

Night coach dacoity : 4 stabbed

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, May 24 : Four passengers were stabbed, two of them seriously, and valuable worth Taka one lakh was looted by armed dacoits in a Dhaka-bound night coach near Baro Bazar of Kaliganj thana in greater Jessore, on Jessore-Jhenidah Highway recently.

Stabbed Emdadul Haque and Abul Hossain were immediately removed to general hospital, Jessore, while the other two were released on first aid from a local clinic, said a source.

According to passengers, about twelve to fifteen people on board the night coach sprang up suddenly after crossing Churamonkathi Bazar. They lost no moment to ransack the coach and rob each passenger's cash and kind by replacing the driver to control steering and keeping all inmates including coach supervisor and conductor hostage at gun point.

They decamped safely with looted goods by stopping the coach at Baro Bazar close to police outpost allegedly in presence of police patrol party.

The source informed this correspondent that they were travelling with their fellow-passengers right from starting point.

The coach bearing number Dhaka metro-Cha-9055 of Dolphin Paribahan was coming to Dhaka from Benapole.

It will not be out of place to mention here that highway robbery in night coach on this route is chronic.

Mysteriously, police administration has failed to ensure security to passengers despite a number of measures taken so far.

Paucity of pure drinking water in Kurigram

From Our Correspondent
KURIGRAM, May 24 : Paucity of pure drinking water all over the district due to the drought has caused immense hardship to the people and different intestinal diseases have broken out in an epidemic form in different thanas in the district.

About 70 to 80 per cent of the tubewells which are the only source of pure drinking water in the rural areas have become inoperative following abnormal fall in the sub-soil water level due to mechanised irrigation through deep and shallow tubewells in IRR-boro fields.

The tubewells which are still operative pump out very little water. People has to fetch drinking water from far-flung areas where deep or shallow tubewells are available.

The scarcity of pure drinking water has caused spread of different intestinal diseases in the affected areas.

According to the health department sources 1200 people were attacked with diarrhoea and dysentery during the last three and a half months from January.

The affected thanas were Fulbari, Ulipur, Bhurungamari, Chilmari, Rowmari, Rajibpur, Nageswari and Rajarhat. One of the other causes of the spread of intestinal diseases was consumption of sweet potato, bangi, etc following the price spiral of foodgrains.

Hats, bazars in pitiable condition in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent
GOPALGANJ, May 24: The hats and bazars in almost all the thanas of Gopalganj district are in pitiable condition, causing immense sufferings to the people for quite a long time.

Lack of proper maintenance and negligence by the authorities concerned is the main reason behind it. It is alleged.

Most of the markets were established at local initiatives but these have not been expanded proportionately with the growing population.

Filth and garbage are piled up hither and thither that emit bad odour threatening public health. Absence of pure drinking water facilities in the markets is another problem, they added.

Shopping of different commodities on the adjacent roads and lanes is a regular feature. Congested places for selling fish, vegetables and other commodities and extortion of tolls by *jaradars* have multiplied the difficulties of both sellers and buyers, local people said. They urged the authorities to redress people's suffering immediately.

The practice of private tuition on commercial basis is hampering the mental development of the students in the district and thana headquarters.



SYLHET: The Sylhet District Shishu Academy arranged a drawing competition for the children recently. — Star photo

Tk 9.08 cr bridge to be built at Shahjadpur Ghat

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 24 : A 977 feet (297.86 meter) long and 7.32 meter wide bailey bridge will be constructed on the river Karotoa at Shahjadpur thana ghat at an estimated cost of Tk 9.08 crore. The foundation stone of the bridge was laid by Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed, Communications Minister recently.

The bridge with eight spans and nine pillars will also be supported by 600 meter road linking the thanas of Sirajganj sadar, Belkuchi and Chowhalli. The Communications Minister told that the bridge will be called "Hazrat Shah Makhdoom Habibullah Karotoa Bridge" as per demand of the local people.

While contacted, Taher Ahmed, Additional Chief Engineer of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) told the newsmen that primary works of construction including call of tenders have been completed and construction work is expected to be completed within next three years.

Minor boy killed

Abdus Sattar (14) of village Char Gopalpur in Belkuchi thana was killed recently.

The victim while sleeping in the shallow machine room was slaughtered to death as a sequel to past enmity.

