

Prices of essentials up in Jhenaidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, May 20: Prices of different essential commodities have been rising in all parts of the district abnormally.

As a result the poor and low income people have been suffering badly.

Now in all the six thanas Saikuppa, Jhenidah, Harinakunda, Kaligonj, Kotchandpur and Moheshpur of the district rice is selling at Taka 12 to 13 per kg Taka 11. Potato is selling at Taka 7 per kg. One kilogram brinjal is selling at Taka 10 prices of all vegetables like basil, karolla, sweet pumpkin etc. have gone up during last one month.

Any type of fish is dear. Now-a-days fish is being sold as an unit of one quarter (one fourth of a kg) as against kilogram. One quarter of puti, small shrimp, tengra, bele, nola, chapla and other small size is selling at Taka 25 to 30 as against Taka 10 to Taka 15.

Prices of eggs also risen in the markets per four eggs is now selling at Taka 12. It has Taka 8 a few days back, price of all types of pulses has gone up. One kilogram of musur, chhola, motor, mug and maskalai is selling at Taka 28, 26, 26, 30 and Taka 28 respectively. But these were selling at a lesser price of Taka 5 a few weeks back.

Price of poultry birds also risen in the markets. A kg of hen is selling at Taka 80 instead of Taka 60. One kg of meat is selling at Taka 100 to 120 as against Taka 85 to 90. Price of beef has also gone up at Taka 55 to 60 as against Taka 40 to 45 per kg.

Prices of all types of edible oil have risen sharply. One kilogram of soyabean is selling at Taka 52 to 54 as against Taka 46. Palm oil at Taka 44 as against Taka 38 and mustard oil at Taka 65 as against Taka 55 to 56 per kg.

Crisis of phone card

Phone card crisis has become acute in Jhenidah district causing much inconvenience to the subscribers.

Card phones were installed at Jhenidah, Saikuppa and Kaligonj a few months back. But the subscribers are suffering badly as sufficient cards are not being supplied to con-

cerned post office.

According to a source, one thousand one hundred fifty pieces of phone card each for 50 units and four hundred pieces each for 100 units were supplied to concerned post offices which is only 20 per cent of requirements.

An official of postal department told this correspondent that when they send a requisition for one thousand pieces, only 200 cards are replied.

The subscribers appealed authorities concerned to supply adequate number of phone cards to remove their sufferings at an early date.

Two commit suicide

Rezaul Islam (25) of village Adarshapara in the town committed suicide by taking pesticides recently.

Family dispute was the cause of his suicide, it was learnt. According to another report, Amena Khatun (17) of village Abaipur in Saikuppa thana of the district committed suicide by taking pesticides on the same day.

Separate unnatural death (UD) cases were filed with respective thanas.

BKB to disburse Tk 1.46 cr loan

UNB adds: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has undertaken a scheme to disburse Tk 1.46 crore loan among the farmers of the district for buying cattlehead in the current fiscal.

Of the total loan, Tk 42 lakh has been allotted for sadar, Tk 35 lakh for Shaikuppa, Tk 23 lakh for Harinakunda, Tk 21 lakh for Kaligonj, Tk 6 lakh for Kotchandpur and Tk 16 lakh for Moheshpur thanas.

The disbursement of the loan has already been started and will continue till June next.

Another message adds: Development work of 10 non-government colleges of Khulna Division at a cost of Tk 2.5 crore is progressing fast.

The Facilities Department of Education Ministry is implementing the programme. Of the colleges, two are in Jhenidah, 5 in Jessore, 2 in Magura and 1 in Narail districts.

Various problems grip Kushtia General Hospital

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 20: The Kushtia General Hospital has been operating with inadequate number of doctors, beds, equipment, staff greatly hindering the normal process of medical treatment facilities, according to the hospital sources.

The 100-bed hospital cannot cope with the rising number of patients due to inadequate number of beds. The existing number of beds can meet only 25 per cent requirement of the patients seeking admission.

Most cots and bedsheets have worn-out and are rarely replaced. It is alleged. A large number of patients both, male and female who come from remote areas of the district return without proper treatment for want of accommodation and medicines.

There is no ambulance for the hospital for quite a long time. Patients with serious ailments cannot be shifted to Rajshahi or Dhaka due to absence of ambulance. In emergency the people can live the ambulance belonging to Pourashava and other private clinics on payment of Taka 2500, it is learnt.

The only X-ray machine in the hospital remains out of order most of the time. Patients are advised to carry out X-ray operations from private clinics.

