

Three killed, over 1000 injured in tornado

From A Correspondent

COMILLA, Mar 23: Three persons were killed and about 1,000 injured in a tornado that lashed four Unions of Devidwar and Muradnagar thanas recently.

The damages done by the tornado that continued for about 30 minutes includes 2900 kutcha houses and standing crops. The tornado was associated with hail storm which caused colossal damage to water Molon, Khira, wheat, Bangee, Boro paddy etc.

Mostly affected unions are Gunaighar north and south unions of Devidwar thana, Marichakandi union in Muradnagar thana.

One Aleya Begum 12 of Gunaighar north union died at the spot in house collapse and two others seriously injured were admitted into Comilla general hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

The homeless people are reportedly living under open sky. Shortage of pure drinking water and absence of electricity added to the miseries of the tornado hit victims. The district administration has so far distributed 40 bundles of CI sheets and Taka 12,000 in cash.

Minister for works, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian with the district administration officials visited the affected areas to assess the needs of the victims.

Surya Sen's birth centenary observed

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 23: In observance of the birth centenary of the valiant freedom fighter Surya Sen Masterda, a meeting was arranged by 8 left parties at the local bar association auditorium on Monday afternoon.

The meeting was presided over by Sudhir Sen. It was addressed among others by Nazrul Haq Nilu, Advocate Abdus Satter, Nazmul Hasan Mian, Advocate Abdul Hye Mahboob, Dr S C Roy and Aminur Rahman Khokan.

Speakers said, Masterda's life sacrifice for freedom is the part of our long freedom movement. Real history of our freedom movement is yet to be written. Names of Masterda and other freedom fighters of our country should correctly be written in our history — they said.

Millat's Dinajpur correspondent assaulted

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, Mar 23: The district correspondent of the Daily Millat newspaper has been physically assaulted by an organised gang of smugglers at Pulhat at the town.

The smugglers got furious seeing a feature on smuggling on March 14 issue.

It is learnt that the feature was written by Asaduzzaman Liton, district correspondent of Dinajpur.

One Labu of Pulhat along with his four accomplices attacked the journalist, Asaduzzaman Liton in front of food godown at Pulhat and beat him till he fainted. Local people came to rescue Liton when they heard Liton shouting for help. The miscreants snatched cash, wrist watch, and a sun glass from the victim and threatened Liton not to take any administrative help.

However, Asaduzzaman Liton went to Kotwali thana to file a case against the miscreants but the duty officer declined to file the case. On the other hand, Vice-president of Jatiya Sangbad Sangstha, Al Haj M A Mazid was ill-treated when he contacted with Officer in Charge of the thana about the matter.

Dispute over land possession leaves 18 people injured

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 23: At least 18 people were injured, three of them seriously, when two rival groups clashed over the possession of a land at Pachila village in Ullapara thana Friday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, the clash ensued when Abdus Satter along with his associates went to take the possession of a paddy field which was earlier cultivated by Abdul Baten of the same village.

Both the groups used lethal weapons in the half-an-hour long clash which left 18 people injured.

Seriously injured Majedul Islam 28, Golap 26 and Alam 40 were admitted to the Sirajganj general hospital.

When contacted, Ullapara police confirmed the incident.



COMILLA: A tornado-hit area of the district. Four unions of Devidar and Muradnagar thanas were affected by the tornado on March 13 last. — Star photo

Attendance poor in pry schools

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Mar 23: The number of primary school going children is decreasing in the remote areas of the district.

According to a study, a large number of children between the age of 10 and 12 years are engaged in different petty jobs instead of going to schools to earn their livelihood.

Landless and poverty-stricken farmers engage their kids in jobs instead of sending them to schools, the study revealed.

The children are compelled to take up odd jobs like cattle grazing, rickshaw pulling and hotel boys at a poor remuneration.

Most of the marginal or landless farmers in the district have three or more children and are facing financial crisis. As a result, they cannot afford educational expenses of their children. Finding no other alternative, they encourage their children to take up any job.

During the harvesting season, a large number of farm-labourers along with their kids

go to other distant places in search of works. As a result, the primary schools in remote areas of the district have been facing acute shortage of students.

Another report says: Frequent power failure has become a regular feature at Habiganj town causing much sufferings to the consumers.

Power supply goes off at least five to seven times a day and resumes after an interval of 30 minutes to one hour.

Students, mills, shops and press owners are the worst sufferers due to frequent power failure. Besides, many of the electricity poles at the town have no bulbs. Taking advantage of darkness at night, the criminals become active.

The authority of local power supply department could not give satisfactory reason of frequent power failure and voltage fluctuation.

The town residents have urged the appropriate authorities concerned to look into the matter and take immediate

necessary steps to ensure smooth supply of electricity.

