old garments imported in the country.

Availability of large scale smuggled Indian sarees in the markets at cheaper prices have pushed the weavers to a very deplorable position with their products at higher prices awaiting sale.

Buses remain off the roads as workers clash

KUSHITIA, Aug 6: The road communication of Kushtia with other parts of the country remained suspended following clashes between two rival groups of workers at the Kushtia bus stand on Thursday, reports UNB.

Bus workers of Jhenidah and Kushtia clashed over toll collection resulting in the suspension of transport movement on the route.

In another incident Friday, a BDR driver allegedly assaulted

a minibus driver on Kushtia-Meherpur road at the 5th mile. The minibus earlier hit a motorcycle but none was injured.

The minibus driver was taken to the police station and handed over to police.

Protesting the incident, the bus workers immediately stopped plying their vehicles on Kushtia-Meherpur road.

Police recovered a body from an agricultural farm at Anila, some 14 miles off the town, on Monday.



MYMENSINGH: Dr M A Majid, Director, Fisheries Research Institute inaugurating a plantation programme through planting a sapling on the campus of the institute recently. — Star photo

Law, order in Sirajganj deteriorates further

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 6: Law and order situation in Sirajganj district specially in the thanas of Tarash, Ullapara, Raiganj and Belkuchi has deteriorated further.

It is informed that activities of outlawed Sarbahara Party have increased in Tarash, Ullapara, Raiganj and Belkuchi thana areas and people of the remote villages have become hostages of terrorists. During last few years, at least 12 Sarbahara men were killed in three separate encounters with

police and the villagers. In Tarash thana, six were killed after a gunfight with the police. The rest fled away towards neighbouring Gurudaspur thana area in Natore district. Manager of Tarash Krishi Bank was kidnapped and later slaughtered to death for non-payment of ransom.

Only two years ago, two terrorists were killed in Ullapara thana. On July 12 midnight, about ten Sarbahara men raided the house of a retired army personnel, Akbar Ali.

Sonali Bank in trouble

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 6: Jhenidah and Magura branches of Sonali Bank are facing trouble with two hundred 11 tollas of gold deposited to them 18 years ago.

It is reported some lonees took loans depositing two hundred tollas of gold to Sonali Bank, Jhenidah branch and 11 tollas to Magura branch 18 years ago. But the lonees have shown no interest to collect back their gold deposited at the banks. As a result, the interest amount is increasing every year.

According to a source closed to Sonali Bank said that they called a tender to sell the gold on March '90. In response to the tender call Champa Jewellery submitted tender schedule at the rate of Taka four thousand five hundred and 50 a tola. But the bank authority cancelled the schedules as the rate was less than then existing market price. Later another tender was called on July '91 and this time Chhanda Jewellery submitted tender at the rate of maximum Taka four thousand five hundred a tola. Once again the bank authority cancelled this accordingly. Since then these gold are lying unsold in Bank godowns for years together.

The source said, since the gold is still officially deposited at the banks the interest against the longest increasing every day which already has crossed beyond the capacity of the depositors or lonees.

If the authority sell the gold at existing market rate, said one source, the banks will have to lose minimum of Taka 12 lakh.

Theft at FWC

A theft was committed at local Family Welfare Centre building (FWC) at Halidhand in sadar thana recently.

It is reported that a gang of thieves cut the grill of the FWC building and looted medicines and other valuables worth Taka about 10 thousand.

A case was filed with Jhenidah sadar thana in this connection.

A cheque distribution ceremony among the dairy farm owners was held at Jhenidah recently.

Mohammed Ali Akhand, DC, Jhenidah presided over the function where Alhaz Abdul Wahab MP attended as the chief guest and distributed cheques.

It may be noted that 13 dairy farm owners were awarded Taka four lakh 62 thousand five hundred in Jhenidah district.

Needless plan to cost Tk 1.41 cr

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 6: The local PWD officials have prepared an ambitious plan to construct a new building demolishing old Circuit House instead of renovation of the old ones which has been ordered by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman during his recent visit here.

The Taka 1.41 crore scheme has been prepared though the present government has no plan to construct new ones at old district headquarters.

Several years ago, a building was constructed at a nearby place next to old Circuit House building at Sylhet. Since then, both the buildings are being

condition of the old Circuit House building.