The water supply is very irregular. Most of the time the patients and staff of the hospital are to drink water from the hand tubewell. The drains by the hospital, floor and other places are not kept clean which can cause infection to the urinals are hardly cleaned. There is no separate ward for patients suffering from infectious diseases.

Office timings are not maintained it is observed. Doctors are allegedly available after 1.30 pm.

Some doctors of the hospital informed that medicines in the hospital is very scarce. Both the indoor and outdoor patients are provided with only prescriptions. The poor indoor patients have been suffering much as they are to purchase medicines from outside. Even the patients who are to undergo operation are to buy requisite materials from outside.

Surprisingly, there is no blood bank in the hospital and the patients are to arrange

blood from outside or bring them from Khulna or Jessore. The diet supplied to the patients is also said to be not up to the standard.

The concerned authorities have been urged to ensure full requirement to the patients.

Price like of building materials

Sudden price hike of construction materials like cement, rod, bricks, sand and C I Sheets as well as carrying cost has been hampering the construction work in the district.

The enhanced price of rod has attributed to the shortage of raw materials like scrap iron from Chittagong. Continuous load shedding has been causing work stoppages and as a result most of the re-rolling Mills are running without work for want of raw materials resulting in scarcity of materials in the market. Demand for this material has increased since development works have been begun in the district.

Similarly, prices of bricks have increased manifold as huge quantity of bricks were consumed in reconstruction work of Kushtia-Daulatdia road via Jhenidah which is nearing completion. Prices of cement have shot up abnormally due to shortage of the item and failure of TCB to meet the demand. Price of cement in Kushtia has shot up from Taka 175 to Taka 190 during last seven days. Carrying cost of materials have also increased for want of sufficient number of trucks.

At present a bag of cement is being sold at Tk 210 against Taka 195 while one kilogram of Rod has increased from Taka 15 to Taka 21. Similarly prices of bricks has gone up because of its heavy demand.

The rural people have also been suffering for high cost of C I sheets. A number of C I sheet manufacturing industries have been closed down as the owners of those Mills are absconding in connection with murder cases.

A bundle of C I sheet which was sold at Taka 1700 now cost Taka 1900 hampering construction of kutcha or semi pucca houses in villages.

Scarcity of fish

Acute scarcity of fish has been prevailing throughout the district for about last one month.

Number of TB patients on rise in Kishoreganj

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, May 20: The number of TB patients is increasing alarmingly in thirteen thanas of Kishoreganj district. The only TB clinic in the district is beset with enormous problems causing much sufferings to the increasing number of patients.

The clinic established in 1964 is extending treatment facilities to the patients. Over 23 lakh people of the district depend on the clinic for their medical treatment but the TB patients are deprived of proper treatment as the clinic lacks life saving drugs, blood bank, necessary instruments, ambulance, etc.

It is learnt from clinic source that normally ten to twenty patients visit the hospital everyday and every year 1800 to 2300 new TB patients are being admitted to the clinic. Who get outdoor treatment on fixed dates subject to prior appointment.

There are fifteen staff members including one medical officer and one junior consultant. The doctors are busy with private practice in their own chamber, it is alleged.

The X-ray machine of the clinic could not be done for want of films. Patients are advised to have X-ray from private clinics. The clinic has no ambulance to carry seriously ill patients for treatment. The hospital has no ward to treat patients suffering from TB and contagious diseases.

According to the sources, the overall environment of the clinic is not at all hygienic. Toilet and urinals remain dirty as they are not cleaned regularly. Offensive small comes out of the toilets, the clinics also facing the problems of water supply.

Besides, in absence of boundary wall a section of miscreants of the locality engage themselves in anti-social activities in the clinic compound after office hours. Moreover, cattlehead including goats move freely which are left by the neighbouring people for grazing in the clinic compound polluting atmosphere and creating health hazard to the patients.

Residential facilities are not provided to the staff. On the other hand the roots and the walls of the clinic are in dilapidated condition in the absence of timely repairing which has aggravated the situation. In the rainy season rain water leaks through the roof of the clinic. No steps have yet been taken to mitigate the sufferings.

Local people and leaders stressed the need for improving the environment of the clinic area.

Two get life-term for murder

Two persons were sentenced to life-term in two separate case in the first and second courts of additional session judges on the charge of killing their wives recently.

