

Storm kills 3, 11,000 houses damaged, phone lines cut off

CHADPUR, Apr 30: Three brothers of a single family were killed by lightning during a violent storm that lashed some villages in sadar, Haimchar and Faridganj thanas of the district on Thursday and Friday, reports UNB.

The unidentified victims, who hailed from Haimchar thana, died on the spot as a streak of light struck them while they were fishing in Meghna.

The tropical storm accompanied by hails, raged Char Ibrahimpur, Khonepur and Fatehjangpur villages in the afternoon on the day.

A large number of trees were uprooted and some 11,000 thatched houses, including 1,000 fully, were damaged during the storm affecting about 200 families.

Standing crops, including irri and other green vegetable, on about 10,000 acres of land were spoiled in the hallstorm.

Telephone lines between Chandpur and the affected thanas remained cut off since Thursday.

Tk 44 cr char development project undertaken

MAJDEE COURT, Apr 30: The government with the financial assistance of the Netherlands has undertaken a project costing Taka 44 crore to implement char development and rehabilitation programmes, reports UNB.

A total of 5,000 landless families of Bhatirtek, Char Mojid and Char Bagua in sadar thana will be rehabilitated under the project.

Official sources said, the government of Netherlands would provide Taka 34 crore while the Bangladesh government will allocate Taka 10 crore for implementing the project.

The Land Ministry will distribute 2.5 acres of land to each landless family and construct 5,000 houses for them at a cost of Taka 10 crore.

Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) under the project will construct roads, culverts, cyclone shelters and drains and dig canal to facilitate sanitation and water supply costing Taka 15 crore. While Water Development Board will construct embankments and repair a sluiceway at the project of Taka 19 crore.

On completion of the projects, some 15,000 acres of land will be saved from salinity, officials added.

Ten awarded life-term for murder

HABIGANJ, Apr 30: Ten people were awarded life term rigorous imprisonment for murdering a man, court sources said Thursday, reports UNB.

The convicts are: Siraj Ali, Umed Ali, Samed Ali, Muhammad Ali Maki Ali, Jitu Miah, Abdun Noor, Abdur Razaque, Salam Ullah, Lal Miah and Abdul Haque of Suto-uzirpur village in Baniachang thana.

According to prosecution story, the accused following a previous enmity killed their co-villager, Firoj Ali with deadly weapons while he was working in a paddy field on December 31, 1989.

A case was filed and police after investigation submitted charge sheet against them.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge after examining the witnesses and records delivered the judgement on April 23.

Statue, heroin worth Tk 16 lakh recovered

DINAJPUR, Apr 30: Bangladesh Rifles Recovered a statue of touch stone and heroin worth about taka 16 lakh during their separate raids, officials said Wednesday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, a BDR contingent led by Commander major Mortuja Al Masud of Fifth Battalion raided the Mohonpur bridge area and recovered the statue weighing 13 kg worth about Taka 15 lakh on April 21.

In another drive on April 22 at Dangapara BDR seized heroin worth Taka one lakh.

Another report from Meherpur adds: Meherpur Customs officials recovered 550 bottles of Indian phenisidyl bottles worth about Taka 50,000 from Malikpara area of the town on April 22.

Acting on a secret information, a team led by Customs Inspector raided the spot and recovered the contraband. None was arrested so far in this connection.



SYLHET: Keith Vaz, a British Member of Parliament speaking at a reception organised by the Lions Club of Sylhet Green held at a local motel recently. Vaz lauded the role of the Lions Club and assured necessary help for executing the proposed Lions hospital project soon. — Star photo

Increasing number of teachers involved in private tuition

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Apr 30: Private tuition has become a commercial practice in Kushtia town and its adjoining thanas.

Local people alleged that most of the teachers of both the government and non-government schools and colleges are engaged in private tuition to earn extra money.

The guardians alleged that the teachers hardly concentrate to teach the students sincerely in the class rooms. As a result, the students find it difficult to understand their lessons in the class rooms.

Most students, enrolled in primary and secondary schools and college usually employ their teachers as house tutors for intensive studies for good results in the examinations.

Local elite feel that private tutorial practice has become an extra professional business of the teachers.

The teachers giving lessons on science subjects, gather students for coaching in batches. English and accounting subjects are also taught in batches.

Private coaching by the teachers in batches usually starts before and after the school hours. Teachers are said to earn handsome amount doing private coaching.

private coaching is also being practiced in the higher secondary and degree levels for securing good results in practical subjects.

Science students informed that it has become impossible to obtain higher marks without the aid of private tutors for having clear conception and thorough knowledge on the topics.

Fish disease breaks out

Fish diseases have broken out in an epidemic form in different areas of the district causing great hardship to the people.

