

WB mission team visits water management project

TANGAIL, Mar 5 : Ann Hamilton, Director, World Bank Washington visited the compartmentalisation pilot project programme at Tangail and expressed her satisfaction over its progress, reports BSS.

She was accompanied by Christopher Willoughby head of World Bank mission in Bangladesh, Saeed Ahmed Rana, head of Agriculture Department of World Bank, Ross Wallace Coordinator of World Bank, Ton Scutte Counsellor, Bert Diphoun First Secretary (Development) of Netherland Embassy, Kamal Siddiqui Chief Engineer Flood Plan Coordination Organisation, Engineer M Obaidur Rahman Project Director and Hans Visser team leader of compartmentalisation pilot project explained the objectives and status of the project. In Tangail under this pilot project water management system is being developed in consultation with and involving the people of the project area.

One killed in road mishap

By Staff Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, Mar 5 : One person was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Maskanda.

The victim, identified as Quamruzzan, 37 died on the spot when his bicycle, he was riding, was hit by a Mymensingh bound minibus (No. Ja-04-0012).

Police seized the minibus. The driver fled the scene. The body was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Application of modern tech in agri sector urged

KHULNA, Mar 4 : The newly elected mayor of Khulna City Corporation Shaikh Tayebur Rahman stressed the need for application of modern technology to boost agricultural production in the country, reports BSS.

The mayor was inaugurating the agricultural exhibition arranged by the Agricultural Extension Department at Phulata on Monday.

Presided over by Phulata Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) Samina Sultana the function was attended by Additional Director of Agricultural Extension Department, Nasir Uddin Phuyun and Deputy Director of Agricultural Extension Department, Khulna Division M A Aziz.

The Mayors said that revolutionary success could be achieved in the field of agriculture by using modern technology and improved agricultural inputs.

They said that the present government was working relentlessly to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people.

At least twenty stalls were put up in the exhibition displaying improved varieties of agricultural products including vegetables, fruits, paddy, maize, wheat, poultry birds and live-stock.

Discussion on hygiene, basic health

KUSHTIA, Mar 5 : A discussion meeting was held at the Diabetic Society unit office here on Monday to mark the Diabetic Awareness Day, reports UNB.

Speakers at the meeting emphasized the need for awareness about hygiene and basic health care of the people to check the rise of diabetic patients.

Presided by the Deputy Commissioner, it was also addressed by Ahsan Ullah Unit Vice President Advocate Shirajul Islam, SM Kawser, Tewhidul Karim, Dr Ashrafuzzaman and acting secretary Mizanur Rahman.

It may be mentioned here that at present there are about 1200 registered diabetic patients in the district and 400 others are in observation.

One arrested with arms, ammunition

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Mar 5 : Acting on a secret information Barisal Kotwali police arrested one Humayun Talukder 30 on Wednesday with a revolver and six rounds of bullets, from Raipasha Karapur village under Kotwali police station about four kilometres off Barisal town.

Other five associates of Humayun managed to flee.

According to Kotwali police, Humayun, allegedly a leader of Kamrup group is a faction of the out lawed Sarbahara Party.

Ground water level fall abnormal

Over 10,000 tubewells not working properly

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 5 : More than 10,000 tubewells in the northern districts are not working properly due to abnormal fall in underground water level and lack of maintenance.

Thousands of people have been suffering for non-availability of drinking water in the areas, according to reports.

As many as 6,000 tubewells out of 96,547 tubewells and 4,050 tubewells out of 47,090 tubewells in Rangpur and Rajshahi zones respectively are not in operation. This shortfall has contributed to rise in various diseases already noticed in some parts of the areas.

Experts say, sudden fall in underground water level has severely affected the situation. In addition, theft of a large number of the installed tubewells has also contributed to the shortage of drinking water in some areas.

Another report says: Electric bills amounting to Taka 100 crore remain unrealised in 16 northern districts during the last nine years.