Abul Mansur, Additional Session Judge, first court, convicted one Kanchan Miah of village Ghagor in Katladi thana and sentenced him to life term. He was tried in absentia.

The prosecution story in brief was that Kanchan Miah took his wife Begum to a nearby field on the night of March 15 1991 and killed his wife with sharp weapons there, police recovered the body the following morning.

A case in this connection was filed with Katladi thana police after investigation submitted chargesheet against him.

In another judgement delivered by Ikedar Ahmed, Additional Session Judge second court one Abdul Barik of village Raghidabad in Kishoreganj sadar thana was convicted and sentenced to suffer imprisonment for life and also to pay a fine of Taka 5,000.

The case in brief was that in the morning of 20 December 1987 accused Abdul Barik stabbed his wife Melaka Khatun that caused her instantaneous death.

A case was registered with Kishoreganj police and they after investigation submitted charge-sheet against him.

Acute housing problem

Low paid employees of government and non-government

organisations, autonomous bodies and private establishments are sufferings from housing problem in Bajitpur pourashava town of Kishoreganj district.

Tenants said the monthly house rent for a house now varied from Taka 700 to 2000, excluding electricity bill and water charge while the owners realise the rent in advance exerting pressure on them.

Owners said they had to increase the house rent due to abnormal rise in prices of construction materials.

Fixed in come groups are unable to live in the pourashava town with families. They live in messes or rented rooms.

People are reluctant to construct houses due to huge financial involvement for price likes of construction materials and lands.

Primary schools face problems

A total of 310 non-government primary schools in 13 thanas of Kishoreganj district have been facing manifold problems hampering primary education.

According to the District Primary Education Office out of the total 206 schools registered and 104 unregistered. About 85,000 students have been studying in these schools. The thana wise breakup of the non-government schools are: 26 registered and 16 unregistered schools in Kishoreganj sadar, 13 registered and 10 unregistered schools in Karimganj, 20 registered and 17 unregistered schools in Pakundia, 17 registered and 10 unregistered schools in Hossainpur, 16 registered and 2 unregistered schools in Katladi, 15 registered and 10 unregistered schools in Bajitpur, 10 registered and 6 unregistered schools in Kuliarchar, 10 registered and 4 unregistered schools in Bhairab, 20 registered and 7 unregistered schools in Austagram, 18 registered and 14 unregistered schools in Nikli, 24 registered and 2 unregistered schools in Itna and 6 registered and 4 unregistered schools in Tarail thana.

Tk 11.66 cr spent for pry schools in Majdee Court

MAIJDEE COURT (Noakhali), May 20: Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) has spent more than Tk 11.66 crore for reconstruction and repair works of 278 primary schools in six thanas of the district in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Of the total, 71 are non-government registered primary schools and 13 rural primary schools and the rest 194 are government primary schools.

The LGED has also supplied furniture to 167 primary schools of the six thanas costing Tk 1,52,26,760.

The programme has been implemented under the scheme of Post-Cyclone Rehabilitation Programme. General Education Programme, Reconstruction of Non-Government Registered Primary School, Reconstruction of Rural Primary Schools at Low Cost through thana offices.

About 80 per cent of the work has already been completed and the rest is expected to be completed by the end of June next, officials added.

Workshop held

A two-day workshop on National Management Action Programme was held Charbar of sadar thana last week.

At least 51 participants belonging to different strata of the society including UP Chairmen, members, local government officials, teachers, journalists, farmers and handicraft workers took part in the workshop. They discussed the problems and suggestions about different environmental problems facing by them.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, United Nations Development Programme and Association of Development Activities the workshop was organised by Coalition of Environmental NGOs (CEN).

It was attended by ATM Salahuddin of Ministry of Forest and Environment, UNDP representative Dr Babar Kabir, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Environment Anwarul Islam.

Some resolutions were adopted to help preserve the environment and promote sustainable development in the area.

Record potato output!

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 20: Rehana Parveen wife of Abdul Latif of village Bairabari in Belkuchi thana has grown 575 maunds of cardinal variety of potato in one acre of land.

It is gathered from a source of thana Agricultural Extension Department (AED) that the grower has produced record quantity of potato in her farm. Each potato of cardinal variety weighs roughly 400 to 500 grams, it was learnt.

The same farm produced a bumper potato output for the third consecutive period.

10 dists of Khulna Div

People face acute shortage of water

KHULNA, May 20: About one crore people of ten districts under Khulna Division have been facing acute shortage of drinking water during the current dry season, reports UNB.

