

Frequent smuggling of Sundarban timbers

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 6: Timbers of various kinds allegedly are being smuggled from the vast Sundarban area to different places of the country through some unscrupulous businessmen and forest officials. It is reported almost everyday smuggling of precious timbers in thousands of cubic feet is being transported with the help of officials and some members of law enforcing agencies through Baleswar.

Two outlawed party members arrested

BARISAL, Feb 6: Two people of the outlawed Sarbahara Party were arrested from Padma Bazar in Muladi thana early Wednesday, reports UNB. The arrested people were identified as the local leader of Sarbahara Party — Nurul Islam, 35, and Harunur Rashid, 37.

Govt poultry farm in Sirajganj faces problems

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 6: The only government poultry farm at Sialkote, about two kilometers away from Sirajganj town, have been playing a vital role to set up private poultry farms in the district but the government institution itself faces manifold problems.

It is learnt that varieties of poultry birds are in the government farm include white leg horn of Italy, Australorp of Australia, Fumy, Egyptian but developed in Pakistan and Lowmen brown of Germany. The Lowmen Brown variety is the most popular bird in the countries. Under direct guidance of the government poultry farm, about 30 to 40 private farms have so long been set up in Sirajganj town.

When visited the farm at Sialkote and private farms of Mirza Muraduzzaman MP and Advocate Abdur Rahman, it was observed that Lowmen Brown variety have much demand among the interested people. The only hatchery of Bogra supplies poultry birds in different areas of the northern districts. An adult Lowmen hen is sold at Tk. 150 which seems to be costly for the poor men. In absence of any private hatchery the interested people are to purchase hens from the government hatchery at higher rate.

Bishkhali and Paira rivers - local sources said. Besides, often 'Sundari' and 'Keora' timbers loaded in big boats are reaching Swarupkathi bandar (port) areas of Perojpur district from Sundarban area.

Informed sources said that many people of some areas of Swarupkathi thana are involved in this business. Thus government is losing a huge amount of revenue as well as prices of these timbers.

It is alleged that some people of the Charduan Police camps and forest office of Patharghata of Borguna district are involved with this smuggling business. They have extended the smuggling routes from Mahipur of Kalapara thana of Patuakhali district to Indurkani of Perojpur district.

It is to be mentioned here that during last size months the forest department seized about five hundred cfts of timbers and 10 boats but none of the smugglers were arrested.

Drinking water crisis in rural Jamalpur, Sherpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Feb 6: Jamalpur and Sherpur district have long been facing acute crisis of drinking water due to the failure of the concerned department to ensure minimum supply of water.

Experts believe that water supply in these districts can be augmented by developing new mechanism but there is no activities in sight for implementation of such programmes.

Twenty per cent of the rural people of these districts use tubewell waters for domestic use while the rest 80 per cent depend on deep tubewell only for drinking water.

In some of the villages in Jamalpur there are no sign of any tubewell. People are compelled to depend on well and derelict ponds for drinking water and other household works. As a result, they become vulnerable to water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery. Most of the rural people, especially the women folk has to travel long distance to collect drinking water from tubewells.

Statistics show that the ratio of per person tubewell was 1:450 in 1972 which in 1993 stood at 1:150 tubewells. The government initiative was negligible in number in comparison to actual demand for it. One fourth of such tubewells remain out of order throughout the year on the one hand, because of fall in the groundwater level, on the other hand, normal water supply is hampered in the tubewells due to malpractice. At present drought has further aggravated water crisis in the area.

The tubewells remaining out of order are not re-sunk on emergency basis. Those remain out of order for years. Concerned authorities and Department of Public Health Engineering seldom give due and timely attention to the repair or replacement.

An engineer of DPHE informed this correspondent that they take up repair work of damaged tubewells only at the approval of higher authorities, the process of availability of which takes considerable time. Besides even if repair order comes, due to lack required spare parts the whole process is delayed. Concerned authorities prefer sinking new tubewells rather than repairing the damaged tubewells. For these reasons damaged tubewells remain inoperative for long.

There are two reasons behind less flow of water in the tubewells of this area: (i) Fall in the ground water level and (ii) existence of tubewells in between deep tubewell and shallow tubewell.