Abdul Mannan, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Habiganj convicted a person and sentenced him to suffer life-term imprisonment and also fined Taka 5000 in default to suffer rigorous imprisonment (RI) for another one year for murdering his wife.

The learned judge delivered the above said verdict in the open court recently.

According to prosecution story, the convicted accused Suruk Mia of village Pashimbag under Ajmiriganj PS killed his wife Gul Bahar on 14.2.1991 in her father's house at Naliganj for enmity over family affairs.

The accused person after killing his wife concealed the body under water-hyacinth of a pond near his father-in-law's house.

In this connection, a case was started at Nabiganj PS against the accused.

The police after investigation submitted chargesheet against him.

The learned judge after examining records, evidences and witnesses found accused Suruk Mia guilty for murdering his wife Gul Bahar and delivered the judgement.

Advocate Shafiqur Rahman Choudhury APP conducted the case on behalf of prosecution while Advocate Muroleedhar defended the accused.

Meanwhile, the holy eid-ul-fitr was celebrated here with due solemnity and religious fervour.

Elaborate programmes were taken up here to celebrate the Eid in a befitting manner.

The National Flag was hoisted atop all public and private buildings.

Improved diets was served to the inmates of the jails, hospitals and orphanages.

The main Eid congregation was held at local Shaistanagar Eidgah Maidan at 8.30 am. Special prayers were also offered at different mosques seeking peace, progress and prosperity of the nation and entire Muslim world.

Negligence keeps village still dark

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Mar 23: Due to negligence of some officials of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) electric connection to Dulai village of Sujannagar thana of Pabna district could not be extended.

According to reports, the village Dulai was included as a member of REB in 1980 and appealed to the General Manager for electric connections in the southern part of the village. The General Manager of REB assured the inhabitants of electric power supply. In 1990, a powerful deep tubewell was installed which also was given electric connections.

However, electricity connections to the southern part of the village remained suspended. Many small irrigation projects, schools, colleges and residents have been suffering due to non-availability of electricity.

The late President Ziaur Rahman ordered to supply electricity to the village but the REB authorities so far has not taken any initiative to arrange for power supply in the area.

The people of the village say, they need electricity for irrigation purposes. They added that, industries and businesses could be set up due to lack of power in the village.

Nine awarded life imprisonment for murder

COMILLA, Mar 23: Nine people were sentenced for life imprisonment for murder, court sources said Wednesday, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convicts Selim Mia, Abu Mia, Abul Hashem, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Karim, Abdus Satter, Abul Kashem, Selim and Amir Hossain Taka 1000 each, in default, to suffer one year rigorous imprisonment more.

Another accused Charu Mia was acquitted following his death during the prosecution.

The case, in brief, a clash was ensued between two rival groups over the possession of a plot of land at village Baralakhpir in Barura thana on April 1, 1991 in which one Mastan Mia was killed by the accused people.

Police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against them.

After examining the witnesses and records additional Session's Judge, First Court, Md Nurul Wadud awarded the punishment last week.

Police officer killed in road accident

GAZIPUR, Mar 23: One police officer was killed and a constable wounded seriously in a road mishap near Palli Biddu Office in Kaliakoir on Dhaka-Tangail Highway Wednesday, reports UNB.

The deceased Abul Kalam Azad, 45, was identified as SI of Kaliakoir Police Station. He died on the spot.

According to witnesses, the accident occurred when a Tangail-bound truck from Dhaka hit the policemen at 10.45 am who were standing at the point.

However, the driver managed to flee with the vehicle. A case has been filed with the police.

Population increases in Rohingya camps

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 23: Birth rate at the Rohingya refugee camps has increased alarmingly due to polygamy and negative attitude towards family planning, reports UNB.

Some 14,574 children were born at the Rohingya camps in last two years while 5,468 died during the period, official sources said here Tuesday.

But unofficial sources put the number of newborn babies at about 18,000. At least 25 children, officials said, are taking birth every day in 17 Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban hill districts. But NGO sources claimed that the number is more than 37 a day.

According to sources, the Rohingyas appeared to be more interested in polygamy — most of them would like to have more than one wife and more children.

The Rohingyas tended to be reluctant in adopting family planning methods and they even avoid health workers and motivators approaching them to preach the methods.

Eversince voluntary repatriation started, some 53,189 Rohingyas refugees out of a total 2.50 lakh have so far returned to Burma's western Arakan province which they had fled in the face of alleged persecution more than two years ago.

District roundup

RAJSHAHI

Tk 17 crore for city development projects

Mar 23: Rajshahi City Corporation has taken up Taka 17 crore -uplift programme during the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Of the amount, government has given Taka 15 crore and the remaining is being provided from the own fund of the corporation.