Out of the total, Taka 65

crore in government sector and Taka 35 crore in private sector remain unrealised.

It is gathered that electric bills in 124 thanas under 16 northern districts remain unrealised since long. The authorities at Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPD) have been issuing notices to the Government offices to realise the bills without positive results. The inmates of government quarters have meanwhile left their respective stations or are residing in private quarters without paying huge amount of power bills.

Due to non-availability of the consumers of government offices and quarters the notices for realising the bills are not implemented. In private sector, most of the bills are unrealised in small and large scale industries.

Due to unrealisation of electric bills the PDB has been facing problem.

Meanwhile, reconstruction of flood ravaged flood control embankment at Makra in Shahzadpur thana has become

uncertain following complexity in acquiring land and non-availability of sanctioned fund.

If the embankment is not repaired before next flood, the total area of the district will be inundated during the next rainy season.

It is gathered that Sirajganj Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Division of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has taken up a project at the estimated cost of Taka 2.30 crore to reconstruct 4.916 kilometre long embankment which include Taka .95 lakh for earthwork and Taka 1.35 crore for land and compensation of crops.

The primary works for tender are completed but failing to acquire the land, work orders are not issued to the contractors. A total of 38 hectares of land is required for the project. But non-availability of funds has created hindrances in occupying the land.

While contacted, a source of Sirajganj WDB said that despite repeated demands money was not made available causing delay in the work.



MYMENSINGH: Prof Dr Shah Mohammad Farouk, VC of BAU distributing certificate to one of the winners of poetry recitation contest held at the local Press Club recently. — Star photo

Medical training school lying idle for six years

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Mar 5 : The Medical Assistant's Training School (MATS) in Kushtia has been lying idle for the last six years for the reasons not known.

Established in 1979 with the financial assistance of the Netherland, the institute opened a three-year diploma course to train medical assistants. After few years of functioning the institute was closed down by the then government of Jatiya Party.

Admission of students remained suspended since 1988. However, the employees continued to enjoy facilities including salaries, telephone bills and others.

It is learnt that salaries worth Taka one crore were drawn by the employers of the institution during the last six years. Besides, Taka 10 lakh was reportedly spent by the institution as municipal tax, water tax, electricity and telephone bills during the period.

The institution has 135 fourth class, 17 3rd class employees, six tutors, one administrative officer, four lecturers, one serious lecturer, and the

principal who are enjoying the facilities without any work.

The training school was set up to facilitate accommodation of students of both, male and female. It also has a proper library, auditorium and of course, class rooms.

Another report says : A major portion of rail lines in Western Zone of Bangladesh Railways has become unfit for service.

It is learnt that the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railways has two divisions, one at Raksey and the other at Lalmonirhat. Out of the total 985 miles of rail route, 685 miles are of broad gauge and 300 miles are of metre gauge. During 1960-1965, the network of Western Zone was extended to 200 miles and connected with the Southern Zone of Bangladesh Railways.

At present, some branch lines have been closed for want of maintenance and development work.

It is learnt that following shortage of slippers and stones the rail route of Western Zone pose great danger at many

points. The railway bridges damaged during the devastating floods of 1987 and 1988 have not yet been repaired.

