

## Two get 7-year RI for snatching in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, Oct 5: Two people were awarded seven years rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more, for snatching away money from a man, reports UNB.

According to prosecution story, Hemayet and Sarwar of Kadamtala village in sadar thana of the district snatched away cash from the possession of Komol Krishna of local Grameen Bank. While fleeing with the money by exploding bombs the snatchers were caught red handed by the villagers on July 21, 1993.

A case was started and police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against them. Special Tribunal Judge Mujibur Rahman after examining the witnesses and records found Hemayet and Sarwar guilty and awarded the punishment last week.

## Faridpur Lions Club's 19th installation ceremony held

FARIDPUR, Oct 5: Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Hossain said here that the present government is ready to extend all cooperation and support to private medicare entrepreneurs to ensure better health services in the country, reports BSS.

The minister was speaking on Friday at the 19th installation ceremony of the Faridpur Lions Club at Kabi Jasimuddin Hall here.

The minister in his speech invited the private entrepreneurs to come forward and set up health care establishments because the existing facilities provided by the government are not adequate to meet the needs of teeming millions.

To a proposal placed by a lions officer-bearer of Dhaka for setting up a kidney research institute in the country the minister assured all possible help and cooperation for the project.

The function was also addressed by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum. Among others, deputy commissioner of Faridpur spoke in the function.

President Shahjada Mia, secretary Yunus Mia along with other office-bearers of Faridpur Lions Club were administered oath for the year 1994-95.

The function was presided by outgoing president Shahjahan Molla in the first session while the second session was presided by newly-elected president.

## Pedestrian crushed under wheels

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 5: A pedestrian was killed in a bus accident on Sunday morning when a Narayanganj bound bus ran over him near number two Dhakeswari bus stand in Siddhirganj thana, reports UNB.

Police said, Firoj Miah, a clerk of Port Education office was standing beside the road when he met the accident. The driver, after the incident, managed to leave the spot with the bus.

After the news of Firoj Miah's death spread, students have started ransacking some buses and pelting stones to police.

Police also threw tear gas to the angry students to control the situation. As a result, 12 people were injured.

During the clash, the road communication between Narayanganj and Adamjee was brought to a halt for two hours from 10:30 am to 12:30 am.

A case has been registered with the police.

## Resolutions adopted to face drought in Gaibandha

GAIBANDHA, Oct 5: District Coordination Committee headed by the Deputy Commissioner has adopted a number of resolutions at a meeting on Thursday to face the prevailing drought situation in the district, reports UNB.

Official sources said the committee initiated various schemes to provide jobs for landless workers and hoped to bring the situation under control.

Meanwhile, fertilizer crisis has turned acute in the district. The farmers alleged that a section of dishonest traders have enhanced the prices of fertilizers taking advantage of irregular supply.

They urged the government to ensure fair supply of fertilizer and take steps to check the price hike.



NOAKHALI: The International Elderly Day '94 was observed in Noakhali as elsewhere in the country. A colourful rally, led by the Deputy Commissioner Noakhali Md Mohsiur Rahman, was brought out in the town recently marking the day. —Star photo

## Crippling economy in Jamalpur Miseries of farmers, fishermen continue to increase

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Oct 5: The economy of Jamalpur district is being crippled due to poor production of crops for the last few consecutive years as well as lack of industrialisation and poor employment opportunities.

The paucity of seeds, fertilizer, irrigation facilities, and persistent drought contributed to the fall of production. The marginal farmers, who constitute about 85 per cent of population here could not cultivate their land properly for want of agri inputs including bank loan.

The total population of the district is about 18 lakh. Only five per cent are engaged in business and services while 85 per cent dependent on agri culture.

A recent survey reveals that over 65 per cent of village people live below the poverty line and are compelled to sell out their produce in advance to the local money lenders just to maintain their livelihood for a price much below the mar-

ket rate, usually Tk 80 to 100 per maund.

Taking advantage of the situation, the local money lenders are doing a brisk business by giving loans on high rate of interest.

The source said a large number of landless people who lost their work as agricultural labourers are passing days half-idle or sometimes unfed.