Official sources said Taka 10 crore has been allocated for construction of 100 km by-lane, 65 km drain and 15 km protection wall in the corporation area. Taka 1.44 crore has been allocated for the under-construction of hospital for labourers, Sonadighi Mosque and different graveyards and cremation places.

Besides, Taka 2.22 crore has been sanctioned for water supply, Taka 1.30 crore for EPI programme, Taka 48.83 lakh for roads and electricity, Taka 73.82 lakh for slum development and Taka 15.50 lakh for tree plantation and environment protection.

Work on some of the projects has already been started and is expected to be completed by next June.

CHUADANGA

Girls high school in poor shape

Mar 23: Jibannagar High School in Jibannagar thana are plagued with various problems since its establishment in 1972, reports UNB.

According to school authority, the school building was constructed on 2.33 decimal land with the financial support of philanthropists of the area. At present, the school has 276 students with nine teachers.

According to the teachers, education is being hampered due to shortage of benches, tables and adequate number of class rooms. Many students are to attend the classes standing for want of benches.

Besides, the school building has become worn out and cracks have developed on roofs and walls. Most of the doors have been damaged by rain during monsoon as there is no roof on the veranda.

Guardians have urged the authorities to take the schools under the development scheme to facilitate the local girls to prosecute their studies smoothly.

C'NAWABGANJ

Tk 6.24 crore project to develop schools, madrasahs

Mar 23: A programme at a cost of Taka 6.24 crore has been undertaken to construct three classrooms each in 39 high schools and 39 Dhakhil madrasahs in 39 thanas of five districts under Rajshahi zone, reports UNB.

According to Facilities Department of the Education Ministry, the districts are Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore and Pabna.

According to officials, Taka eight lakh have been sanctioned for each institution under Annual Development Programme.

The construction work is expected to be completed by December this year. With the implementation of the programme all 78 high schools and Dhakhil madrasahs will get better education facilities, it is learnt.

SATKHIRA

Two arrested on charge of murder

Mar 23: Two people were arrested Tuesday in connection with a murder case in Mohammadpur thana last week, reports UNB.

The arrested are: Abdur Razzak, son of the Yusuf Ali and his mother Amena Khatun. They were sent to police custody for interrogation.

On March 20, during catching fish in a disputed pond in Mohammadpur thana, a clash took place in which one Johar Ali was killed.

Another report adds: A teen aged girl who was kidnapped from her village home at Bhatsala under Debhata thana 32 days ago is yet to be rescued, police and family sources said.

The ill-fated girl Gangarani (13), daughter of Bhakta Ranjan Bhachar was kidnapped by some unidentified miscreants on February 20 midnight when she went out to respond to the call of nature.

A case was filed with the Debhata police by her father.

BARISAL

Furniture for govt pry schools

Mar 23: Facilities department of the Ministry of Education supplied 3,240 pairs of different furniture to 52 government primary schools and eight madrasahs in four districts under Barisal education zone during the current fiscal year, says BSS.

The programme cost the department Taka 52 lakh. According to an official source, the furniture include 2,880 sets of high and low benches and 360 sets of tables and chairs.

Each pair of high and low benches cost Taka 1800 and that of the table and chair cost Taka 1650.

Besides, the department has been constructing five science buildings in these districts.

JAMALPUR

Discussion on conservation of water

Mar 23: A discussion meeting on "World Day for Water" was held at the World Vision Auditorium here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Organised by the Environmental Core Team, it was addressed by local elite, journalists and some members of the core, with its President Stiffen Samar Shangkma in the chair.

It was also addressed by Minhaj Uddin and Abul Hashem of Samaj Progati Sangstha, PHED Engineer Mahbubul Alam and 50 representatives of local NGOs.

Speakers at the discussion urged all to help create public awareness for conservation and development of water resources.

BARGUNA

Lack of civic amenities

Mar 23: Barguna pourashava lacks civic amenities causing inconvenience to the town dwellers, reports UNB.

The dilapidated condition of the roads, lack of proper drainage system and shortage of water supply facilities have made the civic life miserable. About three-fourth roads in the poura areas are kutcha and cracks and potholes have developed at many points due to lack of proper maintenance and repair works.

The situation turns worse during the rainy season. After a slight rainfall, the roads become muddy and slippery hampering the movement of pedestrians and vehicles.

All the kutcha drains are filled with garbage and stagnant water leading to the breeding of mosquito.

School going children are afraid of pye-dogs which are increasing alarmingly in the town and some time the children do not want to go to schools due to fear of these dogs.

Local people urged the authorities to take necessary measures to solve the problems of the pourashava without further delay.

KHULNA

Acute shortage of water supply

Mar 23: Acute shortage of water supply has been causing great inconvenience to the city dwellers for quite a long time, says UNB.