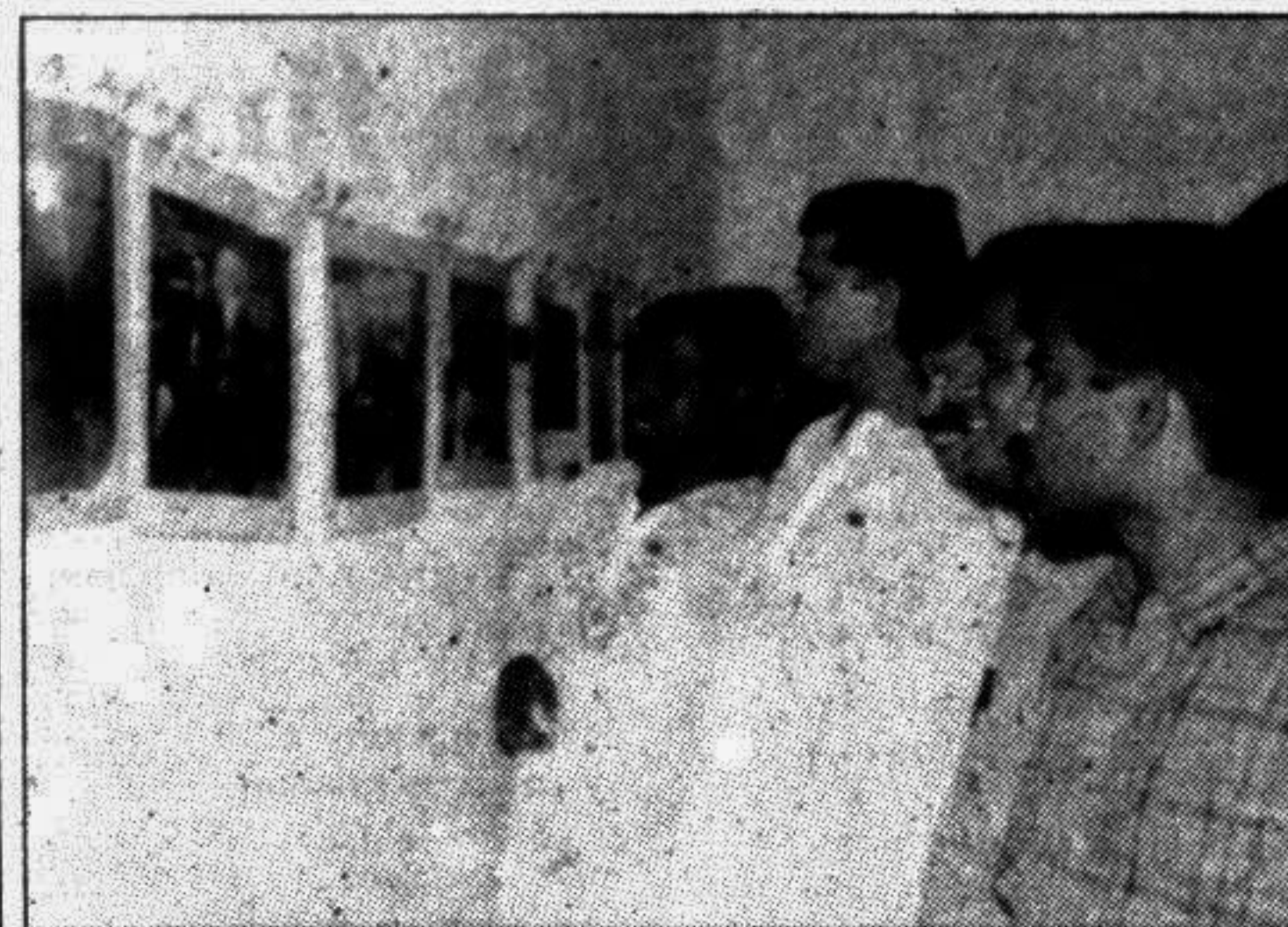
A total of 124 trains including 24 Inter-city Express trains, 24 mail trains and 76 local trains run in the this Zone with only 51 old-age engines.

Transportation of goods without booking and journey of passengers without tickets have been causing revenue losses to the railway department for a long. The existing coaches, specially of the local trains are in very poor shape. Rainwater leaks from the roofs and most of these coaches have no window panes or lights. The dirty toilets function without any supply of water.

Smuggled goods from India including sarees, salt, sugar spices and other materials are carried on most of these trains. Theft of diesel and rail slippers is said to be rampant on Sirajganj-Ishurdi, Ishurdi-Faridpur, Sirajganj-Chapainawabganj, Santahar-Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat-Panchagarh and Rajshahi-Goalundo rail routes.