Most of the hand driven tubewells have been rendered inoperative due to sudden fall in ground water level.

Moreover, about 200 deep tubewells out of 2408 and 4,324 shallow tubewells out of 1,14,686 have gone out of order due to the same reason.

According to officials, the existing tubewells are not working properly due to adverse effect of Farakka barrage. As a result the people are suffering badly due to shortage of drinking water.

Most of the people are using contaminated pond and river water resulting in the outbreak of various intestinal and skin diseases.

According to the sources, the target of the government for sinking one STW for every 75 people and one DTW for every 150 people could not be achieved as yet.

7 held with arms

Police arrested seven people with arms from a passenger launch on Friday night.

Police following tip off raided the M L Munnai launch in Pankhali river under Dacope thana, rounded them up and recovered two pistols, some bullets, knife, binocular and torch-lights from their possession.

The arrested people are the inhabitants of Barisal and Jahalakhathi districts. A case was lodged with the police.

District roundup

PABNA

Flood in 30 villages

May 20: Flood waters have entered the 30 villages of char areas in Bera thana of the district inundating low lying areas, reports UNB.

According to district administration, continuous heavy downpour for the last three days and onrush of hillwaters the water level of Jamuna is on steady rise resulting in overflowing of its banks.

Weather office recorded 53 millimetre rainfall Wednesday.

The Deputy Commissioner's office sources said paddy on about 4000 acres of land went under the flood water in Dhalarchar, Khanpura, Raghunathpur, Puran Gharenga, Bijoygonj and Nayanpur area of the Bera thana.

About 100 kutcha houses were damaged and several hundred people remained stranded in the stagnant water, local people said.

CHUADANGA

Activist of outlawed party arrested

May 20: An activist of outlawed Purbabangla Communist Party was arrested by Damurhuda police from Ramnagar village of the district, reports UNB.

The arrested Baltu alias Abul Kalam Azad alias Mukul (31) of Kalabari village in Damurhuda thana was wanted in connection with various criminal cases.

Police also recovered one shutter gun and four rounds of 303 rifle bullets from his possession.

FARIDPUR

Young woman electrocuted

May 20: A young woman lost her life when she took an attempt to save her only son from being electrocuted in the town on Monday, police said, reports UNB.

According to family sources, a fencing grill of the house of the victim Shamsun Nahar (24), a resident of Habeli Gopalpur, became electrified as a live wire fell upon it during the Sunday's storm.

Suddenly her five-year old son came in contact with the electrified grill and cried out for help. His mother rushed to the spot and saved him. But the ill-fated mother who jumped on the grill to save her son could not save herself from electrocution.

Her husband A K M Fazlur Rahman, officer of a local bank was residing in the rented house for some months.

A case has been filed with the police.

HABIGANJ

Police recovers body

May 20: Police recovered a body from a beel at a village in Baniachong thana of the district last week, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Ziaul Haque (15) of Asua village in the thana.

Being informed Baniachong thana police rushed to the spot and recovered the dead body from Pacha Singa Beel at Asua village on Sunday.

Some unknown miscreants called Ziaul out from his home on Friday night and killed him with deadly weapons. Later they threw the dead body into the beel, police added.

The cause behind the murder is yet to be ascertained.

A case was filed with Baniachong police in this connection.

JAMALPUR

Taka 5,200 snatched

May 20: A gang of armed hoodlums swooped on village headmen and snatched Tk 5,200 when they were arbitrating an incident of robbery at Raghunathpur village in Sadar thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said an old man Alhaj Abed Ali (60) was injured in the attack and rushed to Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Villagers said the arbitration was called after some robbers were caught rehandled while fleeing from a residence at the village with cash and valuables.

During the arbitration some associates of the miscreants armed with lethal weapons raided the gathering and snatched the cash from Abed Ali who collected the amount to purchase cattle for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

A case has been filed with the Jamalpur court.

RAJSHAHI

BRDB disburses Tk 2.65 crore loan

May 20: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) under its rural cooperative project disbursed Tk 2.65 crore loan to the landless people during the last fiscal year, reports UNB.

The loan was disbursed among 12,722 members of different landless cooperative societies to help them run their self-employment projects like cattle and poultry farming and handicrafts.

This was disclosed at a meeting held at rural poor cooperative society office here on Wednesday.

Divisional Commissioner M Aminul Islam attended the meeting as chief guest.

The meeting underlined the need for formation of cooperative societies to involve the male and female landless people in the country's development process.