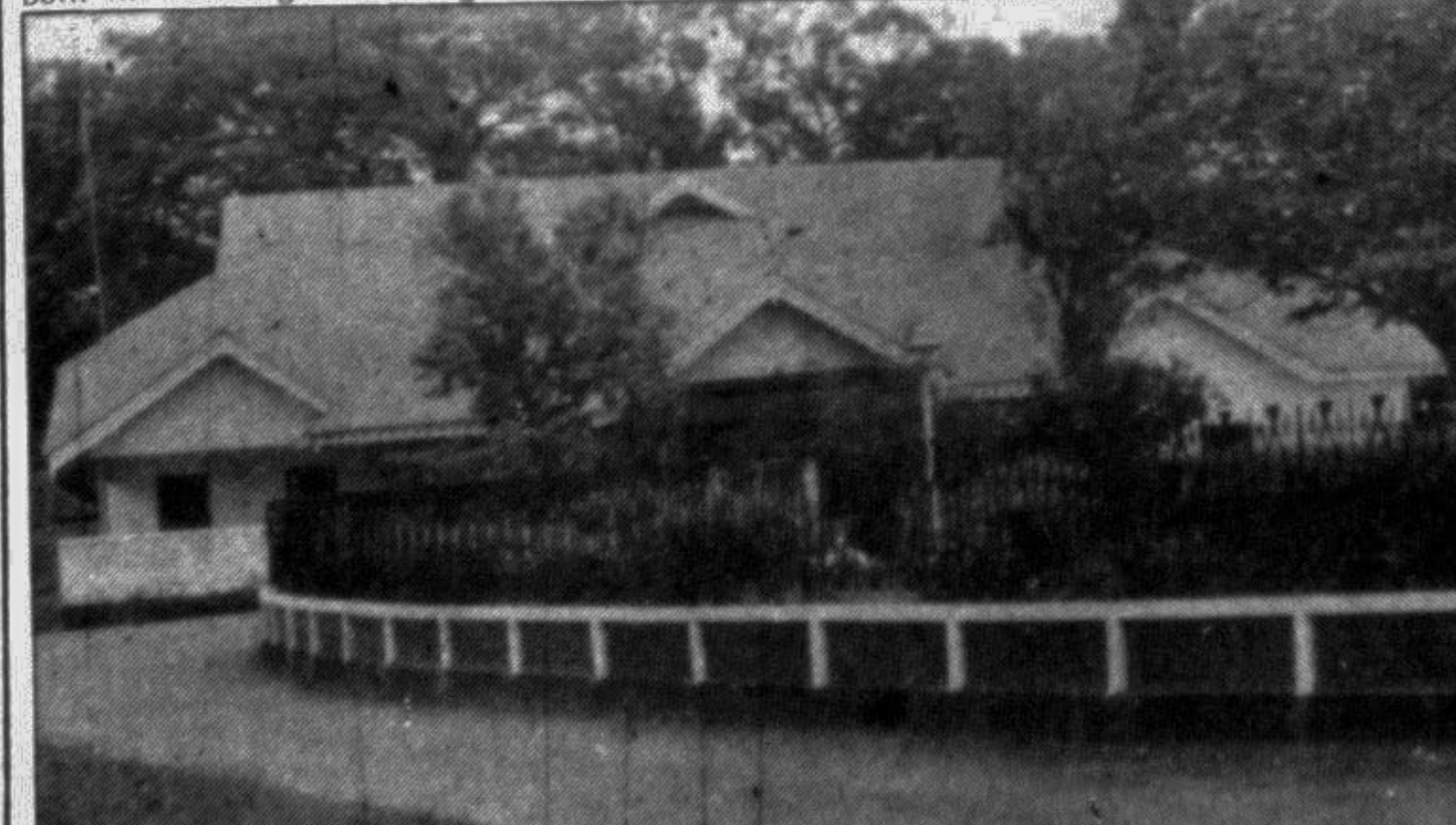
It is alleged that, the local officials of the PWD taking advantage of the minister's instruction, has prepared a scheme to demolish the existing VVIP building and to construct a new building at the same place.

The total estimated cost includes, Taka 93,10,000 for construction of building, Taka 13,97,000 for Internal Sanitary and Water Supply, Taka 2,12,000 for External Water Supply, Taka 43,97,000 for Electrification, Taka 2,98,000 for Room Cooler and Taka

taken to realise the said amount from the defaulter travel agents, it is learnt.

A number of people with fake documents started of UK, USA, Middle East and other countries. These people were caught with fake papers at different airports abroad and were sent back through Bangladesh Biman as 'deportee passengers'.

As per existing rules, the national carrier has to carry these passengers back to the country. The Biman are to realise the fares from the concern travel agents. But the local authority failed to realise the said amount.



SYLHET: A view of the local circuit house building now used by the VVIPs. The house is in perfect condition. — Star photo

used for the VVIPs and VVIPs here. The old one is used by the VVIPs for a long. Both the buildings are situated at a scenic site on the bank of the river Surma at Sylhet town.

On June 24, the Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman stayed at the Sylhet Circuit House as member of the entourage of the Prime Minister who came here to see the floods situation. The minister asked the local officials to improve the

14,94,000 for Furnitures. The scheme has been sent to the higher authorities for final approval.

Tk 60 lakh lying with travel agents

Taka 60 lakh ticket money of Bangladesh Biman has been lying unrealised with 10 travel agents of Sylhet.

The irregularity was detected by an audit team two months back but no step has yet been

The audit report said The Immigration Department seized the fake passports from the passengers and handed those over to Biman. But, they did not realise the travel fares from the agents.

It can be mentioned here that, the Biman authority had lost Taka 40 lakh as bank interest due to late payment of the ticket money by the travel agents in Sylhet during the period from 1985 to 1993.