The problem turned acute in the metropolitan city with a population of 12 lakh and nothing tangible has yet been made to meet the growing need of people, local people alleged.

According to city corporation sources, at present 2.50 crore gallons of water are required per day. But only one crore gallons are being supplied to the dwellers through 34 tubewells and 162 km long pipeline.

To meet the people's demand the Water Supply Department of Khulna City Corporation is implementing a project at a cost of Tk 5.22 crore.

Some 20 tubewells and 40 km pipeline will be installed under this project which will supply another 30 to 40 lakh gallons of water to the dwellers. After the implementation of the project the acute problem will be solved to a great extent, officials said.

Meanwhile, it is apprehended that the crisis will deepen further in near future as eight to ten out of 40 running tubewells may go out of order at any time as the ground water level is falling further.

Machinery trouble hampering irrigation

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 23: Irrigation on 3.5 lakh acres of land has become impossible as 22,000 deep, and shallow tubewells and power pumps in 13 northern districts are now lying inoperative.

It is gathered that there are 70,426 deep, shallow tubewells and power pumps to irrigate agricultural land in 13 northern districts except Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi and Naogaon districts under the Barendra Project.

Out of the total, 21,996 machines are not in operation due to machinery troubles and use of shallow machines in the country boats.

According to a source of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), 2,266 machines including 338 deep tubewells in Sirajganj district out of 9,155 machines. 2,563 machines including 63 deep tubewells in Pabna district out of 8,397 machines. 5,136 machines including 168 deep tubewells out of 16,491 machines in Bogra district. 929 including 106 deep tubewells out of 3,404 machines in Jalpurhat. 373 machines including 87 deep tubewells out of 9,361 in Natore district. 1,593 out of 5,416 machines in Rangpur. 2060 including

197 deep tubewells out of 6,484 machines in Gaibandha district. 710 machines including 40 deep tubewells out of 2,451 in Kurigram. 362 including 85 deep tubewells out of 1033 machines in Lalmonirhat. 395 including 66 deep tubewells out of 1,248 machines in Nilphamari. 2439 including 470 deep tubewells out of 7498 machines in Dinajpur. 643 including 60 deep tubewells out of 1,883 machines in Thakurgaon and 222 including 29 deep tubewells out of 601 deep tubewells, shallow tubewells and pump machines in Panchagarh district are not used in irrigation purpose due to various causes including machinery troubles and use of shallow machines in the country boats.

Following in operation of about 22,000 irrigation machines about 3,50,000 acres of land in 13 northern districts are not irrigated properly. Some shallow machine owners, informed that use of shallow machines in the country boats is more profitable than irrigation. Thousands of country boats are now plying in the river routes to carry passengers and merchandised goods. The deep tubewells are inoperative mainly due to

shortage of spare parts. Knowledgeable sources have urged upon the authority to ensure use of pump machines in irrigation purpose.

About 2.50 lakh people of 16 northern districts have been suffering from tuberculosis disease.

Hospital sources here said, the disease is multiplying fast due to the lack of proper treatment, manhandling and malnutrition of the patients.

Doctors said the treatment of the disease is costly and time-consuming. As most of the patients are poor they cannot bear the expenses of the treatment for a long-time. On the other hand, the hospitals or TB clinics cannot provide medicines to the patients.

Moreover, the patients do not follow the precautionary measures in their daily life due to sheer ignorance. Excessive smoking, mixing with the attacked patients, malnutrition in the flood-affected areas in the northern districts are the main causes of spreading of the disease.

District-wise break up of the patients are as follows: Sirajganj — 10,000. Pabna —

15,000. Rajshahi — 20,000. Natore — 15,000. Naogaon — 15,000. Chapainawabganj 10,000. Bogra — 15,000. Joypurhat — 15,000. Rangpur — 20,000. Gaibandha — 15,000. Nilphamari — 15,000. Lalmonirhat — 20,000. Kurigram — 15,000. Dinajpur — 20,000. Thakurgaon — 20,000. Panchagarh — 15,000.

Another report says: Police arrested six youths while they were allegedly stealing a micro-bus from a garage in the town last week.

According to police, on March 13 at midnight the miscreants arranged an alternate key from one Mahbubur Rahman's garage at Masumpur area in the town and tried to escape with the vehicle.

Suspecting the youths, the local people gheraoed them and informed the police.

Police rushed to the spot and arrested Abdullah Sheikh (20), Manik (20), Rafiqul (18), Motaleb (19) Monirul (18) and Alim (15) and seized the vehicle.

The arrested were sent to jail hajat and a case was filed with sadar thana in this connection.



JAMALPUR: Erosion of the river Jamuna at village Gafargaon of Madarganj thana of the district. — Star photo