Experts suggest that alternative arrangement may be taken up to remove the crisis of water. In almost every village there are deep and shallow tubewells for irrigation purpose. Which can supply drinking water too to the village people. Tanks can be set up along side the DTW and STW which can be filled two or three times a day. Rural people can easily collect drinking water from those sources. It is believed that once this arrangement is made on experimental basis village people would start using water from this source.

Road mishap claims one, injure three

KUSHIA, Feb 6: A young man was killed and three others were injured in a road mishap at Kumarkhali thana on Saturday, hospital sources said, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the incident occurred at about 2 pm when two buses collided head on killing Abdur Rauf, 32 on the spot. His body was sent to morgue for autopsy.



NARAYANGANJ. Narayanganj police arrested 12 pickpockets including two women and a child from the bus and launch terminal areas of the town recently. — Star photo

Sad ending

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 6: Three sweepers died and a jailguard was injured seriously when they were electrocuted at the Patuakhali jail area recently.

Three sweepers, Ayub Ali, 50, Azhar Ali, 40, and Debu Chandra, 35, were electrocuted when they were busy in piling up fodder around an abandoned iron pillar in the jail area. At one stage suddenly the iron pillar came in touch with a nearby PDB's 132kv electric wire and soon become electrified.

Two of the sweepers died on the spot and Debu Chandra died on way to hospital. Jailguard Paban Gazi, 42, was also injured and admitted into Patuakhali hospital.

14 awarded five yrs jail terms

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 6: The Assistant Sessions Judge, Sylhet Rezaul Karim Khan while passing his judgement found 14 persons guilty and sentenced them all to suffer rigorous imprisonment for five years each in a case of Jaintapur thana recently.

The prosecution case in brief is that, a gang of dacoits created barricade at Kharikapumji on the Sylhet-Tamabil Road near Damri bridge under Jaintapur thana in the night following April 2 of 1992. They put two electric poles on the road blocking the way for the vehicles from both sides. The dacoits took away money in cash, wrist watches and other valuables from the passengers, drivers and helpers of a number of vehicles. The approximate value of the booty stood at Taka 39,798.

One killed, cloths worth Tk 50 lakh robbed

NATORE, Feb 6: A young merchant was killed and his cloths worth about Tk 50 lakh were looted in a daring dacoity, police said Sunday, reports UNB.

According to police, a gang of dacoits numbering 10 to 12, equipped with fire-arms, entered the shop by breaking open the door at the midnight of January 31. The shopkeeper Md Abul Khayer was in deep asleep.

He suddenly woke up and cried for help. At this the dacoits stabbed him mercilessly killing him on the spot and decamped with the booty.



NARAYANGANJ: Peter Ashim D' Costa, a member of N'ganj photographic society recently received the 1st prize, 'gold medal' award for this picture in the black and white section. The picture, titled 'Ray and Rail', was put in the 6th national photo competition held at the national art gallery, Shilpakala Academy.

Prices of essential items up in Natore district

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Feb 5: Prices of all essential commodities including fish, rice, atta-flour and vegetables, like every year, have registered a steep rise in the markets of six thanas of Natore district with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the report, the low income groups including the landless day labourers are the worst sufferers of the price-hike of essentials.

It is learnt that prices of hilsa fish are being sold between Taka 80 and 100 per kilogram (kg), Rubi fish — between Taka 80 and 83 and Magur fish — between Taka 100 and 105 per kg.

Similarly the prices of one kg beef varies from Taka 50 to 60 and one kg meat varies from Taka 85 to 100. The retail prices of some of the essentials in local markets are: atta-flour — Taka 13 and Taka 15 per kg, rice — Taka 12.50 and Taka 15 per kg, Soyabean oil — Taka 50 per kg, mustered oil — Taka 60 per kg, khesari pulse — Taka 15 per kg, masur pulse — Taka 28 and Taka 32 per kg, boot (gram) pulse — Taka 25 per kg, local made sugar — Taka 30 per kg while the sugar imported from India, Brazil and Malaysia are selling between Taka 25 and 28 per kg.