BRAHMANBARIA. Visitor at the four-day-long agriculture fair held here recently. — Star photo



NARAYANGANJ: Visitors at an art exhibition organised jointly by the local photographic society and Apex Club of Narshingdi. The exhibition was held at Narshingdi Pourashava auditorium recently. — Star photo

Open sale of smuggled Indian insecticides

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 5 : Smuggled Indian insecticides are being sold in the markets of the district adversely affecting the crops in Kishoreganj, Mymensingh and Netrakona districts.

The agricultural experts said, extensive use of Indian banned insecticides has been destroying soil fertility.

Indian pesticides like thiodin, thionel, hengidel, vil dol etc which are harmful to animal, crops, fish, frog have flooded the border districts of the country. These insecticides are being sold openly in the markets in presence of the law enforcing agencies, sources said. When contacted some pesticides traders informed that they were allowed to sell Indian pesticides by the relevant authority who are taking advantage.

Most of the local insecticides also available in the markets are adulterated, ineffective and expensive. As a result, they are compelled to use

those cheaper Indian pesticides.

The influx of beggars at the district town, Bhairab and Bajitpur has been creating inconveniences.

According to reports, thousands of people who were rendered homeless by re-current floods, cyclone and river erosion have flooded these town areas to earn their livelihood.

Due to repeated natural calamities, these distressed people were compelled to move to the town areas in search of food and shelter. Finding no job opportunities they resort to begging.

The town dwellers complain that the beggars have been erecting slums on the roadsides and highland areas polluting the environment. They also said that many destitute people were engaged in various anti-social activities.

Local people and elite urged the authorities to take schemes to rehabilitate these beggars on the outskirts of these towns.

Fish output declining for want of planning

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 5 : Fish production in the district is declining despite favourable condition for pisciculture due to absence of proper planning, reports UNB.

Fish production in the area is being hampered due to leasing of the water bodies to non-professionals, irregularities in the Fishery Department, frequent outbreak of ulcerous diseases of fishes, unabated use of current nets and catching fries.

Frequent attack of ulcerous syndromes during the last three years have created scarcity of fish in the area, giving rise to abnormal prices, local leaders said.

As a result, low income groups, unable to consume fish, have been suffering from protein deficiency.

Silted rivers, caused by adverse effects of the Farakka Barrage, have forced many fishermen to leave their profession.

Experts said the production can be raised upto the optimum level by properly utilising nearly 3000 ponds and about 650-mile long river of the district and removing existing obstacles in the water channel.

According to the experts about 1000 ponds of the area need reexcavation to boost the pisciculture production.

Setting up of hatcheries with electric connection, improvement of transport facilities and training to the fish cultivators are the other necessities for increased production, they opined.

Another reports says: About 2,500 betel leaf growers of the district are facing various problems while many of them have been compelled to give up their ancestral profession.

Lower prices of their product in the markets and price

hike of inputs and fund constraints are among the many problems faced by the betel leaf cultivators in five thanas of the district.

Growers said at present the production cost of betel leaf has increased several times.

The prices of bamboo and straw, the two important raw materials for betel leaf plantation have shot up.

At present prices of oil cake and bamboo are being sold at Tk 3000 per maund and Tk 80 to 90 per piece respectively, much higher than that of the past.

In the past, betel leaf grew abundantly in the district and a large quantity of the product was sent to different parts of the country.

Adulteration of foodstuff rampant

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 5 : Adulteration of foodstuff is rampant in almost all the hotels and restaurants of the town causing outbreak of intestinal diseases, reports UNB.

Town dwellers alleged that foodstuffs are also being prepared for customers in most unhygienic manner besides its low quality and adulteration in these hotels and restaurants.

They also said some vendors are found selling adulterated foodstuffs in front of the schools causing stomach ailments to the school children.