They are forced to sell their animals and utensils for mere survival. It is learnt that the price of bullocks has drastically fallen and about 50 per cent of the poor farmers have already sold their animals.

The condition of the sugarcane growers is even worse as they have incurred heavy losses this year due to lack of marketing facilities. About 50 per cent of sugarcane produced in the district were wasted.

People in different char areas of Jamalpur district earn their livelihood by selling sweet potato but the farmers are facing problems due to poor production at lower

price. Sweet potato is sold between Taka 70 and 100 per maund.

A large number of fishermen were left unemployed following sharp decline in fish production.

Most of the beels and rivers have silted up causing havoc to pisciculture.

To help solve the unemployment problems a huge quantity of rice and wheat has been sanctioned against uplift project under the Food for Work Programme.

But gross irregularities and misappropriation are alleged. The villagers are selling their poultry birds and other properties to meet their daily necessities. The price of land has fallen for want of buyers.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation earlier was the sole distributors of irrigation equipment.

At present, there is no control over the quality of the equipment for which low quality equipment have flooded the markets.

## Confce of SCEMR,B in Faridpur

## Call for providing education facilities to mentally retarded

FARIDPUR, Oct 5: The first regional conference of the Society for the Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMR,B) held here on Friday called for providing education facilities to the mentally retarded as part of government strategy to achieve universal education for all citizens by the year 2000, reports BSS.

The conference presided over by Alhaj Firozuzar Rahman, president of Faridpur SCEMR,B was attended by 21 representatives from SCEMR,B branches in Khulna, Bagerhat, Kushtia, Bhola, Barisal, Jessore and Faridpur.

The conference was inaugurated at the local 'Asha School Bhawan' here by the Deputy Commissioner K M Nurul Huda as chief guest who in his speech hoped that the conference would help in creating mass awareness among the people and contribute to the welfare of the mentally retarded. Among others, the inaugural session was also addressed as special guests by DP Barua, president of SCEMR,B, Dr Gyasuddin Molla, secretary general, SCEMR,B and Mosharraf Hussain, member of parliament.

Eighteen participants in the main working session lasting for nearly three hours under

the chairmanship of D P Barua, emphasised the rights of the mentally retarded for special education.

Ahmed Jamal, joint secretary of SCEMR,B, Faridpur branch presented the key-note paper on the problems in this field and suggestions for their education and training.

Speakers called for adequate support from the government for incorporating the rights of the mentally retarded in the programme for universal education for all, legislation in the Jatiya Sangshad to protect and promote the rights of the disabled including the mentally retarded, survey for identification of these disadvantaged group throughout the country, formulation of a special curriculum based on the mental retardation of each individual and creation of mass awareness.

In his presidential speech, DP Barua said that the rights of mentally retarded in the families and the society in all fields were being highlighted in the context of UN-Sponsored International Year of the family, 1994. He said, a national policy for the disabled including the mentally retarded is being formulated by the Social Welfare Ministry of the government with the participation of NGO's working in this field to ensure their rights in vari-

ous fields.

Barua said, the government strategy of education for all, has in principle, accepted the rights of the large number of disabled including the mentally retarded in the plan for universal education. He said the SCEMR,B as the national interest organisation shall have to take responsibilities to work as a pressure group for realising the rights of the mentally retarded.

Discussions in the workshop included Mosharraf Hussain, MP, Mansurul Alam, secretary, Barisal branch, Dr Abdul Mannan, secretary, Bhola branch, Meer Shawkat Ali, secretary, Bagerhat branch, Masuda Begum, principal of Asha School of Faridpur, Prof Nargis Begum, secretary of Jessore branch, Mohammad Shahjahan, treasurer, Faridpur branch, Tawhidur Rahman, Treasurer of Jessore branch, Asma Akhter, teacher from Kushtia, Professor Nurul Islam, treasurer of Khulna branch, secretary general Dr Gyasuddin Molla, first joint secretary general, CDR (Rtd) A J M Hamed Hossain, organising secretary Sajida Kabir, NEC members, M A Shafi Majumdar, Shahara Banu Salam, M Faizullah and Mazharul Karim.