Traders said, prices of essentials registered an increase due to shortage of supply. But according to some reliable sources, a section of unscrupulous traders indulged in creating artificial crisis in the local markets to make profit taking advantage of the sudden price-hike.

While talking to The Daily Star, KH Jubayer Hossain, Chairman of Natore Pourashava said that all leading businessmen in the town were requested to harmonise the prices of essentials especially during the month of Ramadan. Some of the people who crowded Nichabazaar station bazaar and Madrasa bazaar in the town on the first day of Ramadan they complained that prices of most of the essentials have gone out of their reach. They demanded immediate and effective steps to arrest the price hike which was started during the last week of January 95.

However, the price-spiral of the essential commodities in the markets almost become a common feature before different religious festivals like Ramadan, Eid, Puja etc.

One sentenced to life-term for murder

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 6: The District and Sessions Judge, Habiganj Saleh Uddin Mahmud while passing judgement in a murder case found one person guilty and sentenced him to suffer life-term imprisonment recently.

The court also asked him to pay a fine of Taka five thousand in default to which to suffer imprisonment for two months. The court acquitted four other accused persons in the case.

The prosecution case in brief is that, on June 6, 1992 Rupcharan, son of Gurucharan of village Kakura collected water from the tubewell from the nearby house of the accused persons. There ensued a clash between them. The accused persons gave him a good beating. At one stage, Rupcharan's father, Gurucharan came to rescue his son, as he made a hue and cry. Being agitated, Girindra Namasudra, Farendra Namasudra, Nanda Namasudra, Gunindra Namasudra and Upananda Namasudra hit him with a lethal weapon. Gurucharan died on the spot.

A case in this connection was registered with the police station by the wife of the victim.

RU history deptt observes 40th birth anniversary

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Feb 6: History department of Rajshahi University observed its 40 years anniversary on January 26 and 27 with great enthusiasm. Dr Shahidullah Arts building gave a festive look on that day. Whole building was illuminated and decorated with colourful banner and festoons. About one thousand students including two hundred ex-students participated on this occasion.

History department of RU started its curriculum since 1953-54 session. There were seven students in the first batch including one girl student.

The two day long programme started with National Flag hoisting in front of Dr Shahidullah Arts building. Historic place visit, blood donation, rally, mobile archaeological exhibition, memory programme, friendly football match and cultural functions were included in this 40 years anniversary programme.

On the 26th January morning Prof Shalahuddin Ahmed, former head of the history department of RU and eminent historian of Bangladesh formally inaugurated the function as special guest at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium while Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof M Eusuff Ali was in the chair. Written lecture of Prof Azizur Rahman Mullik (well known as A R Mullik), former head of the history department and former Vice-chancellor of Chittagong University who was scheduled to attend as chief guest was read-out by a student Faruq Ahmed.

Prof A R Mullik said history is not mere photography. A historian in fact, always goes deep in finding the truth. History is like a living river with current. As it is the living picture of the society, to acquire knowledge of history means to know the history of mankind. This, not only the students of history department should know the subject, history, it should be known to all the students.

In his presidential address VC Prof Eusuff Ali said history can give the answer of many questions and hence we have been able to take the human civilization a long way. Prof Atul Hye Shibly, Prof Nurul Husain, Dr Abul Kasem also addressed the opening ceremony. All of the participants visited the historic 'Kusumba Mosque' of Rajshahi as the part of the historic place visit on January 26 afternoon. A mobile lorry of Bangladesh National Museum with archaeological collections of different aspects of Bangladeshi culture were exhibited in front of the history department.

The first programme of the second day was blood donation. Some 87 bags of blood were collected with the collaboration of 'Shandhani' a voluntary blood collecting organisation, Rajshahi unit. A colourful rally with banner and festoons paraded the campus. The most enjoyable programme of the anniversary function

Govt policy of supplying fertilizer faces complexity

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 6: The government policy of supplying fertilizer at fair price faces complexity in Sirajganj district due to manifold reasons.

It is learnt that following price hike of fertilizers, the government took up a step to sell fertilizers through the Deputy Commissioner's office of respective districts. The step was taken to ensure availability of fertilizer at fair price.

