

10 textile mills in Barisal Div face closure

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Feb 28: At least ten private textile mills in Barisal division face closure due to shortage of fund and efficient management.

Situation of small scale and cottage industries in the area is said to be similar. Most of the mills are running without any flow of capital. Production from these mills is minimum and they may be closed down at any day, according to sources.

A list of sick industries in the southern districts was prepared by the concerned authority but rehabilitation measures are yet to be taken. Commercial banks were also advised to sanction necessary loans for the sick industries but the authority has not yet taken any initiative to forward the required amount of money to the banks, complains a mill owner.

Miscreants damage pry school, 8 houses

NARSINGDI, Feb 28: One primary school and eight houses were damaged and three people were injured in an attack by the rival group at Beluarchar village in Raipura thana, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, armed hoodlums numbering 50 to 55 allegedly led by an ex-chairman of Sreenagar union stormed the house of one, Zaman last week following a previous enmity. The attackers hurled bombs at the villagers who assembled there.

Housewife killed for dowry

From Our Correspondent
GAIBANDHA, Feb 28: Shaher Banu, a house wife of village Ram Bhadra under Sunderganj thana was killed by her husband being failure to realised dowry from father-in-law.

Steps taken to keep fertilizer prices stable

Feb 28: The government has taken all possible steps to keep the prices stable for fertilizer and agricultural inputs produced in the country and distribute those among the farmers in time through easy process, reports UNB.

Agriculture Minister Major Gen (ret'd) M Majid-ul Haq said this Friday while visiting some sales and distribution centres of fertilizer at different hats and bazars of the district.

University after FK Chowdhury in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Feb 28: A university after the name of late Fazlul Kader Chowdhury will be established in Chittagong, reports BSS.



RAJSHAHI: Prof M Anisur Rahman, VC and Prof Azharuddin, Pro-VC, of Rajshahi University placing wreaths at the mazar of Dr Zoha on the occasion of his 25th death anniversary. — Star photo

48 sick tea estates will now get interest-free loan for five yrs

MAULVIBAZAR, Feb 28: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) will provide financial support to 48 sick tea estates for their rehabilitation on firm footing, reports UNB.

The local Krishi Bank branch sources said under the programme, the bank will waive 100 per cent penal interest and allow 90 per cent of the principal under the interest free block account of five years.

The total liabilities of 48 sick tea gardens stands at Taka 19.52 crore with Taka 10.40 crore overdue.

As per decision of the parliamentary committee for commerce, government formed a Task Force with the representatives of Bangladesh Tea Board, Bangladesh Krishi Bank and Bangladesh Cha Sangsad to identify the sick tea estates, their problems and to suggest remedial measures.

The committee identified 48 sick tea estates covering a total area of 29,981 hectares of land with 8,453 hectares under tea cultivation. They produce 3.1 million kgs of tea with only 387 kg per hectare as against national average yield of 1080 kgs per hectare.

The tea estates have about 7000 hectares land suitable for extension of tea cultivation with a liability of Taka 19.52 crore of overdue, besides other liabilities with other agencies like Tea Board.

They have also failed to pay agricultural development tax and personal loans. The total amount of loan could not be known.

To arrest the deteriorating situation in the sick tea estates, the committee in their report outlined various problems of management and finance and suggested remedies.

Bangladesh Krishi Bank in an agreement waived 100 per cent penal interest and allow 90 per cent of their principal under the interest-free block account for five years. After five years the unpaid loan of the concerned tea estates will be collected in ten annual instalments. The number of instalments can be increased or decreased on the basis of financial strength of the particular tea estate.

The sick tea estates will now enjoy financial facilities for their rehabilitation under the specified programme.

It is expected that after the thrust the tea estates will be self-reliant to take up further development plan with their own resources.

High price of newsprint

High price of newsprint for the last few months has hit hard the printing and publication industries.

Market sources said inadequate supply of newsprint has caused price-hike of news print as well as white paper. Students are also worst sufferers.