SYLHET: A 13-member plastic surgery team from UK is now on a 12 day visit in Sylhet. The surgeons of the team are seen with some of the patients at Nurjahan Poly Clinic recently. —Star photo

# They deserve the challenges

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 5: A tale of a number of distressed women who changed their lot from the abyss of poverty and frustration.

Amina, Shabana Khatun, Gita Rani, Puspita Rani, Chapala Rani and few others look for a better life.

Amina Khatun, 39, a widow of village Kusobaria in Saikupa thana of the district was passing days in extreme hardship. Finding no other alternative, she took loan from the Grameen Samaj Kendra, an NGO. She borrowed Taka one thousand making Chira and Muri, traditional, light food. She sells 25 to 30 kilograms of chira or muri on an average earning about Tk 70 a day.

Shabana Khatun, 33, another poor fellow of Amina of village Nagrat in Saikupa thana. She is mother of a son and a daughter. She also took loan of Taka one thousand from the same organisation. She earns between Taka 30 and 35 everyday husking paddy.

Shabana said, she suffered a lot as her husband deserted

her. However, she did not give up. She is now self-reliant.

Gita Rani Misty, 31, a housewife changed her fate by making chira and muri. She too had taken loan from the Grameen Samaj Kendra. Now she is the second earning member of the family and can help her family with a contribution of about Taka 30 to 35 a day.

Puspita Rani Das, 40, of Saikupa leads a happy life with her husband Narayan Das and four children. One of her sons passed this year's SSC examinations.

Puspita said, "there was no peace in the family. They had to starve at times."

About three months ago she too took a loan of Taka one thousand from the same NGO. She earns Taka 70 to 75 a day. She along with her husband now make different types of handicraft items with cane and bamboo.

Chapala Rani Das, 35, also earns out of making handicraft goods. She said that for fund crisis she was out of employ-

ment. Her husband, Haran Chandra, Das a bamboo, or cone-based cottage industry labourer, was also jobless. They took loan from the NGO a few months ago investing the amount to purchase bamboo and cane. They now about earn about Taka 70 a day. Their children can now go to school regularly.

Taking to The Daily Star, one of the directors of the Grameen Samaj Kendra in Dhaka explained to this correspondent that to remove poverty, illiteracy and some other evils, the organisation is doing everything possible within its limited resources to help.

Saikupa unit has 142 centres in 135 villages in eight unions out of 15 union parishads including Saikupa Pourasabha. Two more centres, will be opened soon the director informed.

According to the official sources, the NGO so far distributed Tk. 6,88,500 among 658 members as loan which will be recovered with 20 per cent interest in 50 weekly in-

stalments. The Kendra gives 10 per cent interest on savings deposited with the 13 account, throughout the village. The loan recovery rate is satisfactory, official sources said.

The members of the organisation from the very beginning of the unit here accepted tubectomy as a method of sterilization. So far, 50 members of the Kendra have received the tubectomy. The Kendra has also made temporary family planning method popular among the members through group discussions.

All the members of the Kendra here can sign the Kendra has three open night schools and a day school too for women.

The Grameen Samaj Kendra members have established a fruit and vegetable nursery it was learnt.

The source said that the Kendra is also extending loans for establishing small poultry and dairy farms. When contacted, some members alleged that a few organisations in the name of God claim that all the NGOs have been doing anti-religious activities.

## Road mishap claims two in Savar

SAVAR, Oct 5: Two people were killed and 15 persons injured when two trucks collided head-on on the Dhaka-Archana highway near Jahangirnagar University early on Monday, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Makrum, 60, a businessman of Hargar village in Sattura thana of Manikganj district, and a truck helper.

Eight of the injured were admitted to Savar Health Complex and seven others of Ganoshasthya Kendra.

Police said an Archana-bound truck from Dhaka collided with another loaded truck at 4 am.

Bodies were sent to the Dhaka medical College Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Savar thana.

## A donation with a difference

SYLHET, Oct 5: A retired officer of village Shilghat under Golapganj thana of Sylhet district Ahmed Chowdhury recently donated a pucca building and a piece of land measuring half a bigha for the 'Osia Khatun Mass Education and Rural Community Centre' in his own village, says a BSS report.

