

Transport workers start strike in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Road communication between Sirajganj and rest of the country snapped as the Motor Sramik Union enforced an indefinite strike in the district today, reports UNB.

All sorts of vehicles stayed off the roads responding to the strike inflicting immense suffering on the passengers.

The transport workers enforced the strike demanding trial of those responsible for Sunday's attack on their coworkers.

Some 125 people were injured in a violent clash between the rickshawpullers and motor-transport workers near New Market on Sunday.

Witnesses said the strikers halted some 20 Belkuchi-bound trucks on New Dhaka road in the evening.

Earlier, in the morning, a meeting between the local administration and the union leaders ended inconclusively. Additional District Magistrate Ruhul Amin Khan presided over the meeting.

Leaders of different motor-transport unions warned that they would not call their non-stop strike off until the attackers were arrested. They also demanded suspension of five police officers for charging baton on them during the melee.

Sharp rise in prices of essentials

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Prices of essentials have abnormally gone up in the villages of Sirajganj district causing extreme sufferings to the common people.

It is observed that price of rice have increased by Tk two to three per kilogram. Masur pulses are sold at Tk 28, mug at Tk 32, mash at Tk 30, mator at Tk 26, chola at Tk 28 and kheshari at Tk 16 per kg. Zira, which was available at Tk 80 per kg only a fortnight ago is now sold at Tk 120 per kg. Onion is now sold at Tk 20, garlic at Tk 60 and zinger at Tk 50 per kilogram. Fish are out of reach of the common people due to scarcity and extremely high price.

Vegetables are in plenty but prices are also high. One kg of potato is sold at Tk 10, brinjal at Tk 12, patol at Tk 8, green papaya at Tk eight, lal-shak at Tk 10 and Palong at Tk 12 per kilogram.

Hilsha fish are available but the prices vary from Tk 40 to 60 per kg. Rohit, mirgel, katla and other big fish are not available in village markets and if available in the town, one kg is sold at least at Tk 150 which is too high in comparison to the city markets.

Goods worth Tk 1 lakh looted in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Oct 18: Armed dacoits in a midnight raid looted valuables worth Tk 1 lakh from a house at north Sachipara in the town, reports UNB.

Police said, the gang of 20-25 robbers entered the house of Khokon Bhuiyan by cutting window grill around midnight on October 6 and looted Tk 50,000 cash, 10 tola ornaments and watch.

The house owner received injury while trying to resist the dacoits.

Police arrested one Kutub Uddin in connection with the dacoity. A case was lodged with Narsingdi police.

Alleged robber shot dead

JHENIDAH, Oct 18: An alleged robber was shot dead by Ansars of a night coach in Kaliganj thana on the Jhenidah-Jessore road early Friday, reports UNB.

Police said, a group of armed bandits put barricades on a bridge at Keyabagan and looted goods from two trucks.

They also attacked a Benapole bound night coach coming from Barisal and exploded a number of trackers. Two Ansars travelling on the bus opened fire killing one of the attackers. They also seized a pipegun.

The dead was identified as Tahajjel Hossain, 35 of Naodia village in Kaliganj thana.

Van-puller chopped to death

JHENIDAH, Oct 18: A van-puller was chopped to death by unknown miscreants at a village in Mohashpur thana early Thursday, reports UNB.

Police recovered the body identified as Abdus Sattar, 30 of Jagrithuda village from a road in the neighbouring Hamidpara village.

The body was sent to sadar hospital for autopsy.

Police suspected that past enmity might be the cause behind the killing.



SYLHET: This road in Mewa point on Sylhet-Benabazar highway leads to Indian border, only few kilometres away. Hundreds of tonnes of goods are traded which are carried through this important road. Condition of the road still remains in poor condition despite repeated appeals for development. — Star photo

Diarrhoea breaks out in Santhia of Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 18: Diarrhoea has broken out in five unions of Santhia thana of the district. Already, three persons including one female, have died and more than 100 people were attacked. The thana health authorities have taken steps to control the situation but the efforts are reportedly not adequate.

The affected unions are: Bhulbaria, Gourigram, Khetupara, Dhulanri and Dhopadaha. In Bhulbaria union, one Fatyan Bawa, widow of late Joymuddin of village Gosabari died. Two others, Alhaj, 12, son of Abdul Hamid of village Barigram and Parvin Khatoun, 5 of village Bhabanipur also died. A total of 15 persons of these three villages have been attacked with diarrhoea. About 80 persons mainly children, have also been attacked with the disease in Dhapadaha, Dhaulanri, Gourigram and Khetupara unions of Santhia thana. It is learnt.

Meanwhile, the authorities of health department have provided the patients with oral saline and other medicines. Stock of medicines, it has been claimed, is quite adequate with them.