Local people alleged that some unscrupulous traders taking advantage of the short supply have increased the prices of newsprint and white bond to earn windfall profit.

Meanwhile, prices of books and copy books have also gone up affecting studies of the students at all levels.

Another report adds: A three-day agricultural exhibition organised by the district Agricultural Extension Department was held here recently.

About 50 agricultural products collected from across the districts were put on display. The exhibits included sugarcane, pumpkin, papaya, potato, brinjol, redish etc.

People from different parts of the district thronged the fair to have view of the different varieties of agri-products.

Child labourers on rise

Child labourers are on rise in the town following influx of poverty-stricken people for bare survival.

Natural calamities like flood and cyclone have rendered hundreds of poor families homeless and forced them to move to the urban and town areas in search of food and shelter.

Local money-lenders are also responsible for making many of them homeless who grabbed their land and other properties by force for non-payment of their loan money.

According to a survey, children of these poverty-stricken families aged between 8 and 10 are working in hotels, restaurants, factories and as rickshawpullers, day labourers and shoe shine boys.

With their meagre income, they support their family members who live in slums. Most of these boys are half fed and half clad and are not given real wages by their employers.

Local elite have urged to the concerned authorities to construct homes in the outskirts of the town for their rehabilitation.

Coconut production declining in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, Feb 27: Coconut production has declined to a great extent in the district due to absence of planned plantation.

Local farmers said the climate and soil of Satkhira district is highly suitable for cultivation of this lucrative plant but this opportunity is not being utilised by them due to various reasons.

Experts said, coconut can be produced in the district in large scale with a minimum cost which can help poverty alleviation to a great extent.

Traffic jam frequent

KUSHTIA, Feb 28: Frequent traffic jam on the busy roads of the district town including Majampur area obstructs the movement of vehicles and pedestrians, reports UNB.

Local people said playing of a large number of rickshaws, haphazard parking of vehicles in the busy areas and unauthorised occupation of footpaths by small traders are the main causes of traffic jam.

Only a limited number of rickshaws plying on the roads have valid licences and more than 2000 other rickshaws ply without licenses, informed sources said.

Meanwhile, the number of tempo and auto-rickshaws have increased in the town and ply as per whims of the drivers violating the traffic rules.

At Majampur about 100 buses trucks and minibuses take there stoppages haphazardly on the roads and road-sides every day creating traffic hazard in the area blocking the movement of pedestrians. School children are the worst affected.

Local leaders urged the authorities to look into the matter and take necessary steps to ease the traffic jam.

Another report says: Adulterated food items are being sold in different markets and commercial centres of the district.

According to the consumers, edible oil, butter, ghee, powder milk, rice, flower and ata are found mostly adulterated. Even rotten foodstuffs are being sold in hotels and restaurants and many consumers are suffering from intestinal diseases due to intake of these foodstuffs.

The bakeries are selling inferior quality biscuits, breads and other materials. And sub-standard and date expired medicines are also being sold in the markets.

Local people alleged that the district administration are not taking any measure to prevent adulteration of the foodstuffs for the interest of the public health.

They urged the authorities to take stringent action against the adulterators of food

According to a survey conducted by a voluntary organisation, there is no primary school in 1031 villages out of 2164 villages of 13 thanas in Dinajpur district, no primary school in 85 villages among the total 633 villages in Thakurgaon district and no primary school in 421 villages among the total 850 villages in Panchagar district.

The existing primary schools in the greater district are also facing manifold problems such as shortage of educational instruments like black board, daster, bench and chair. In many schools education is being seriously hampered due to shortage of teachers.

Students of some the primary schools are attending their classes under the sky or under the trees as those were damaged by the natural disasters. Students of those schools enjoy vacation during the rainy season, it is learnt.

Local leaders urged the concerned authorities to set up primary schools in 1,537 villages and give attention to the problems of the other primary schools to fulfill the slogan of the government — 'Education for all by the year 2000.'