Accordingly, 192 metric tons of fertilizers were sent to Sirajganj by Railway. The Deputy Commissioner of Sirajganj allowed a fertilizer trader to lift the goods at the rate of Taka 210 per maund. Later, 40 metric tons of fertilizers were sent to the district administration with a note of selling in open market at the rate of Tk 230 per maund. The official rate of fertilizer is learnt to be

Tk 247 per maund as rated by Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

According to the government order the fertilizers will be sold at Tk 230 per maund. The district administration is now in problem in fixing the rate for the dealers.

While visiting the Deputy Commissioner's office recently, this correspondent witnessed some dealers of fertilizer from Sirajganj sadar, Raiganj and Shahzadpur thanas assembled there to learn about marketing system of fertilizer. The traders alleged that the Deputy Commissioner has sold total 192 metric tons of fertilizer to one businessman at the rate of Tk 210 per maund. Regarding 40 metric ton quota, rate is fixed at Tk 230 per maund. The traders expressed their inability to sell fertilizer

in rural areas at the purchasing rate because labour charge, carrying cost and a minimum profit are not available.

When contacted, a source of Sirajganj district administration told The Daily Star that the quota of 192 metric tons of fertilizer was allotted to one person for shortage of time and to avoid any damages of Railway. About 40 metric tons quota, the source also said that the problem will be communicated with the higher authority for further instruction.

Meanwhile, the farmers have started planting IRRI saplings. Fertilizers will be needed shortly. The farmers have appealed to the authority to take positive and prompt step to ensure easy availability of fertilizer at fair price through the dealers of district administration.

Fodder crisis: Dairy farm owners in trouble

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Feb 6: Dairy farms in greater Jessore district are facing problems for want of sufficient food stuffs for long.

According to sources, there are atleast 180 dairy farms in Jhenidah, Magura, Narail and Jessore districts under greater Jessore district.

For want of sufficient rainfall yield of paddy was not sufficient this year. As a result, fewer quantity of fodder or paddy straw was produced in these districts. The dairy farm owners and farmers of these localities are compelled to depend on husk of wheat.

Now in different hats and bazzars one kilogram of husk of wheat is being sold between Tk 6.50 and Tk 8.00 instead of previous price of Tk. 4.00. A few weeks ago one bag of per containing 50 kilograms of husk of pulse, 'Khesari' was being sold between Tk 150.00 and Tk 160.00. But it is being sold at Tk 220.00 to Tk

230.00 per bag.

The dairy farm owners and common farmers are in trouble as they are not in a position to feed their animals with sufficient fodder.

Nimal Kumar Ghosh, a professional dairy farmer said that he could hardly get seven litres of milk from one of his cows instead of regular 11 litres of milk a day. Due to fodder

Father charged with killing daughter

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 4: CID has submitted chargesheet against one Arman Ali accusing him for the killing of his four-year old daughter recently. It was submitted in the court of Sylhet sadar thana magistrate. Arman Ali is a sweeper of Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital.

