

National

Bus-truck collision kills three in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Mar 21: Three people including two drivers were killed and 50 others injured when a Khulna-bound passenger coach collided head-on tonight with a truck at Shibrampur village on Dhaka-Khulna highway, police and hospital sources said, reports BSS.

The identity of the third victim, a coach passenger, could not be known immediately.

Gun looted from bank in Sylhet

Sylhet, Mar 21: Armed miscreants looted one SBBL gun from the Agrani Bank Kalganj branch of Biswanath thana last night. But they failed to break the Strong Room. Police said the SBBL gun (No. 1223) was taken away by the miscreants. There was no guard in the bank. A case has been lodged.

Meeting condemns publishing of fabricated news

KURIGRAM, Mar 21: A meeting of the college teachers was held at the professors common room of Kurigram Government Mahila College recently to discuss the concocted news item published in some daily newspapers and in a local weekly regarding the character of a teacher.

The meeting raised protest against baseless report published in the newspapers regarding illicit relationship between a lecturer of the women's college and a lady professor of the same college. It was discussed in the meeting that some newspapers are not always faithful in their way of reporting. Often, these papers indulge in fictitious characterization which prove wrong reputation and social position of those innocent people or particular institution.

Presided over by Professor ABM Majbar Rahman, Principal, Kurigram Govt Mahila College, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Asst Prof Anjad Hossain, Asst Prof Abul Kashem, Asst Prof Mahabab Ali Sarder, Lecturer Abdul Qader, Secretary, Teachers' Council, Vice-Principal, Farida Begum, Lecturer Fazul Haque, Lecturer Habibur Rahman, Lecturer Sultana Begum and Lecturer Sabiha Khatun.

Smuggled goods seized in Brahmanbaria

BRAHMANBARIA, Mar 21: Bangladesh Rifles seized smuggled Indian goods worth Tk 29,374 in a number of raids on Monday and Tuesday, reports UNB.

According to official sources, BDR jawans of 23 rifle battalion recovered the contrabands including sarres, sindur - wood and sugar. The goods were deposited with the Akhaura Customs godown and Sathchari forest office.

Another report adds: Property worth about Tk 1 lakh was gutted in a devastating fire at a house at Fulbaria village in Sadar thana on Monday.

According to witnesses, the fire originated from the kitchen of one Furkan Miah and soon engulfed five adjacent houses.

Ensure proper distribution of fertilizer: Hossain

COMILLA, Mar 21: Environment and Forest Minister Akbar Hossain called upon the government officials to ensure proper distribution of fertilizer to the peasants, reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting here at Kangshanagar on Sunday, the minister also called upon the law enforcing agencies as well as the general people to resist trafficking of fertilizer outside the country. He also laid emphasis to ensure proper electricity supply to the deep and shallow tubewells in the country so that the irrigation network is not hampered.

Akbar said for the socio-economic development of the country all parties should give up negative politics.

"Considering the greater interest of the country, opposition political parties should withdraw their negative programmes as Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had already announced that she would leave the chair before 30 days of the next general elections", he said.

The minister said, "after the announcement, it is clear that the general elections will not be held under the BNP government."

People using contaminated water, 3 lakh sick
Over 10 lakh people deprived of supply of drinking water in CHT

From Our Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Mar 21: An unprecedented drinking water scarcity has taken an alarming turn in the hill tracts region causing serious problems to the inhabitants.

About ten lakh people living in the rural areas of the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban have been using contaminated water from Kaptai lake, canals and fountains due to scarcity of supply of drinking water.

At least eighty per cent tubewells, ringwells and other types of water lifting pumps have reportedly gone out of order due to abrupt fall in water level in both waterbodies and underground as well as irregularities and malpractices adopted by the concerned officials and contractors at the time of installation and maintenance of those, the sufferers, social workers and local leaders said.

serious threat. Bacteria pollution water was also taken from the test on sample taken from Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

The existing arrangement for supply of drinking water to some 1.5 lakh people of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban in municipal areas is quite inadequate. The water treatment plant is Rangamati can hardly supply forty per cent of the required water. It supplies on an average 300 litres per head against the requirement of 1200 litres to some 65,000 consumers.

Bandarban does not have any water treatment plant and the plant in Khagrachhari is under construction.

The residents of old Rangamati town are not getting any supply of water since long due to leakage of water tank. Nurul Alam, ex-chairman, of Rangamati Poura Sava said. Some 200 orphans of the

normally sunk either in flat land or low lying areas.

The project to sink ringwells in the locality on the hill tops to ensure the supply of drinking water is not being implemented due to mysterious reason, local leaders alleged. However, the Executive Engineer of Rangamati DPHE said, steps would be taken soon to solve the water scarcity problem by sinking new tubewells and dig ringwells and repairing the existing old and disordered tubewells and ringwells. It is not possible to repair 646 tubewells, which are now out of order in the district," he added.