A case is lodged with Belkuchi police and the dead body is sent to sadar hospital for autopsy.

Eight trucks were looted and two persons were injured in a daring dacoity at Pachila in

Ullapara thana on Nagarbari-Bogra highway.

A group of 15/20 dacoits put barricade and looted valuable worth Tk five lakh from the trucks. Two persons including a driver were injured during resistance. A case is lodged with Ullapara police in this connection.

One commits suicide

An unidentified woman (38) of village Doulatpur in Belkuchi thana died by taking poison. Some people brought the woman at the hospital and fled

Bus journey hazardous in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 24 : Bus journey in different routes from Sirajganj have turned hazardous causing sufferings to the passengers.

Every day, thousands of passengers travel by bus from Sirajganj terminal. The buses for long routes are, however, well. But the buses for Sirajganj-Pabna and Sirajganj-Bogra routes possess not the minimum facilities for the passengers. The condition of vehicles running in thana level routes is beyond description.

Overloading in Sirajganj-Pabna and Sirajganj-Bogra routes is a regular feature.

The vehicles running in Sirajganj-Kamarkhanda-Belkuchi routes have no fitness certificates.

Belkuchi police lodged a case and sent the body to sadar hospital for autopsy.

The 125th founding anniversary of Sirajganj Municipality was observed through a three-week programme. The concluding session was to be attended by Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives. The 21-day long programme include discussion meeting, village fair, cultural function and publication of souvenir.

Sharp rise of water in Jamuna

Following heavy downpour for the last few days, water level of Jamuna and the tributaries marked a sharp rise. Due to onrush of water from upstream, crops including paddy saplings on about 10,000 acres of land in the charlands have been submerged.

The Jamuna has turned furious threatening erosion in five riverbed thanas of Sirajganj district.

Collision of boats in Jamuna

Two shallow driven country boats collided head-on in Jamuna on Enayetpur-Chowhalli river route causing injury to 20 persons including three women.

The boats from opposite direction collided near Muradpur. The injured persons were rescued by local people and four seriously injured persons were admitted to Chowhalli health complex.

Number of drug addicts on rise in Jhenaidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, May 24 : Number of drug and liquor addicts are on increase in Jhenaidah district.

According to reports, five persons died and two others

Smuggled goods worth Tk 5 lakh seized

From Our Correspondent
SYLHET, May 24: Smuggled goods worth about Tk 5 lakh were seized by the BDR personnel from village Hamara under Companyganj thana yesterday.

On a tip off, a patrol party of BDR raided a house in the village and seized the goods including 490 pieces of sarees, 20 kilograms of ganja, 86 bottles of wine, bidis, safety matches, betel nuts, cosmetics and jungs.

Akhas Ali of village Udapur under Chhatrak thana was also held during the raid.

A case was registered in this connection while the seized goods had been handed over to the Customs Department.

23 injured by lightning in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, May 24: Thirteen persons including five female were injured, three of them seriously by lightning in two places Sunday evening in Jhenidah.

According to reports, Brickfield labourers, Jamiruddin, 45, Alauddin, 32 and Shahida Begum, 25 were injured by lightning while they were working

feil seriously ill after taking spurious liquor namely "rectified spirit" at Kaliganj town in the district recently.

Eye witnesses and local people said Indrajit Biswas (50), Nasir Hossain (50), Nasir driver (51), Gobinda driver (40), Shukur Ali (42), Narayan Chandra (40), Lulu (42) and Ishaque and some unknown liquor addicts allegedly purchased rectified spirit from a local homeopathic shop on the night of May 2. After drinking the spurious liquor Indrajit, Nasir and Nasir driver died. Gobinda driver and Shukur Ali died the next day on May 3. Affected Narayan, Lulu and Ishaque are undergoing treatment.

District civil surgeon's office at Jhenidah said that they did not receive any news of death following liquor reaction.

Later a case was filed with Kaliganj thana but the alleged spirit seller Ashraf Ali has not been arrested so far.

It may be noted here that about 105 homeopathic medicine sellers are involved in selling rectified spirit which is mainly used as alcohol in different areas of the district.

It is also alleged that most of these homeo medicine sellers have no proper licence to run their business. They are running the same with the help of local officials.