The disease has also broken out, not yet in large scale, in

different villages of Pabna sadar, Sujanagar, Bhangora and Faridpur thanas, it is also gathered.

Diarrhoea claims 4 lives in Sherpur

Diarrhoea claimed four lives and infected some 300 people in 24 hours Saturday in famine stricken Nokla and sadar thana of the district, officials sources said, reports UNB.

They said the diarrhoeal death toll rose to 13 and 1,050 people were suffering from the disease that broke out three weeks before. But, according to unofficial sources, 25 people died and 3,000 were attacked by diarrhoea during the period.

The diarrhoeal victims are Amena, 13, and her mother Shilpi, 30, of sadar thana. Identities of two other victims of Nokla thana were not known immediately. Nineteen diarrhoea patients were admitted to sadar hospital Saturday, hospital sources said.

The district civil surgeon said, 81 medical teams are working in different places of the district, but local people alleged that medicare facilities were not available in the affected areas.

Surma, Kushiya erosion Huge areas engulfed

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 18: Erosion in the rivers Surma and Kushiya have grabbed a large part of land during the last few years in Benabazar thana of Sylhet district.

Vast areas in villages, Naya Dubag, Gajukata, Charlagram, Charla Bazar, Dubag Bazar and Sheolatuk of Dubag Union, Dheunagar, Dighabak, Balinga and Balinga bazar of Sheola union and Bairagi Bazar, Abdullahpur, Angura Mohammadpur of Kurarabazar union have already been grabbed by the river Kushiya. The river Surma has also engulfed areas in the villages, Ramdha Bazar, Ujandhaki, Raikail, Kholagram of Alinagar union and Konagram, Bhelekhani, Fengram, Nayagram, Gadabazar and the road connecting the Gadabazar of Charikhali union. Huge numbers of dwelling houses, arable land, roads, bazars, schools and madrasahs, and mosques have been eroded by the river Surma, during the last few years. Several thousand families have also become homeless in the said areas.

Massive programme to instal 4802 tube wells

BARISAL, Oct 18: The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) in collaboration with UNICEF has undertaken a programme to instal 4,802 tubewells to ensure drinking water in three divisions under Barisal circle at a cost of about Tk 7.54 crore under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) during the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the programmes include sinking of 1,250 deep tubewells, 685 shallow tubewells, 400 tara pumps, 115 shallow shrouded tubewells (SST), 90 Very Shallow Shrouded Tubewells (VSST) and 36 Pond, Sand Filler (PSF) tubewells and resinking of 2,226 shallow tubewells.

Of the total about Tk 5.43 crore will be spent for the installation of deep tubewells and about Tk 30.50 lakh for

Kushiya plying of big boats, carrying goods and cargo vessels is being seriously hampered.

People have urged upon the authorities concerned to take immediate and necessary measures to save the properties and villages from the clutches of erosion.

1800 dwelling houses engulfed

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Oct 18: One thousand and eight hundred dwelling houses of fifty four villages under Char Bhadrason and Sadarpur thanas have been eroded into river beds of the Padma and Arial Kha with the recession of water level affecting about 20 thousand people and damaging crops on 26 thousand acre of land. Some parts of the embankment from Goalanda to Shibchar via Char Bhadrason have been eroded into the river Padma. Five thousand people have been murdered homeless and caused massive damages to standing crops on vast areas.

shallow tubewells about Tk 8.80 lakh for SST, Tk 7.69 lakh for VSST, Tk 8.22 lakh for PSF, Tk 38.10 lakh for tara pumps and Tk 1.15 crore for re-sinking of the shallow tubewells.

Altogether 516 deep and 185 shallow tubewells will be sunk in four districts of Barisal Division, 544 deep tubewells in two districts of Patuakhali, 190 deep and 500 shallow tubewells in five districts of Faridpur.

Besides, PHED will instal 115 SST in Barisal Division, 90 VSST in Barisal and Patuakhali districts, 36 PSF in Barisal and Patuakhali, 400 tara pumps in Faridpur and re-sink 709 shallow tubewells in Barisal Division and 1,517 shallow tubewells in Faridpur, the source added.

Meanwhile, preliminary works have completed.

'Action committees' in 16 dists Demand for bridge over Padma

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Oct 18: More people are voicing in support of the demand for construction of a bridge over the river Padma, connecting Daulatdia Ghat with Aricha. More than three crore people from 21 districts in southern and south western areas of the country are determined to realise the demand.

According to Abdur Razzak Khan, President, Jessore Chamber of Commerce and Industries an 'action committee', in Jessore, for establishment is under process of finalisation. Headed by Abdur Razzak Khan, a programme has been planned to organise movement throughout the district by mobilising support in favour of the demand, as elsewhere in the area. Such 'action committees' has reportedly been formed in 16 other districts of the area with the same terms of references and programmes, the source added.