The DPHE in Bandarban has been supplying 2.26 lakh gallons of water daily against the requirement of ten lakh gallons for about 40 thousand consumers, officials said

1992. But the file remained shelved in Dhaka for unknown reason, the sufferers alleged.

More than one thousand people of the three hill districts died due to attack by various water borne diseases in the last six months due to intake of contaminated water. Of them, 252 died of diarrhoea in December last year alone, local leaders and officials of DPHE told.

Over three lakh people have been suffering from intestinal disorders which the DPHE experts said was the main reason of taking contaminated water.

According to Sub-Divisional Engineers of DPHE, 72 including 20 tubewells, 28 deep tubewells, 12 tara pumps, 12 ringwells in Rangar thana, 59 including 10 tubewells, 43 deep tubewells, 6 tara pumps, 10 ringwells in Manikchhari

More than one thousand people of the three hill districts died due to attack by various water borne diseases in the last six months due to intake of contaminated water. Of them, 252 died of diarrhoea in December last year alone, local leaders and officials of DPHE told.

Ringwell, canals, rivers and fountains are, drying up gradually intensifying the scarcity of water. Meanwhile, water borne diseases have broken out in many areas causing panic among the people.

The blue water of 58,300 hectare Kaptai Lake which criss-cross the hill districts has been contaminated beyond safety limit. In every 100 litre water contains average of 7,500 coliform, a dangerous bacteria, where water with only two coliform bacteria is said to be hygienically safe for use. This has been revealed in a recent survey and chemical test on water sample from Kaptai Lake conducted by officials from Public Health Engineering Directorate and experts from the Environment Control Department.

Another survey recently led by Dr. Supriya Barua, the civil surgeon of Rangamati Hill district says, a quantity of more than five tons of garbage, waste including human stool and urine was dumped every day in Kaptai Lake, which is a

Rangamati Govt Orphanage locally known as 'Sarkari Shishu Sadar' brought out a procession in the town and gheraod the office of the Chairman, Local Government Council of Rangamati Hill district recently demanding restoration of supply of water to the orphanage. The inmates are not getting any supply since last two years. "As the existing provisions, could not supply the water to the orphanage, four tubewells were sunk which are now choked due to fall of underground water level," the Executive Engineer of local DPHE Mafizullah said.

More than ten thousand slum dwellers of about 25 in Rangamati Poursava have absolutely been deprived of supply of water both from DPHE and Poursava authority since couple of years.

Many choked up tubewells are yet to be repaired in the rural areas while many remote areas of the 25 thanas of the hill tracts region have no tubewells at all, said local social workers. Tubewells are

adding, the capacity of water lifting pumps, operating by them. But contradicting the report an official from the same DPHE, told this correspondent on March 14 that Bandarban DPHE can not supply even 2.0 lakh gallons of water per day requesting for his anonymity.

The three out of seven water lifting pumps have been operating. The other four pumps have gone out of order immediately after start of those operation in 1985. Due to nonavailability of spare parts and constraints of necessary funds, the repair works of those four pumps could not be possible, an engineer from Bandarban DPHE said. As the water of Bandarban town contains excessive iron and contamination beyond safety limit, an estimate to modernise the existing plant at a cost of Tk four crore was sent to higher authorities in 1988. But nothing tangible has yet been done in this respect. The problem was brought to the notice of the Prime Minister in August,

thana, 30 including 13 deep tubewells, 9 tara pumps, 9 ringwells in Luxmichhari thana and 187 including 37 tubewells, 117 tubewells, 3 tara pumps, 30 ringwells in Matiranga thana have gone out of order for years together. More than 1000, 1200 and 995 tubewells of different types are lying disordered in all the 8, 10 and 7 thanas of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts respectively, the concerned officials told this correspondent during the survey. 10-12 per cent of the tubewells in commission have been delivering sands with water beyond useable limit, they added.

According to DPHE in Bandarban, there are 3,314 different types of tubewells sunk in the district out of which 2,885 are in commission. But the scenario physically is quite different. Even 1000 tubewells are not in commission at present due to absence of repair and renovation, local leaders and social workers alleged.



GAIBANDHA: An age old building situated at old collectorate area might collapse at any time. The building is being used by some employees of the union offices. — Star photo

Construction of Tk 324cr highway nearing completion ahead of schedule

JOYPURHAT, Mar 21: The vigorous rehabilitation and maintenance works of about 150 kilometres of national highways, now nearing completion in the north-western districts, reports UNB.

It will bring about a radical change in the road communication network in the country, said Communications Minister Oli Ahmad while visiting the construction sites here on Sunday.