According to statistics, there are 20 homeopathic shops at Jhenidah town and suburbs, 25 in Sallakupa thana, 10 in Harinakunda thana, 25 in Kaliganj thana, 15 in Kutchandpur thana and 10 in different areas of Moheshpur thana.

heshpur last month.

According to reports, BDR personnel from Kusumpur, Bagdaaga, Shyamkur and other border areas seized Indian jute seeds, Gamaxin powder, radio, TV spares, saree, blouse pieces and other goods worth Taka about 10 lakh. Separate cases were lodged with respective thanas, it is learnt.

Over Tk 1 lakh Electricity bills unpaid in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, May 24: Electricity bills amounting to Taka over one lakh have remained unpaid to Natore Pally Biddut Samity — (NPBS-I).

It is learnt that mainly some consumers in irrigation sector and the government officials are defaulters.

Sources explained that irrigation consumers are the deep tubewells, shallow tubewells and low-lift-pump users.

Concerned sources said, the average system loss of the samity was recorded at 15.69 per cent in February, '94.

The samity authority has submitted electricity bills of about Taka 1.50 lakh to its total of 23,679 consumers at Shingra, Bagatipara and sadar thanas of Natore and Puthia and Bagmara thanas of Rajshahi district.

Since the beginning the samity has electrified about 1287.72 kilometres of lines and covered 452 villages of a total of 1358 villages in five thanas under Natore and Rajshahi districts.

Bar on use of current nets defied Production of hilsha fish declines

From Our Correspondent

MADARIPUR, May 24: Production of hilsha fish is rapidly declining due to extensive lifting of spawning fish by current nets despite government ban.

Sources here said siltation of Padma, Meghna, Arial Khan, Kumar and Kirtinasha was also hampering hilsha production.

The hilsha fish move upstream to the rivers from the deep sea during their spawning period in the months of September and October when these are caught by fishermen.

Local people alleged that *jhitka* and egg-bearing fish were usually caught by current nets in Shibchar, Chandpur, Munshiganj of Padma and in the estuary which are known as hilsha sanctuaries.

They said about 1,000 tons of 8/10 cm fish were caught from the areas last year.

About five lakh fishermen are engaged in catching hilsha from Chandpur, Barisal, Teknaf and Mongla coastal areas daily, the sources added.

An official of Hilsha Development and Management Project here said catching of hilsha should be banned for the period between September 15 and October 15.

Wooden bridges need repair

Wooden bridges at Jhaodi union in sadar thana of the district, which were damaged since long, still remain unrepaired.

Of the bridges, 4 are on Kulapaddi Maktumbari to Madra Road, 5 on Madra-Tuvia road and 3 on Saiderbali-Tuvia road.

People of Jhaodi and adjacent areas of the thana are facing troubles to come to district headquarters by these dilapidated roads via Jhaodi.

Local leaders have urged

the authorities to take steps for repairing of the bridges immediately.

Number of quacks on rise

Quacks and unlicensed medical practitioners are thriving in the district on the ignorance of the poor people in the rural areas.

According to social workers educated young men having failed to get jobs are resorting to medical practice to earn their livelihood.

Very few of them have basic training on health care. They are not only deceiving the people but also creating grave health problems by prescribing wrong medicine.

Poor people, mainly landless and day labourers who can hardly afford treatment at hospitals and cannot travel to the thana headquarters, are the victims of these unscrupulous quacks.

Kutchra latrines are posing a great threat to public health in Kalkini thana of the district.

Almost all the inhabitants of this thana use kutchra latrines. Even at the thana headquarters people show an apathy towards sanitary or sealed latrines.

Thousands of kutchra latrines have been set up by the side of the rivers, canals and even ponds in rural areas which help outbreak of diarrhoeal diseases.

The thana public health engineering department sources said they had adequate stock of rings and other necessary materials for sanitary latrines but people were the least interested in taking supply of them.

It is alleged that the health department did not initiate any motivation programme to create public awareness about the hazards of kutchra latrines.

Bamboo production declines in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, May 24: Bamboo production is declining very fast due to lack of proper maintenance, nursing of bamboo clusters and absence of planned plantation programme.

Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts were once very famous for bamboo production. There were thousands of clusters on vast tracts land of the district but now they are vanished.

As such scarcity of bamboo has been prevailing in these areas and consequently prices of bamboo have increased several times.