Presided over by Chairman, Chuadanga Municipality, Wahidul Islam, a meeting, attended by representatives from all walks of life, was held at Chuadanga on September 16 to discuss constructions of the said bridge, feasibility, its economic importance and social impact and chalking out 10 grammes to organise further movements. The chief architect of the movement, Chairman, Faridpur Municipality, Professor Fazlul Kabir Chand

has called upon all irrespective of party affiliations to join in the movement and press home the demand for existence of the people of western side of the Padma. He said, this zone comparatively remained neglected and underdeveloped. Industrial trade, gas, power and economic progress in the region was lagging far behind due to lack of the bridge, it was observed.

Criticising the government policy of industrialisation, power distributions and gas supply, Professor Kabir regretted that this zone remained virtually cut off from rest of the country since the liberations. He urged upon all to rise to the occasion and get the bridge constructed, as early as possible.

The Chairmen of Rajbari Municipality, Neaz Mahmud, Anisur Rahman, Jhenidah Municipality Moshshur Municipality Azizul Haq and Chowgacha Union, SM Habibur Rahman preferred launching direct action and demonstration for realisation of the demand.

President, Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Atair Rahman underscored the need for organising mass movement in the areas to press home the demand.

When contacted President, Jessore Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Abdur Razzak Khan an interview with the Daily Star said that people of this side of the river Padma are groaning under brunt of unequal development in respect of economic, industrial, trade, gas supply and communications. He also noted with deep regret the half hearted attitude of the authority to delay in upgrading the Benapole check-post to land post.

He said, only way to improve lot of the people of the area was constructing the bridge over Padma.

Family Planning Deptt. 28000 workers do not get their salaries according to pay scale

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 18: More than 28 thousand workers of the Family Planning Department reportedly are not paid according to pay scale in the district.

Sources say more than 28 thousand workers have been serving as Family Planning Inspectors (FPI), Family Welfare Visitors (FWV), Medical Assistants (MA), Family Welfare Assistants (FWA) and as Aya and Peons.

From the very beginning these employees were appointed against the development fund instead of the revenue fund. As a result whenever fund crisis prevails, these employees can not draw their salaries on time.

Some employees of Family Planning Department said that after their retirement they would be deprived of pension and gratuity facilities as they were appointed against development fund. On the other

hand, the field workers of same category of Agriculture, Live Stock and Health Department have been enjoying pension and gratuity facilities.

The field workers said, they had staged demonstrations several times in the district. Even they went on strikes but no effective measures were taken so far. They also said that the government assured that 20 per cent of the employees would be treated under revenue fund employee per year and with this system all the employees would go under revenue fund system within five years time. But it has not been implemented.

While talking to the deputy director of Family Planning department this correspondent was informed that salaries and other facilities for these employees and field workers mostly are arranged by donor countries and whenever their services would be treated under revenue fund system the concerned donors would no longer assist for the same purposes which may hit population control programme.

Several long-route buses were stranded during the 10 am to 12 pm rail-road blockade and passengers of these vehicles suffered for the delay.

Meanwhile, the Action Committee has called on a half day hartal in Faridpur to press their demand of upgrading Faridpur district to a division.

Ist phase works of Pabna irrigation project completed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: The works of the first phase of the Pabna Irrigation and Rural Development Project have been reported to be completed. The Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has implemented the project at the cost of Taka 380 crore.

It is learnt that the project was taken by the WDB to construct 155 kilometres at flood control embankment which will save 1,85,000 hectares of Agri land from flood water and to extend irrigation facilities for 6500 hectares of cropland in 11 thanas of Pabna and Sirajganj districts.

After completion of the project, pisciculture and hatchery complexes will be set up at the project area, sources said.

It is confirmed that the greater Pabna district will turn to an area of surplus food production after the completion of the project. Sources added that under social afforestation, 10,000 saplings of trees have been planted in the project area.

TK 39.66 cr spent 13 bridges constructed in Faridpur, Rajbari

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Oct 18: Thirteen bridges have been constructed by Roads and Highways Department in Faridpur and Rajbari districts during the last three years. The bridges cost Taka 39 crore 66 lakh. Out of the 13 bridges, five have been constructed at a cost of Taka 39 crore three lakh and 40 thousand in Faridpur district and the rest of the eight bridges in Rajbari district at a cost of Tk 62 lakh and 60 thousand.

According to Roads and Highways Department, Bakhunda bridge on Faridpur-Bhanga highway has been constructed at a cost of Taka 4 crore 67 lakh and 98 thousand. Alimuzaman bridge on Faridpur-

Kamarkhali road at a cost of Taka 79 lakh 99 thousand, Gorai bridge on Faridpur-Magura highway at a cost of Taka 32 crore 78 lakh and 47 thousand, Nagarkanda bridge on Talma-Nagarkanda road at a cost of Taka 64 lakh and 40 thousand, Matarer Kum bridge on Faridpur-Char Bhadrason road at a cost of Taka 12 lakh and 60 thousand.