The 324.70 crore Taka, World Bank aided project, the

Tk 2 crore uplift projects planned in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Mar 21: Jamalpur Zila Parishad has taken up 19 development projects involving Tk two crore during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

The projects include construction of roads and culverts, construction and reconstruction of seven union parishad buildings and first floor construction of Zila Parishad Bhaban.

The Zila Parishad has taken up another scheme at a cost of Tk 39 lakh for the construction of Bausi-Shengura and Melandah-Shayampur roads.

Officials said two bridges each 90-feet are also being constructed at a cost of Tk 50 lakh on Islampur-Hargila and Jamalpur-Narayampur roads.

Works on the projects are expected to be completed by May next.

second phase of Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project (RRMP) is expected to be completed one year ahead of the schedule, by June '95 instead of June '96 saving an amount of Taka 85 crore, he said.

The second phase of the project was taken to rehabilitate the transport infrastructure of the country. The project is aimed at contributing to more efficient transportation costs besides strengthening the Roads and Highways Department in road construction work introducing institutional and technical improvements in programming of work, administering and maintaining of the road system and technical standards and materials.

The second phase of the project is now nearing completion. Under seven contracts 70 per cent of work is expected to be completed by the end of current month against the 55.39 per cent target fixed for the period.

Under the second phase of RRMP 149 kilometres of Nagarbari-Rangpur highway via Bera, Ataikula, Pabna, Dashria and Pirganj was taken for rehabilitation and development.

The phase one of the project ended in May 1993 wherein 136 km of national highways were developed from Ullapara to Pirganj via Bogra bypass and Chandaiakona at a cost of Tk 204 crore.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmad visited the construction sites of the ongoing

project on Sunday at Mithapukur and Shatbari. He also saw for himself the stone crushing, concrete mixing, plate compaction and asphalt concrete pavement plant of the projects and expressed satisfaction over the progress of works.

Oli Ahmad said that the government has ushered in a new era of progress in the field of road construction by allowing the local experts to prove their excellence, said an official handout.

Contraband worth Tk three lakh seized from Aricha ghat in six months

MANIKGANJ, Mar 21: River police in separate drives seized smuggled goods worth about Tk three lakh from Aricha Ghat during the last six months, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the contrabands included Indian sarres, cosmetics and medicines. The goods were deposited with the customs godown.

Police also recovered two country-made pistols, one pipe gun and 22 rounds of bullets from the ghat area during the period.

An alleged inter-district dacoit Maniruzzaman of Galachipa thana in Pataakhali was also caught by police during the period.

An encouraging initiative

COMILLA, Mar 21: Construction of a well equipped 40-bed Rotary Eye Hospital, a joint venture of Rotary Club of Comilla and Rotary Club of Thornton Health, London will be completed soon, reports BSS.

The Comilla Rotary Club source said construction of the two-story hospital complex began in 1993 on 0.375 acre of land donated by RTN Idris Hussein.

Rotary foundation has sanctioned the matching grant for the equipment of the hospital. One foreign ophthalmologist, a rotarian from Switzerland, expressed his desire to work as volunteer for the first three years in Comilla eye hospital.

The project will cover the people of greater Comilla, Feni and Noakhali, the Rotary source said.

The Comilla Rotary Club has so far treated about 20,000 people of various eye problems and out of them about 4,000 patients have been operated upon for cataract.

Gas from tubewell

From Our Correspondent

NOAKHALI, Mar 21: Two cases of emission of gas from tube well pipes in Noakhali has been reported recently.

The in-charge Engineer (Marine) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, reported the incidents after his recent tour in Noakhali.

Md Zafar Master of village Horinapur under Kamalpur union and Md Golam Rosul of village Hirapur under Badal Cot union have reported that after sinking their tubewell pipes, gas had been coming through the pipes.

The mouths of the pipes later has been sealed.

1000 buses, trucks stranded at Aricha, Nagarbari ferry ghats

MANIKGANJ, Mar 21: Nearly one thousand trucks loaded with perishable items and inter-district buses were stranded at Aricha and Nagarbari on Monday due to shortage of ferries, reports UNB.

BIWTA sources said ferrying passengers as well as goods including rice and fertilizer has been seriously disrupted as three ferries on the Aricha-Nagarbari route went out of operation.

Family Planning field workers
They no longer face resistance

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Mar 21: "Now I can move freely in village areas but it was very difficult for me to move about few years back." This opinion was given by an employee of Family Planning Department, Sufia Kabir, a Family Welfare Assistant (FWA) in Saikupa pourashava. She informed, in rural areas people are very aware about family planning methods these days. They no longer reject adopting the methods offered by the department.

Kabir said that some so-called 'maulanas' (influential religious people) are still misleading the innocent people especially the illiterate women in village areas. "They are against any improvement in life-style of rural people in true sense. Even the maulanas do not encourage any campaign on the literacy programmes for common people which was advised by our Prophet Hazrat Mohammed (SM)."