Meanwhile, 1,429 new and 3,219 old cooperative societies have been brought under BRDB raising its total members to 1,09,715.

RANGAMATI

Wild elephant kills two

May 20: A wild elephant trampled two people, including a minor, to death at Siberaga village in Gagachar union of Langadu thana on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Local people said the elephant entered the house of Atar Ali at about 7:30 pm and trampled to death his middle-aged wife and eight-month-old grandson while they were taking meals.

People of Gagachar, Gulshakali and Kala Pakujia unions of Langadu thana of the district are in constant fear due to frequent trouble caused by wild elephants. Some 10 people were killed by the elephants in last seven months.

They alleged that the Forest Department and the local administration did not take any measure to protect the people from the wild elephants.

BARGUNA

Number of pry school-going children decrease

May 20: The number of primary school-going children is decreasing in remote areas of the district as they are compelled to take up jobs to give financial support to their family, reports UNB.

According to a survey, a large number of children, between 8 and 12 age groups are engaged in different odd jobs to earn their livelihood instead of going to school.

As a result, primary schools of these areas are facing acute shortage of students and the problems are being intensified day by day.

The survey report said the parents of these children are marginal and landless farmers and have a large family of six or more members. Most of them cannot afford to meet the expenses of their family.

Finding no other alternative, the poverty stricken farmers prefer to engage their kids in various petty jobs like cattle grazing, rickshaw pulling and hotel boys at a poor remuneration.

Besides, during the harvesting season, a good number of labourers along with their kids migrate to other places in search of work.

MAGURA

Storm kills four

May 20: A violent storm pounded a bazar in Shalikhtha than Wednesday, killing four people and injuring some 50, reports UNB.

Officials and local people said the telephone exchange at Arpara Bazar collapsed under the lashes of the nor'wester that also damaged many shops and houses in the bazar and elsewhere in the district.

The casualties occurred in house collapse.

The dead were identified as Gmanendranth (35) of village Kulia, Nanigopal (40) and Akram Hossain (30) of village Turagachi and Rabiul Islam (32) of Kechundubi village.

Ten of the injured have been admitted to Magura Hospital while the rest 40 to Shalikhtha Hospital.

Of the 10 admitted to Magura Hospital, the condition of 3 — Alek Khan (65), Abdul Khaleque (70) and Hasina Begum (40) — was stated serious.

Power supply and telecommunication remained snapped following the storm. Several telephone poles broke down.

Damage to crops and houses was reported from rural areas.



SIRAJGANJ: Grower Rehana Parveen.

— Star photo

Women labours increasing in Kushtia

The unusual spurt of women labour force in the district in recent days has been causing concern among the social welfare activists, reports UNB.

According to social welfare and labour leaders thousands of female day labourers are seen husking paddy, working in the brickfields and taking part in earth digging.

Unmarried girls and divorcees constitute the majority of the women labour, they said adding opportunities for their work have been shrinking for various reasons.

Recurring floods, drought and other natural calamities in the last few years have been damaging crops in the district affecting small and marginal farmers adversely.

As a result, many families have been rendered destitute, they said.

Finding no other way out the distressed women under compelling circumstances are coming out from their homes in search of livelihood.

The leaders called upon the government to create job opportunities for poor women by extending soft credit facilities for small and cottage industries in order to make them self-reliant.

BSCIC estates in Rajshahi div

Industrial units face various problems

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, May 20: Most of the industrial units established in the BSCIC estates in Rajshahi division are facing various operational problems, reports UNB.

According to official sources of the total 2,236 plots in the BSCIC estates in the division, only 1244 plots were allotted and 519 industrial units got approval and construction of 368 units have been completed. Construction work on 56 plots is going on. The fate of the rest plots is uncertain.

The sources said of the total constructed industrial units, 268 units have gone into production, 11 units remained idle or sick and 89 units were closed down.

The number of closed industries are: 40 in Rajshahi, 18 in Pabna, 15 in Bogra, 10 in Rangpur and 6 in Dinajpur districts.

Entrepreneur sources said running of the industries has become very difficult due to shortage of working capital, frequent load-shedding, want of market facilities, communication problems, high production cost and lack of skilled labourers.

BSCIC, however, is considering to distribute the remain-

ing plots for poultry farms, animal husbandry and similar other projects, it is learnt.

Over 1.6 lakh acres of land have been brought under Barland Multi-purpose Development Programmes' irrigation network during the current fiscal.