Fisheries Department source said a kind of water-borne disease belonging to virus group ulcerative syndrome is found in rivers, beels ponds and canals of Kushtia, Bheramara, Daulatpur, Kumarkhali and Khoksa.

The affected fishes are being sold in abundance in the markets, local people alleged. The same disease took a serious turn a few years ago in the district.

The number of landless and unemployed people are on increase in all the six thanas of the district.

According to a survey conducted by local leaders and journalists, the total population now stands at over 15 lakh. Of the total, 70 per cent depends on agriculture, 10 per cent on different types of occupation and the rest of the 20 per cent are unemployed.

Among the farmers, 65 per cent are landless and 20 per cent are marginal, rest of the 15 per cent have some land.

The survey report said, river erosion, shortfall of foodgrains, flash flood and other natural calamities were the main causes for growing landlessness.

The farmers, having a few acres of land, can not cope with the rising price of agricultural inputs. They have been compelled to borrow money from the local money lenders at a high rate of interest for livelihood.

The farmers are also deprived of fair prices of their produce in the local markets. The poor farmers are not getting irrigation facilities as they are not capable to bear the cost.



Male voters standing in queue show their identity cards, introduced by the Election Commission for the model polls held in Dapunia Union Parishad under Mymensingh district yesterday. — Star photo

RMCH nephrology unit in poor condition, needs fund

From A Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Apr 30: The normal functioning of the Nephrology (kidney) unit of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital is being hampered due to shortage of doctors and absence of necessary equipment causing immense suffering to the patients.

One Registrar is managing the unit consisting of 20 beds. The posts of one Associate Professor, one Assistant Professor, one Assistant Registrar and one Medical Officer have been lying vacant for long.

Hospital sources said that the Nephrology department was started with only two beds in 1988 under the Medicine unit and later, in 1991, eminent kidney specialist Associate Professor Habibur Rahman was entrusted to open a fullfledged kidney unit in RMCH. The unit had no ward of its own at the beginning. The beds were scattered in different wards of the medicine unit.

The RMCH authority locally managed a small ward for the unit with only 20 beds.

At the end of 1992 Dr Habibur Rahman was transferred. Dr Kazi Tariqul Islam was appointed Assistant Professor of the unit, but he later left the country, since then Registrar Dr Abdul Khaleque alone have been managing the unit.

The RMCH sources said that about 40 to 50 patients with acute, and chronic renal failure rush to the hospital a month seeking admission. Only 7 to 10 could be admitted. A kidney patient takes at least three weeks to be cured. These patients need either maintenance of haemo-dialysis or kidney transplantation. It was learnt that intermittent Peritoneal Dialysis (IPD) had been performed since the inception of the unit is 1988 but haemo-dialysis can not be done for lack of necessary machines and tools. Two haemo-dialysis machines, are however, lying useless at the hospital. To use these, a water treatment plant is needed, government earlier had sanctioned Taka six lakh this year against the need of about Taka 10 lakh to purchase the plant. So the problem could not be solved yet.

It was also learnt that the necessary quality investigations facilities required for a kidney patient were not available. A separate laboratory should be set up or the existing pathological laboratory should be supplied with improved and modern equipment to get quality results, said hospital sources.

AL brings allegations of vote riggings whenever they lose: B Chowdhury

MYMENSINGH, Apr 30: Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury MP, the deputy Leader of the House Wednesday said that whenever Awami League won elections in recent years it kept quiet but whenever it lost it brought allegations of rigging and vote dacoity, report BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest at a freshers' reception at the Nasrabad College, Prof Chowdhury said, the opposition leadership even did not accept as fair the elections conducted by the neutral and interim government of acting president Justice Shahbuddin Ahmed in 1991 although the whole world and the entire population of Bangladesh recognised it as fair elections.

It shows, Prof Chowdhury said, that they have developed the habit of making allegations of rigging whenever they are defeated in any election.

Prof Chowdhury said that if any party had any allegation against the conduct of the polls the best and the accepted democratic and constitutional way to get the remedy is to appeal with the election commission against the election results.

Prof Chowdhury said that by giving identity cards to the voters the system of conducting polls could be improved and at the same time it could stop false voting.

The Deputy leader of the House said, all should think how far the proposal and idea of a caretaker government in place of a government elected by the people for holding free and fair polls would be helpful in creating the tradition of democratic culture in Bangladesh.

Prof Chowdhury also said that to make student politics healthy the non students as well as the over aged who already got married and entered into practical life ought to quit student politics and instated either join the main political parties or their youth wings.

He said that in order to make student politics healthy all students organisations also should be freed from donation seekers, and those who carry arms and created terror.

The Deputy Leader of the House called upon the students to utilise their spare time by taking part in constructive pursuits like spread of mass education of trees, raising poultry or in constructive social movements.