Another report says: Bangladesh Rifles' fifth battalion seized contraband goods worth Taka 27.28 lakh and rounded up a man in separate drives in different areas of the district from February first to 19.

The sources said smuggled goods worth Taka 2.58 lakh were recovered from a bus on February 19 while in another drive BDR seized goods including chocolate bombs worth Taka 1.52 lakh from Bhalgaon in Chirirbandar on February 15.

In another drive on February 16 the jawans also recovered goods worth Taka one lakh from Nurpur area in Phulbari thana. And the goods worth several lakhs were seized in different drives by the same battalion.

Mentionable that the battalion seized goods worth Taka 3 crore during the last year.

All the goods were despatched with the customs godown, the sources added.

Six held with current nets, fined

BARISAL, Feb 28: A mobile team led by Tapas Kumar Bose, a First Class Magistrate, arrested six fishermen and seized current nets worth about Taka 3 lakh from different rivers including Arhialkhan of Barisal district on Thursday, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the magistrate fined each of the arrested fishermen Taka 500 and burnt the nets. In lieu of the fine they would suffer one month imprisonment.

Another report says: A mass and adult education centre was inaugurated at the Islamia College premises by Mamtaz Uddin, Deputy Commissioner, Barisal on Thursday.

The function was attended among others by Md Mujibur Rahman, TNO, Barisal sadar thana.

This centre will be run with the financial assistance of the local zilla parishad.

A large number of adult students, elite teachers and social workers of the town were present on this occasion.

Meanwhile, government has undertaken programme for the beautification of the divisional headquarters at a cost of Taka 2 lakh during the current fiscal year.

A meeting of the government officials, elite of the town and political leaders was held in the conference room of the Divisional Commissioner with M A Rashid, Divisional Commissioner, Barisal, in the chair.

District roundup

DINAJPUR

Heroin worth Tk 45 lakh seized
Feb 28: Bangladesh Rifles seized heroin worth Taka 45 lakh from a Dinajpur-Gobindaganj bound bus at RP checkpoint at sadar Rangamat in Phulbari thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip off, the jawans of the fifth battalion searched the bus (No. Bogra B-3886) and recovered 430 tolas of heroin. But no one claimed the ownership of the seized heroin.

Later the contraband item was deposited with Hilli Customs Godown. A case has been lodged with the police.

BANDARBAN

All religious communities to get help from govt

Feb 28: Religious Affairs, Minister M Keramat Ali has said the present government is eager to help all the religious communities including the Buddhists in the development of their social and religious activities, reports BSS.

He said a Buddhist library has already been established. Steps are being taken for the translation and publication of the Buddhist holy book Tripitak, he added.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the funeral ceremony of late Shangha Nayok Ushumana Mahasthabir here recently. He said various religious communities in Bangladesh were enjoying peaceful atmosphere in pursuing their religious practice, education and culture.

The minister called for all out cooperation from the local people in rehabilitating a section of tribal people living in a foreign land.

Paying rich tributes to the late Ushumana Mahasthabir, Ali said his contribution in the field of Buddhist religion will be honourably remembered in future.

BARISAL

1.71 lakh couples given FP methods

Feb 28: A total of 1,71,251 fertile couples have been brought under family planning coverage in Barisal district till December last, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the number of fertile couples in the district is 1,90,278. The Contraceptive Acceptance Rate (CAR) in the district stood at 89.77 per cent last year.

Of the total acceptors, about 1800 were given permanent methods, 78,277 couples were provided with oral pills, 8,398 with IUD, 9,835 with condom, 69,799 with injectables and the rests with other methods.

During the first six months of the current fiscal year, the family planning department sterilised 1,087 couples. The department also supplied 5,86,380 cycles of oral pills, 2,14,888 doses of injectables, 7,28,700 pieces of condoms and 4,939 pieces of IUD during the period, the source added.

KUSHTIA

Looted TV set, ornaments recovered

Feb 28: Police arrested three persons and recovered one television and some ornaments looted from a house of housing estate on Tuesday last, reports BSS.