Local people said adulterated rice, atta, bread and biscuits are being sold in the market openly before the nose of the law enforcing agencies. They said pure edibles like milk, ghee, mustard oil, soyabean oil etc are hardly available in the hats and bazars.

Fodder shortage acute, 150 cattle die

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 5 : At least 150 cattle died in all the 13 thanas of the district due to acute shortage of fodder in last two months, reports UNB.

Farmers of the district have been facing difficulties in feeding their cows, goats and buffaloes for quite a long time.

The situation has aggravated as the drought and flood damaged grass and other kinds of fodder last year.

Fodder crisis has also been resulted in the gradual loss of health of cattle and sharp fall in milk supply.

The price of straws have increased abnormally in different parts of the district and that of oil-cakes, bran and husk, used as fodder, have also gone beyond the purchasing capacity of the farmers.

Meanwhile, a large number of cattleheads have fallen prey to various diseases. Foot and

mouth diseases of cattleheads have broken out in an epidemic form, causing setbacks to the cultivation of lands.

Another reports says: Rampant catching of fish fries despite government ban by current nets in all the 13 thanas is hampering fish production in the district.

Fish production in the district has come to all-time low following indiscriminate catching of fries, local people said.

A section of greedy fishermen, violating the government restrictions, are catching fries openly in the rivers, canals, beels, haors and ghers and selling them in different local markets under the very nose of the law enforcing agencies, they alleged.

They urged the concerned authorities to take immediate steps against the alleged fishermen.

District roundup

JAMALPUR

11 arrested on various charges

Mar 5 : Police in a special drive rounded up 11 people in connection with various anti-social activities from the town last week, reports UNB.

Of the arrested, four were nabbed while smoking ganja in a rail colony and the rest from a brothel in Raniganj on February 4.

Ayat Ali, an alleged illegal ganja trader of the colony was also among the arrested.

A case was filed with the sadar thana.

Another report says : Jamalpur Zilla Parishad held an iftar party at the local Circuit House premises on February 26.

Elite of the district, political leaders, journalists, and government and non-government officials were present at the party.

Deputy Commissioner Jalal Ahmed organised another iftar party at the same venue on February 27.

"Saptahik Jamalpur", the local weekly newspaper, also organised a week-long iftar party at its office from February 19 to 25.

Local office bearers of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, Grameen Sangbadik Sangathan and Jatiya Sangbadik Sangstha, elite and political leaders attended.

MADARIPUR

Students suffer for want of books

Mar 5 : Non availability of books of Bangladesh Madrasa Board from class one to five are causing harm to the studies of the students, reports UNB.

The books under the new curriculum, announced earlier by the Madrasa Board, are hard to get in the local markets, students alleged.

The Madrasa Board declared to introduce the new curriculum from this year replacing the present one.

More than two months have passed since the declaration, but the books are hardly available as yet.

If available, prices are much higher than those of the previous year, they said.

As a result, the students and teachers are facing difficulties in pursuing studies.

KISHOREGANJ

Indiscriminate screening of obscene films

Mar 5 : Indiscriminate screening of obscene films in the town is affecting the moral upbringing of the youngsters of the locality, says UNB.

Town dwellers alleged the young generation is being spoiled by the "distasteful" exposure of these films in Hindi and English.

The moves are full of obscene scenes and erotic dances, they said.

Besides, unabated selling of sedatives and other intoxicants by some medicine shop owners contributed further to their moral degradation.

The guardians have urged the authorities concerned to take stringent measures against the owners of video and medicine shops.

BARISAL

Tk 13.74 crore school building construction project

The facilities department of the ministry of education has been implementing 134 projects involving Taka 13,74,42,000 in four southern districts under Barisal zone during the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

The projects are located in Barisal, Jhalakati, Pirojpur and Bhola. According to an official source, the projects will be implemented with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The projects include the construction of four government primary schools, three secondary schools, 27 non-government secondary schools, four government college academic buildings, development of 27 non-government secondary schools, construction of 27 secondary schools and 27 madrasas, and development of 12 non-government colleges, the source added.