Speaking on the occasion Chowdhury said, he was inspired by the programmes pursued by the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, for rural mass education which was earlier initiated by late president Ziaur Rahman.

While handing over the land and the building to the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Golapganj he said, the programmes adopted by late President Ziaur Rahman, now being pursued by the Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, are making positive contribution to develop opportunities for rural mass education.

He urged the affluent section of the society to come forward to make the government's mass education drive a success.

## Valuables worth Tk 6 lakh looted

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 5: At least 21 people were injured, five seriously, when a gang of armed pirates attacked a Sirajganj ghat bound passenger boat coming from Jagannathan-ganj ghat on Saturday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the dacoits numbering 15-16 raided the boat, beat the passengers indiscriminately and looted goods and cash worth about Tk 6 lakh.

The robbers boarding an engine boat attacked the passenger boat at around 3:30 pm when the boat was passing through Char Chundni of Kalihati thana in Tangail district.

Of the seriously injured, two were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital and three others to Sirajganj Community Hospital.

## Two get life term for murder in Brahmanbaria

BRAHMANBARIA, Oct 5: Two people were awarded life term and fined Tk 6000 each or in default to suffer six months RI, for killing an old woman at Sarail in the district, reports UNB.

District and Sessions Judge Md Furkanullah handed down the verdict last Thursday on accused Abdul Aziz and Farid Ali of Sidderswari village.

## More youths taking drugs in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 5: The number of heroin and other drug addicts including those engaged in illegal drug-trafficking have increased beyond all limits throughout the district.

So far, according to an unofficial estimate, over 100 young men died due to drug-addiction specially heroin-addiction during last ten years in Pabna district and most of them are reportedly from Pabna town.

Although this district has no border with India, it is widely alleged that from the neighbouring border districts of Rajshahi and Kushtia, smugglers supply heroin to selected places in Ishurdi and Pabna town. It is further alleged, that the law enforcing agencies are helping the smugglers. Police, however, arrested a number of people involved in smuggling and detained them. But the bulk of the addicts and the 'big bosses' are never found to have been arrested. In fact, such

'big bosses' have allegedly been able to build secret empires of their own.

Heroin addiction are found among both, male, and female students, unemployed youths and bus-truck drivers. But the percentage of addicts is high among youths.

The smugglers are reportedly active in Ishurdi, Paksey, Dasuria, Tebunia, Mooladute, Atakula, Bongram, Santhia,

## 71 affected with diarrhoea in Chapainawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 5: A young boy died of diarrhoea while 71 people, mostly children, were affected by the water-borne disease in the district on Thursday and Friday, reports UNB.

Based, 6, of Anupnagar village in Sadar thana died on Thursday.

Kashinathpur, Bera, Chatmohar and Faridpur.

In Pabna town, Radhanagar, Krishnapur, bus stand area, Edward College and Bulbul College campus, Dilapur, Gopalpur, Shalgaria, Kalachandpur, Raghobpur, Dakshin Raghobpur, Hemayetpur, Arifpur, telegram office area, BRTC terminal area, Beltala Road area, Gore Bangla area and Mohila College area have turned into safest dens for heroin and other drug addicts.

The situation is very grave. The addicts are also often found armed who have been committing crimes of various nature, said a number of victims who were mugged.

As soon as day light disappears, youths start enjoying drugs at different points in the town areas. On many occasions, these drug addicts were caught while committing crimes specially while collecting tolls from shops and other business centres.

## TR programme in Sunamganj 10,000 tonnes of wheat allocated

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 5: Works of a total of 2768 schemes are going on in full swing in ten thanas under Sunamganj district during the current season under Test Relief programme.

When contacted an official source informed this correspondent that, the government had sanctioned a total of ten thousand metric tons of wheat for execution of a total of 3569 schemes in the district, this year. The thanawise break up of the allocation against the schemes include, 1500 metric tons of wheat for 453 schemes in Sunamganj sadar, 750 metric tons of wheat for 321 schemes in Chhatrak, 1000 metric tons of wheat for 241 schemes in Jagannathanpur, 1000 metric tons of wheat for 424 schemes in Drai thana, 800 metric tons of wheat for 207 schemes in Shulla thana.