On the other hand, no efforts is being taken to save the bamboo clusters from decaying in these areas.

The owners of the clusters are indifferent to proper production method. The bamboos are lifted at random and sold in the markets. Tender bamboo plants are not left for future growth.

Production of bamboo is not increasing according to the

growing demands of the people. This has also created an adverse affect on the day labourers and bamboo based cottage industry.

Repair and construction works of kutchra houses in the rural areas are being hampered badly for want of bamboo and traditional cottage industry depending on bamboos is also facing extinction.

It may be stated that, 90 per cent of the houses in the rural areas are kutchra and bamboo is basically used for the construction of these houses. The price of a bamboo is now between Taka 50 and 70. As a result, 70 per cent of the villagers are unable to buy it at an exorbitant price.

The sufferings of those who depend on bamboo based industry for their livelihood beggar description. Many of them are sitting idle for want of work while others have been compelled to leave the profession because of poor return from their products.



COMILLA: Newly-elected office-bearers of Comilla Apex Club seen in the picture. On the occasion of the 22nd founding anniversary of the club a public reception was organised by the club recently. District Judge Sahul Hossain was present as chief guest and Chairman, Comilla Municipality as special guest. Advocate Eaqub Ali was in the chair.

Hartal, strike hamper production: Hafiz

MIRZAPUR, May 24: Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mirza Golam Hafiz offered his Eid prayers at the Eidgah Maidan of Mirzapur under Atoari thana in Panchagarh district, reports BSS.

After Eid prayers, the minister addressed the devotees and prayed to Almighty Allah for peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

He underlined the need for greater unity of the Muslim countries of the world to check the torture and oppression on Bosnian Muslims.

The minister said sacrifice in the mundane life and coming to the aid of human beings are the imperatives for men to come close to the Almighty Allah.

Later, the minister exchanged Eid-greetings with the people at Mirzapur. He said hartal and strike had hampered production in

our industrial sector. He said these had resulted in low productivity of the industries, and also slowed industrial growth.

The minister was addressing as the chief guest a reception arranged by Collective Bargaining Agents (CBA) of Panchagarh Sugar Mills at the mills premises. Presided over by CBA president Abul Bashar, the reception was addressed by local political leaders.

The minister stressed the need for stopping of hartals and strikes for the industrialisation of the country. In reply to a demand for the privatisation of the Panchagarh-Sugar Mills, the minister assured the CBA leader that he would discuss with the concerned authorities about it. He called upon the workers and employees of the mill to work hard to make the mill a profitable one.

District roundup

JAMALPUR
650 tonnes of wheat seeds produced.

May 24 : Some 650 metric tons high yielding variety wheat seeds and 625 metric tons paddy seeds have been produced in contract growers zone of BADC of Jamalpur district during the current season, reports UNB.

According to official sources, with these seeds at least 10,666 acres of land will be brought under wheat and about 20,000 acres of land under paddy cultivation during the next season.

The sources also said some 1,266 contract farmers in seven blocks have been producing the seeds every year during the monsoon.

Later, the produced seeds are distributed in different parts of the country through Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC), the sources added.

The residence of the town have long been facing myriad problems due to absence of many civic amenities in the town.

Local elite alleged that town life has become insufferable due to lack of proper drainage system, shortage of housing facilities, sanitation, mosquito menace, frequent power disruption, inadequate street lights and recreational facilities.

The municipal authorities have even failed to ensure minimum civic amenities although the population of the town increase manifold, they further alleged.

Most of the town roads are too narrow for smooth traffic and pathholes in many become muddy and slippery during rainfall. The stagnant rain water on the road also causes difficulties to pedestrians and movement of vehicles.

Meanwhile, the roadside ditches have turned into dumping places for garbage and filth making them as ideal mosquito breeding centres.

On the other hand, anti-social activities are increasing day by day due to lack of street lights in many areas of the town which plunge into darkness soon after the sunset.

Housing facilities were also said to be inadequate in proportion to population growth in the municipality. Moreover, its conservancy service is not satisfactory. There is no public latrine in the roads and the arrangement to clean the roads and garbage are insufficient.

They urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and take immediate steps to mitigate their sufferings.

MADARIPUR
74 transformers stolen

May 24: Rampant theft of transformers and electric wires of Pally Biddut Samity has been hampering irrigation, production in factories and household works, reports UNB.