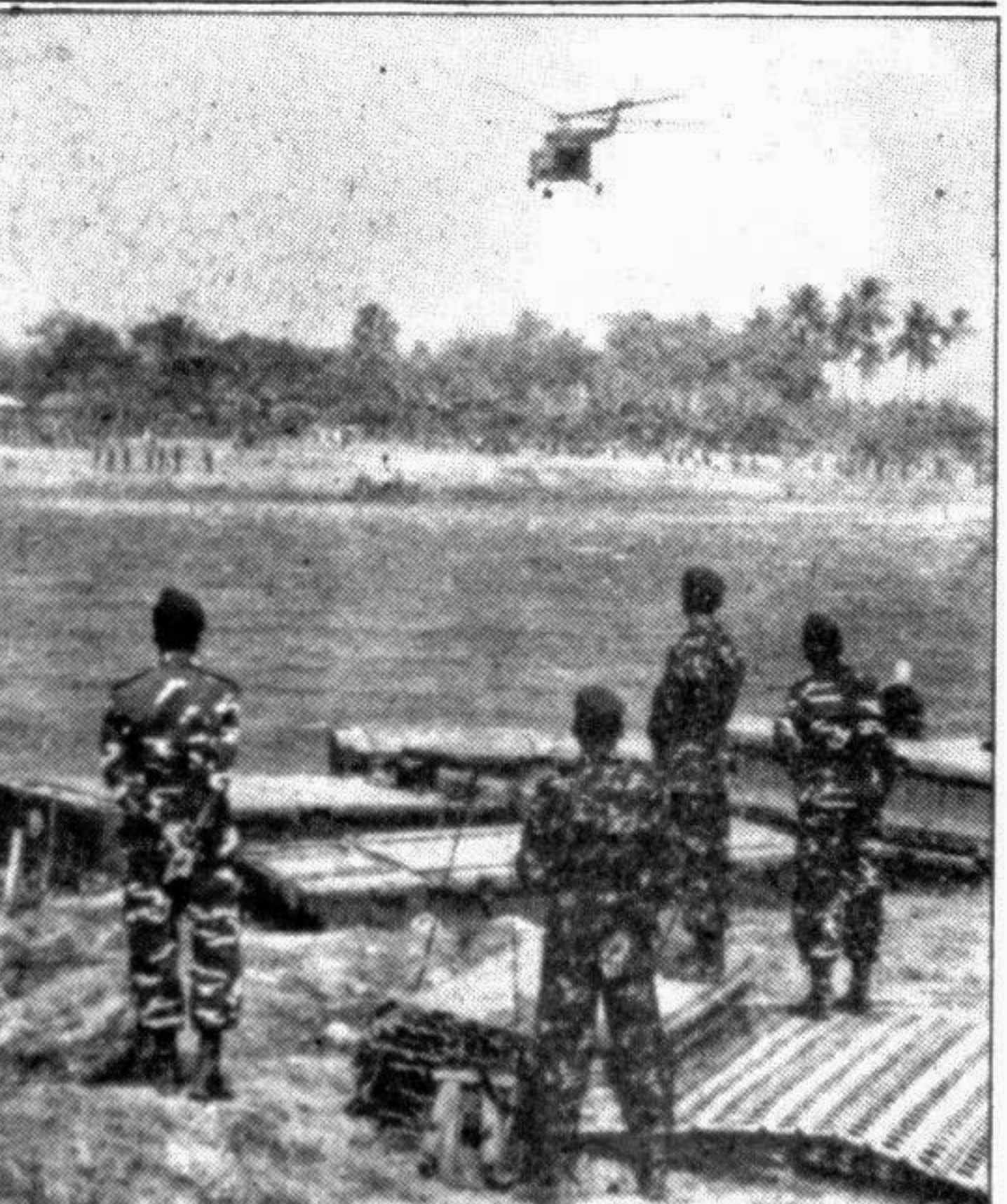
der scarcity and high price many dairy farm owners like Ghosh are facing trouble, he added.

Another farm owner informed that last year a good number of dairy farm owner received incentive from the government to further encourage them. But a good number of farmers are facing closure of their farms for fodder scarcity.

The farm owner informed that sometimes they had to face problem as there is no proper market for selling milk. As a result, sometimes they are compelled to sell the same at the rate of Taka 6.00 to 7.00 a litre for want of customers. He also added that from the dairy farms of Jessore district 2 thousand 5 hundred litres of milk is produced daily. But the quantity is decreasing day by day. The dairy farm owners demanded to install feed mills in Jhenidah, Jessore, Narail and Magura districts to remove the instabilities.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: The history department of the university organised for a day-long voluntary blood donation programme on the occasion of the department's 40th birth anniversary. — Star photo



EXERCISE BALANCE BUFFALO. Engineer troops of the Bangladesh Army observed a helicopter exercise across the Manaharpur canal, near Jessore, during Exercise Balance Buffalo. The combined US-Bangladesh exercise strengthened the Bangladesh armed forces' ability to respond to natural disasters. The helicopter crews and the Bangladesh troops received training from teams of the 1st Special Forces Group. The MI-8 helicopter of the Bangladesh Air Force's 1 Squadron practiced winch extractions of paracommandos, rappelling and fast roping, and emergency pickups of refugees. In the foreground are sections of pierced steel plank (PSP), used to allow landings on waterlogged flood areas.