7000 metric tons of wheat for 261 schemes in Doarabazar thana, 650 metric tons of wheat for 176 schemes in Biswambharpur, 800 metric tons of wheat for 296 schemes in Jamalganj thana, 1600 metric tons of wheat for 630 schemes in Tahipur thana and 1200 metric tons of wheat for 585 schemes in Dharampasha thana.

The source further informed that, about 30 per cent works of the schemes had already been completed.

The schemes include, construction and reconstruction of kutchra roads, playground, excavation of derelict ponds, improvement of educational institutions and government offices.

Works on the schemes will continue till December this year, the source added.

## Drought renders agri labourers jobless in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Oct 5: Although the government has geared up relief and the other activities in mitigating the sufferings of the drought-hit people of the northern region, all these initiatives remained far to meet the demands, according to the information received here from the remote corners.

There is no work in the field, the prices of essentials shot up beyond the purchasing capacity of common consumers and the prices of the agricultural produces like jute and others have come down below output cost.

In most areas, the day labourers have been selling their labour in advance at a very low rate between Tk 15.00 and 20.00. The poor farmers are also reportedly selling their crops at cheaper price, well ahead the harvesting season to meet the irrigation costs. Jute is now selling almost everywhere below Tk 200.00 per maund much below the production cost while rice is being sold at higher rate between Tk 12.00 and Tk 16.00 per kilogram, after is selling at Tk 11.00 per kilogram and soyabean oil at Tk 52.00 per litre. The prices of fishes, fowls, eggs and meat and other daily necessities have also registered an upward

trend in the markets.

Due to drought and occasional rains at least 50 per cent arable lands of the targeted 16 lakh hectares left unploughed, on the other hand vast aman fields in the region are being damaged for want of water.

The well publicised agriculture rehabilitation programmes has not yet been implemented. It is further alleged.

There are also allegations that the 4,100,000 metric tons of wheat sanctioned under Test Relief and GR programme the drought-hit eight northern districts are being mis-used.

## Workshop on compulsory pryd in Barisal

BARISAL, Oct 5: A day-long workshop on compulsory primary education for the union parishad, chairman and ward-committee chairmen was held here recently, reports BSS.

Ten chairmen and 30 ward-committee chairmen from ten unions of sadar thana took part in this workshop.

## BRDB female inspectors' training ends at BAU

AGRI-VARSITY, Mymensingh, Oct 5: Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Shah Muhammad Faruk underscored the need for identifying the problems of farmers of the country with a view to plan future agricultural programmes to augment production, says a press release.

Speaking as chief guest at the certificate awarding ceremony of a ten-day higher training course on 'vegetable production and livestock and poultry rearing' arranged for the BRDB female inspectors, the Vice-Chancellor called upon the trainees to work in the villages in order to attain self-sufficiency in food. He said village development is not possible without agricultural development.

Organised by the Graduate Training Institute (GTI), the function was presided over by GTI Director Prof Dr M Tazul Islam, Professor Md Amir Hossain, course coordinator, BRDB deputy director Nurul Islam Akanda, Umme Salma and Bishnapada Gowsami spoke on the occasion.

Later, the Vice-Chancellor awarded certificates among the trainees.

## One killed in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Oct 5: An old shop owner was killed by some miscreants in Sept 25 while he protested their anti social activities, reports UNB.

According to police, Rehan Ali, 70, of Beparipara in Jamalpur thana has been doing business on a plot of railway land after taking lease beside the rail crossing.

A few days back Ayubur Rahman of the same village built a house illegally on the land adjacent to Rehan's shop and allegedly started selling ganja and liquor. The house turned a den of anti-social. Rehan time and again protested the anti-social activities of the Ayub and his accomplices.

On September 24 night Rehan Ali again protested the anti-social activities of Ayub Ali this Ayub became furious and on the following morning he along with his four accomplices dragged Rehan from his shop and hit his head with stones injuring him grievously.

He was rushed to the district General Hospital where he died in the evening. A case was filed and police arrested one Alnur in this connection while other accused remained absconding.