Besides, Harai bridge on Rajbari-Kushtia highway, Gadi-mara bridge, Chanda bridge, Hat bridge, Raghunathpur bridge Baliaapur bridge, Chadpur bridge, Masspara bridge have been constructed in Rajbari district at a total cost of Taka 62 lakh and 60 thousand.

Jamuna erosion Part of flood control embankment washed away

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Sudden erosion of the Jamuna have washed away about 100 feet area of Brahmaputra flood control embankment popularly known as the WDB bundh at Simla point in Sirajganj sadar thana.

About hundred families were rendered homeless due to erosion, according to reports.

It was however, observed that water level in the Jamuna have been gradually falling. On Oct 10 erosion turned serious and about 100 feet of WDB bundh at Simla point was washed away. Local people had dumped banana trees and sand bags to control river erosion but the situation still remained unchanged.

When contacted, a source of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) division of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) confirmed erosion at

Simla point and said that a proposal to construct a groyen at Simla have been sent to the higher authority for approval and allocation of fund but no response was received within last three years.

Local people are demanding construction of a groyen at Simla and Saidabad in Sirajganj sadar thana. They also ghaeroed the DC's office and WDB office and submitted memorandum demanding implementation of the work on the groyens.

Local MP, Mirza Muraduzaman also stressed upon the need for a groyen at parliament. When contacted Mirza Muraduzaman MP said that protective measure of erosion at Saidabad will be taken by the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) and a groyen will be constructed at Simla during next dry season.

'Drought situation totally under control in Nilphamari'

From Our Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Oct 18: The drought situation of Nilphamari district is now under complete control and the government has allocated Taka 26.50 lakh for post drought agro-rehabilitation programme, a PID handout said here Saturday, reports BSS.

This allocation is in addition to 1500 tons of wheat already allocated under Test Relief (TR) and Gratuitous Relief (GR), the handout added.

A high level meeting held on Thursday at the conference room of the deputy commissioner with Minister of State for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan in the chair reviewed the latest drought situation and the progress of the relief activities.

Local MP Prof Abdul Hafiz and the deputy commissioner addressed the review meeting. District level officials and project implementation officers attend it.

Dr Moyeen Khan said that the drought situation was faced successfully because of timely and right decisions and directions of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

He informed the meeting that various development measures including agro-rehabilitation projects and schemes for improving conditions of destitute women and children have been taken for improving the drought situation. Besides, steps have been taken to sell rice, wheat and fertilisers in open market to keep the market price of essential stable.

The state minister sought cooperation from all and directed the concerned officials to put in their best efforts for

Bus passengers robbed, driver stabbed

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Twenty passengers of a night coach were injured when dacoits attacked them and looted their valuables at Ullapara here Friday, reports UNB.

Police said the bandits numbering 10 to 15 were travelling by the Dinajpur bound coach from Dhaka in disguise of passengers. They stabbed its driver and his two helpers, and halted the bus at Purbodehua in Ullapara thana at about 4 pm.

They stabbed and beat up the passengers indiscriminately, drove the coach, left it at Gurka in Royganj thana and decamped with the booties worth about Tk four lakh.

Of the injured, seven were admitted to Royganj Health Complex and three to Ullapara Health Complex.

Driver of the bus, Taher Ali, 40, and his helpers Khokon, 38 and Abdul Hamid, 40 were rushed to Bogra Mopammad Ali Hospital with serious stab injuries.

'Come forward to help ease movements of blinds'

GAZIPUR, Oct 18: The World White Cane Safety Day was observed here Saturday as elsewhere in the country, reports BSS.

In observance of the day, Gazipur district unit of National Organisation for Blinds arranged a discussion meeting at Tongi municipality auditorium.

State Minister for Establishment Aminul Hoque attended the meeting as chief guest while State Minister in charge of the Ministry of Science and Technology Prof M A Mannan was present as special guest.

Hoque called upon all to realise the sorrows and sufferings of the blinds in the society and come forward to help ease the movements of the blinds so that they could contribute equally in the nation-building activities. He called upon everybody to donate their eyes posthumously for the blinds.

The State Minister said, the government was taking special measures to educate and rehabilitate about 15 lakh blinds in the country. He sought co-operation of all to help implement the welfare programmes.

Prof Mannan said, if we ensure education and training to the blinds, they can equally participate in socio-economic development.

He called upon the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and social workers to supplement government efforts to rehabilitate the blinds.

The meeting was also addressed by the president of the National Organisation for Blinds, Syed Kamalullah Hashmi and Publicity Secretary Mainuddin Chowdhury.



SYLHET: A rally was brought out in the town marking the World White Cane Safety Day Friday. — Star photo