During the dacoity the neighbours caught Saidul, one of the members of the gang and handed him over to the police.

During interrogation, he mentioned some names. Accordingly police arrested Arab Ali from Kalisankarpur and Zillur from Basgram and recovered one television and some gold ornaments from them.

JAMALPUR

Krira Sangstha criticised

Feb 28: Cricket organisers and players of the district accused the Jamalpur Krira Sangstha for not financing the district team to take part in the upcoming National Cricket Tournament in Sylhet, reports UNB.

The organisers at a press conference at the local press club on Monday alleged that the sangstha is delaying to finance the cricket team although it collected fund from various sources.

It spent more than Taka one lakh for football matches in last three months, they said.

They asserted, the cricket team, formed with the promising players from among the 12 clubs of the district, would be able to perform well at the national level if they were properly patronised.

The organisers further alleged that the sangstha did not even give awards to the winners of the Bhulu Srmiti Cricket Tournament as yet.



NARAYANGANJ: This photograph, 'Dream Land of Abu Naser Siddik of Bangladesh received first prize in 'Human element' group and also received the Federation Cup in the 23rd International Photography Contest held in Macon of France recently. A total of 2,271 photographs were received at the contest from 23 countries. — Star photo

Fruitbearing trees decreasing

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 28: The number of fruitbearing trees in five thanas of the district is rapidly decreasing as the owners are selling them to the wood traders due to their abject poverty, reports UNB.

The poverty stricken people of Shibganj, Nachol, Gomostapur, Bholahat and Nawabganj Sadar thanas are selling the fruitbearing trees like mango, black berry and lichi to the traders just to meet their livelihood, a study said.

The demand for woods in the district have also increased due to their massive use in furniture making, brickfields, match and biscuit factories.

Besides, the owners were said to be reluctant to plant saplings which could gradually make up the loss. The rising trend to build new houses also squeezing the prospect of the plantation of the trees in the areas.

The wanton felling of trees is also adversely affecting the environment causing ecological imbalance in the areas, experts said.

They urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to stop indiscriminate felling of trees and their use in the brickfields.

Another report says: Rohanpur bazar, one of the busy commercial centres of the district, is smarting under various problems.

According to local people, deplorable condition of roads, inadequate street light, lack of proper sanitary arrangement, absence of accommodation and shortage of pure water have been hampering the smooth functioning of the market.

Residents said the commercial town is expanding with the increase of population but the authority fails to provide necessary civic amenities to them.

It may be mentioned that Rohanpur bazar is the biggest sale centre of paddy and other commodities of the whole northern part of the district.

Most of the roads in the bazar area are narrow, uneven and cracks and potholes have developed at many points. After a slight rainfall the roads become muddy and slippery. During the rainy season, water remains stagnant causing difficulties to pedestrians and vehicular movement.

Moreover, the roadside ditches, filled with filth and garbage are not cleaned regularly which have gradually turned into mosquito breeding centres. Absence of drainage system is another problem for bazar residents.

Anti-social activities in the bazar area are also increasing as most of the street lights remain without bulbs or with fuse bulbs.

It is alleged that most of the teachers of the district's schools and colleges are engaged in the private tuition. They are imparting coaching to students in batches to earn additional income.

The teachers are charging Taka 300 to 1500 per month per student for coaching.

Netrakona FF commander dead

NETRAKONA, Feb 28: Commander of the Netrakona District Muktiyoddha Sangsad Chowdhury Illus Ahmed died of a massive heart attack at the local hospital here this evening. He was 57, reports BSS.

Chowdhury, who was a valiant freedom fighter at the Sector 11 in the War of Liberation.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held tomorrow.

Chowdhury left behind his wife, one son and one daughter.

District roundup

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SYLHET: A cataract operation at an eye camp held in Jakiganj thana. Jalalabad Rotary Club recently arranged the camp. — Star photo