Four academic buildings will be constructed, one each in Barisal and Jhalakati districts and two in Pirojpur district.

Besides, 49 educational institutions will be constructed or developed in Barisal district, 22 in Jhalakati, 29 in Pirojpur and 30 in Bhola districts.

However, nobody was arrested in connection with the illegal use of the "current net". It may be mentioned here that the government has put a ban on the use of it.

The Detective Branch of Chittagong City police, recovered the nets from a boat named as "EB Shah Amanat" at about mid-night Thursday and seized the boat.

DINAJPUR

Taka 77 lakh smuggled goods seized

Mar 5 : The BDR personnel recovered smuggled goods worth about Taka 77 lakh in separate raids in different parts of the district during the last month, reports UNB.

The BDR 15th Battalion Commander Major Murtaza Al Mahmud conducted the raids and recovered the smuggled goods.

Acting on a tip they also recovered a black statue worth about Taka five lakh from Hilly border area on Thursday.

The statue was deposited with the customs office.

MAGURA

AL leaders seek vote for party candidate

Mar 5 : Awami League leaders on Friday urged the people to get united under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and free the country from "corrupt and inefficient rule" of BNP, reports UNB.

Addressing several election rallies at Mohammadpur and Shalikhah thana here this afternoon, the leaders charged BNP government with failure in governing the country and fulfilling its election commitments.

During the day-long campaign, Tofael Ahmed MP, Amir Hossain Amu, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Sharif Khasruzzaman MP, Khan Tipu Sultan, Roy Ramesh, Altaf Hossain and party nominee Shafiquzzaman Bachchu spoke at the meetings at Babukhali and Binodpur in Mohammadpur thana and Arpara in Shalikhah thana.

Tofael alleged that ruling BNP has indulged in corruption and abuse of power. Despite persistent demand to discuss corruption in parliament, the government ignores the opposition demand and tries to suppress it.

He said that due to negative attitude of the government leaders, the parliamentary probe committee faces stalemate in conducting investigation against Irrigation Minister Majid-ul-Haq.

Amir Hossain Amu said, Prime Minister Begum Zia has betrayed with the commitments made to the people in last parliamentary election and has been running the country in autocratic style. He said economy has collapsed, mills and factories are being closed, unemployment has increased and law and order deteriorated due to misrule of BNP.

The leaders urged the people to vote for "Boat" in the March 20 by-election in Magura-2 constituency to protest the corrupt rule of BNP government.

BRAHMANBARIA

Bank staff, 3 others held for irregularities

Mar 5 : District Anti-corruption Bureau has filed a case against four people including a bank official for misappropriation of bank loan recently, official said here on Friday, reports UNB.

The allegations were brought against Rafiqul Islam, former officer of Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) Jibaganj branch, Nadiruzzaman, Nurul Islam and Shahidul Islam of Badda village in Banchharampur thana.

It has been alleged that Rafiqul Islam in collaboration with Nadiruzzaman, Nurul Islam and Shahidul Islam has drawn Taka 40,000 as irrigation loan under the fake name of two minor boys — Ababil Miah and Saim Miah of the same village in 1982.

The forgery came into light after six years when BKB issued a letter to Ababil Miah and Saim Miah to pay the loan.

The BKB investigated into the matter and filed a case against the culprits with Nabinagar thana. The case was later shifted to District Anti-Corruption Bureau.

CHITTAGONG

1150 current nets recovered

Mar 5 : The city police recovered some 1150 fishing nets worth about Taka 20 lakh from port area near the river Karnaphuli on Thursday night, police sources said here on Friday, reports UNB.

However, nobody was arrested in connection with the illegal use of the "current net". It may be mentioned here that the government has put a ban on the use of it.

The Detective Branch of Chittagong City police, recovered the nets from a boat named as "EB Shah Amanat" at about mid-night Thursday and seized the boat.