According to samity officials, some 74 transformers worth about Tk six lakh and 40,000 metre wires worth about Tk five lakh were stolen since its establishment ten years back at Mostafapur in sadar thana.

During the current fiscal, 18 transformers in Mostafapur, Ghotakpur, Kendua, Bajitpur, Badarpasha, Amgram and Khaila areas of the district were stolen. Meanwhile, the system loss stands here at about 15.13 per cent.

On the other hand, so far one man was arrested in connection with transformer and wire theft, although 49 cases were lodged separately in four thanas. But later the arrested man was set free for unknown reasons, the sources added.

The samity expanded 970 km line network in 217 villages of four thanas during the last 10 years where some 18,000 families are enjoying electricity facility.

MANIKGANJ
I killed, 29 hurt in road mishaps

May 24 : A man was killed and 29 others were injured, nine seriously, in two accidents on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Sibalaya thana of the district Friday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said an unidentified man was killed and 25 persons were injured when a Dhaka bound minibus coming from Aricha tumbled into a 30-feet ditch near Borongail bus stand this afternoon while trying to give side to a truck.

In another accident, four people were seriously injured when their Aricha bound truck fell into a roadside ditch near Falatiar of Sibalaya thana in the morning.

They were admitted to sadar hospital.

JHENIDAH
Ex-UP chairman killed

May 24 : A former Union Parishad chairman was allegedly killed by his opponents at a village in Harinakunda thana Friday over previous enmity, villagers said, reports UNB.

Azuddin (60) was attacked by a group of miscreants with spears at Padmanagar village at about 2 pm when he was going to a local market. He died instantaneously.

The former UP chairman was acquitted on Thursday in a case filed by his opponent Bisarad.

On hearing the death news supporters of Azuddin clashed with those of Bisarad, leaving two people injured.

Rojdar (30), a supporter of Azuddin, was admitted to sadar hospital in a critical condition while Abdul Latif (40) of their rival group was released after receiving first aid.

A case was filed with the Harinakunda thana.

PANCHAGARH
Opposition urged to join JS budget session

May 24 : Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mirza Golam Hafiz said every problem of the country could be solved in the parliament, reports BSS.

He urged the members of the opposition to join and contribute in the next budget session of the parliament.

Addressing a public meeting at the local thana parishad campus, he said hartal and continuous boycotting of parliament would only bring suffering of the people.

He said government of the BNP believes in deeds, not in hollow words. The government is giving more emphasis on the development of communications system, he added.

The Law Minister said, construction works of a bridge over the river Karotoa at Deviganj will begin very soon with the assistance of the Chinese government to fulfil the long-cherished dream of the local people.

JESSORE

Old woman killed in road mishap

May 24: An old man was killed in a road accident on the Jessore-Benapole highway, reports UNB.

Witnesses said that the accident occurred when a Benapole bound minibus hit the 90-year old Abed Ali Mondol near Navaron godown on the Jessore-Benapole highway at 6:30 am.

Mondol who hails from village Kazirber in Sharsha thana, died on the spot while he was walking beside the road.

The driver of the minibus, however, managed to flee along with his vehicle immediately after the accident.

BDR, BSF hold flag meeting

LALMONIRHAT, May 24: A flag meeting between Bangladesh and India was held at the Burmari frontier Thursday to defuse border tension caused by trespasses, reports UNB.

Officials said Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at the border talks agreed on peaceful co-existence of the BSF and the BDR at the border points and not to violate each other's territory and airspace.

Tension mounted in Burmari land port areas recently following violation of airspace and intrusion of the Indian BSF into Bangladesh.

An eight-member Indian team was led by DIG of Kuchbhar district S S Kutial while Sector Commander of BDR Rangpur zone Col Lentu Kamal led a six-member Bangladesh team at the meeting.

Indian airforce fighter planes twice flew into Bangladesh airspace May 9 night, creating panic among the local people and construction workers of a Burmari frontier project.

Earlier also, Indian fighters had violated Bangladesh airspace twice and BSF fortified its strength along the border, apparently to obstruct work on the Loop Channel Project undertaken to project the land port from erosion by river Dharla, country's only transit route for the import of goods from neighbouring Nepal and Bhutan.