Chaired by the Principal of the college, Prof Abdul Qudus the function was also addressed, among others by AKM Fazlul Haq MP.

Participation of people urged to prepare development plans

NATORE, Apr 30: State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan has said the present government is committed to establish democratic values and ideals in all activities of the state, reports BSS.

Unless there is democracy, the fruits of development will not reach the doorstep of the people, he pointed out.

The state minister was inaugurating a participatory type advisory meeting on perspective plan period beyond 1995 here Wednesday.

Held at the Natore district circuit house auditorium, the inaugural session of the meeting was chaired by Awami League MP Shankar Gobinda Chowdhury. The Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu and Maulana Abu Bakar Siddique, Parliament Member from Natore-Singair were, among others, present at the meeting.

People's representatives, political leaders and leaders of labour and peasant organisations and people of all strata from various unions and thanas of the district attended the meeting.

The state minister said, since the government believed that there could not be any development without democracy, the perspective planning was being prepared on the basis of opinion of the people on various issues.

The minister explained the background in taking initiative of the present government to ensure participation of the people from the grass root level in the preparation of plan. He sought the cooperation of people from all walks of life to make this endeavour a success.

The Mayor of Rajshahi, said it was imperative that participation and opinion of the masses were taken in the preparation of plan since village is the focal point of development. He thanked the state minister for planning for taking such initiative for the first time in the country.

In his presidential speech, Awami League MP Chowdhury said, though his party colleagues were abstaining the meeting of the parliamentary standing committee, he could not keep himself from this meeting which was intended to work unitedly for the development of the country. Irrespective of party affiliations, there should be consensus on certain national issues, he expressed.

On the question of participatory planning, he said, a consensus should have been there and urged all to extend total support to this initiative of the democratic government.

Jamaat MP Siddique who presided over the concluding session, congratulated the minister for taking the historic step of initiating the process of participatory planning.

'Exercise democratic norms for development'

CHITTAGONG, Apr 30: Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah Al Noman Thursday said the benefit of democracy could not be ensured without exercising democratic norms in the national life, reports BSS.

Consensus on national issues was also essentially needed to strengthen democracy, he said.

The minister was addressing a cross-section of people while inaugurating Moulana Muhamad Shaheb road in Kachu Khain village under Rouzan thana here.

This long-awaited three-kilometre road will connect the Muhammadia, Darbar Sharif and Kaptai road. Constructed at the cost of Taka eight lakh by the Local Government Engineering Department, this road was named after the founding personality and Peer Shaheb of Muhammadia, Darbar Sharif.

The minister said protection of hard earned democracy was the demand of the time. Political activities of some parties had been creating challenge to the progress of democracy, he said and added, this was because of the failure of those parties to win over the hearts of the people.

He termed the parliament as the life and blood of parliamentary democracy and said it was very difficult to find out any reason in boycotting the parliament and enjoying all the facilities from there.

Referring to the success of the present government in running the administration of the country, Noman said, the benefit of the strong infrastructure of development created in the process of consolidating the shattered economy inherited from the preceding government had already started.

He said, massive development activities including construction of road, culverts, bridges and school building were going on in full-swing at thana and union levels and these would be further strengthened. He called upon the people to be careful about the ill-effects of break the tempo of development work initiated by the present government.

Presided over by the present Peer Shaheb of the Muhammadia Darbar Sharif Moulana Saifur Rahman, the function was addressed, among other, by BNP leader Golam Akbar Khandakar, M A Sabur, Muhiuddin Ahmed, Abdul Halim, Nurul Alam Sawdagar, Habiburullah Master and Monirul Islam Moni.

Government fund will be utilised for the implementation of the schemes. The work of schemes is expected to be completed by June this year.

District roundup

SIRAJGANJ

Prisoners suffer due to poor shape of sub-jail

Apr 30: Prisoners are facing serious problems due to want of accommodation and prevailing unhygienic atmosphere at the Sirajganj sub-jail, reports UNB.

At present, there are about 427 prisoners at the jail — having capacity of 48 prisoners only. Moreover, most of the prisoners are suffering from various contagious diseases, it is learnt.

It is gathered that many prisoners can not sleep at night due to shortage of accommodation. The jail authorities are to bear additional expenditures for emergency shifting of some prisoners to Pabna Jail.

However, construction of the new sub-jail, which began seven years ago at a cost of Taka 10 crore, is yet to be completed and shifting-work could not be started due to delay.

Early shifting of the old sub-jail to the newly constructed one, situated in the Sirajganj town, would help redress the sufferings of the prisoners and reduce unexpected financial expenditures and social problems, local people believe.

CHANDPUR

Shortage of post cards

Apr 30: Post cards are not available at the Chandpur General Post office for the last two weeks causing inconvenience to the people, reports UNB.

Local people said the shortage has been acute also in 23 branch and 28 sub post offices and four other extra departmental sub-post offices under the general post office.

As a result, they are facing difficulties to carry on their urgent correspondence.

When contacted, officials at the general post office informed that they have already informed the matter to the higher authorities and hoped that the problem would be solved soon.

KISHOREGANJ

Open sale of Indian pesticides

Apr 30: Indian spurious pesticides are openly being sold in different markets of Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrokona and Kishoreganj districts despite government ban, says UNB.

Farmers said they were using Indian substandard pesticides, including Thiodin, Thiol, DDT, and XN-50 helbiss, as they could buy those at lower prices from the local markets.

But the farmers are not getting expected results from the pesticides, local leaders alleged.

A section of dishonest traders in collaboration with some government officials are selling the spurious pesticide badly affecting land fertility, they further alleged.

According to agri-scientists, extensive use of spurious pesticides largely decreases production capacity of land.

Local pesticide producers urged the concerned authorities to take immediate action against those involved in smuggling Indian pesticides.

RAJBARI

UP members asked to lead rural uplift works

Apr 30: The Jute Minister said, the union parishad members should actively participate in the population control and mass literacy programme, reports UNB.

The Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah said this while speaking as chief guest at the Rajbari district union parishad members convention here Thursday.

The minister said that the union parishad members should come forward to lead the rural people for their development.

Presided over by industrialist Alhaj Nazir Uddin, the meeting was also addressed by Mia Mohan and Elias Ahmed Pal, President and Vice President respectively of Bangladesh Union Parishad Members Association.

"Union parishad members should do their best in implementing the development activities of the government", Hannan Shah said.

RAJBARI

Turn idle hands into real working force: Mostafiz

Apr 30: Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman Wednesday called on the people to work hard for poverty alleviation and over all development of the country, reports UNB.

Addressing a meeting at the local zila parishad conference hall, Mostafiz stressed the need for effective and people-oriented plans to turn idle hands into real working force.

Presided over by Farida Rahman MP, the meeting was addressed, among others, by AM Reasat Ali MP, Sheikh Ansar Ali MP and Member of the Planning Commission Syed Ahmed.

Referring to the ongoing development activities, the minister said, the government had introduced new systems of local level planning which facilitate people's participation in nation building activities.

Many development programmes, including three five year plans in the past failed to yield fruitful results as the people were not allowed to participate, the minister observed.

The present government attaches importance to the people's advice in planning and other activities as it believes "people are owner of the country".

Later, the Minister chaired a meeting of the district development coordination committee.

BBARIA

Minor girl rapped

Apr 30: A 11 year old girl was raped at Tarua village in Ashuganj thana Thursday, police said Friday, reports UNB.

Ferdousi Begum, daughter of Nur Miah of the village was allegedly violated by one, Ayub Ali also of the same village.

The victim's father filed a petition at the Magistrate court in this connection.

None has been arrested so far.

BBARIA

Programme to implement 98 uplift projects

Apr 30: A programme has been taken up to implement 98 uplift projects in six thanas of the district, reports UNB.

According to Relief and Rehabilitation Department, 1,548 metric tons of wheat have been sanctioned for the implementation of the projects.

Of the total, 26 projects have been undertaken in Begumganj, 24 in sadar, six in Chakthil, nine in Senbag, 11 in Companiganj and 12 in Hatiya.

The projects included reconstruction of the roads of rural areas, earth work, leveling of the school fields.

The work on the projects is expected to be completed by the end of the next month.

MALJDEECOURT

New Press Club executives

Apr 30: A 33-member executive committee of the Gazipur Press Club was elected for a tenure of two-year, official sources said, reports UNB.

District Correspondent of Dainik Bangla Abdus Sattar and Editor of Ganamukh Anjad Hossain were elected president and secretary of the new committee respectively.

The election was held on April 24 at a meeting of the local journalists, working for local and national dailies and weeklies and news agencies with District Correspondent of Bangladesh Times Md Baduzzaman in the chair.

MALJDEECOURT

Prokrichi-BCS meeting held

By Staff Correspondent

Secretary of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, Javed Iqbal Saturday said the country's administration would never, cease to work even for an hour if professional heads are appointed in the district administrations and in the Secretariat.

Giving a fervent call to the Prime Minister, Iqbal said "Appoint heads of the district administration and secretaries from, among the professional cadre and the on-going process of development will never stop for an hour."

"The 70 thousand professionals of the country will also follow the Prime Minister," he told a joint meeting of the Kushtia, Meherpur and Chudanga units of the Prokrichi in Kushtia town.

The meeting was also addressed by the Secretary General of the Action Council Dr Gazi Abdul Huq, Khan Manzur Morshed and local leaders.