Kabir, who has been serving as FWA for last 15 years and was awarded several prizes as the best worker in the area said, "despite having social barriers the villagers are learning to understand things. Most of the women especially newly married women are keenly interested about family planning methods. The rate of the accepters are increasing gradually. This has certainly encourage us FWAs too to work at the field level. "We no longer fear attack from villagers anymore."

Kabir further informed that they have been motivating people not only about accepting family planning methods but also giving advices on seven vital points which are titled, "Family Planning Plus (FPP) like safe delivery of pregnant mothers, immunisation of children and mothers, distribution of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) for protection of diarrhoeal disease, distribution of vitamin A capsules to remove malnutrition, give knowledge to illiterate women, tree plantation and use of hygienic sanitary latrines.

Akiron Nessa, 29 of village Jhaudia in Saikupa thana, mother of two children has accepted a permanent method, tubectomy about eight years ago. She said, following her tubectomy operation she was totally detached or outcasted from her society. But she was not disappointed as her husband had supported her, from the very beginning. Its so bad. No one even would talk to you. But things have improved.

Another, Dulli Begum, 30, of village Kabirpur who is also a mother of two said she too has accepted a permanent FP

method-like tubectomy operation about nine years back which greatly helped her to lead a happy life. Her husband earns very little. But she can manage the family with her husband's income. Dulli Begum



Sufia Kabir

said, the fatuwa giving moulavees or matbars (village leaders) tried to stop the field workers from carrying out their duties. But the villagers protested it boldly. Now a good number of women who desire to lead happy lives come to take advice from her.

Talking to an Assistant Director, Clinical Contraceptives (ADCC), of Family Planning, Jhenidah district, Dr Mosharrif Hossain said, in the

male took contraceptives injections, 555 female were treated with Menstrual Regularisation (MR), 8,69,549 male used condoms and 8,26,738 women used oral pills. In the same period the rate of contraceptive users was 56.91 per cent.

The source added, in the next fiscal the number of users increased. Twentyeight male and 826 female were operated upon permanently, 4,514 women used copper T or IUD, 50,092 female took contraceptive injections, 587 women were given MR, 1,00,0489 male used condoms and 9,55,226 cycles of pills were distributed. The rate of users was 60.42 per cent. That is a 3.51 per cent increase in acceptors in the district, from the previous fiscal.

The source informed that the rate of performance is 60.37 per cent in Jhenidah sadar thana, 61.05 per cent in Saikupa thana, 60.21 per cent in Harinakundu thana, 60.53, per cent in Kalganj thana, 61.00 per cent in Kotchandpur thana and 59.44 per cent in Mohespur thana. The activities of family planning method is always high or satisfactory in Saikupa thana according to records available with District Family Planning Office.

Another source said, in Bangladesh the birth rate is 1.95 per cent per year on average while in Jhenidah district it is 1.9 per cent.

According to another

source, since November of last year the supply of condoms was almost inadequate which might hit the target of the programme in the districts. But the family planning field workers are cordially convincing the couples to collect condoms from markets till the supply was available with them.

Prices of different varieties of rice rise in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Mar 21: Prices of all varieties of rice specially coarse ones have increased by at least Taka two per kg recently. This has caused extreme impact on the people of this district.

The BR-II variety of rice is now selling at Taka 15 a kg, as against Taka 13 a kg on March 11.

The common people consuming this variety of rice are, facing tremendous hardship as their daily income has not increased.

During a survey in different markets of the district, it was found that 'shoma' rice is being sold at Tk 16 as against Tk 14 a kg. The prices of 'pau' has increased from Taka 15 to Tk 17 a kg, 'khato pata' from Tk 14 to Tk 16, 'badar' from Tk 13 to Tk 15, 'kataribog' finer variety from Tk 22 to Tk 24, 'kataribog' lower variety from Taka 18 to Tk 21 in the span of only four days. It is alleged. However, 'ata' is selling at Tk 11 as before.

The supply of all varieties of

rice is adequate in the markets and no one can assume the reason behind the price hike.

However, it is learnt from the retailers that the rice markets are controlled by a handful of rich traders. The people have hoarded thousands of bags of rice in their godowns, it is reported.

People claim that if each of the hoarders sells two hundred bags of rice every day, it will take at least two months to dispose their stockpiled rice.

On March 12, a meeting called by the Faridpur district unit of Adarsha Krishak Samity demanded punishment to these merchants.

In another development fertilizer crisis has been prevailing throughout the district. Faridpur district is famous for watermelons (tarmose). But a short fall in the production of watermelon is feared. Non-availability of fertilizer specially urea has been allegedly the reason, according to a delegation of farmers.

Non-government schools in deplorable condition

KUSHTIA, Mar 21: The standard of education in the non-government, secondary and junior high schools of the district has been deteriorating due to lack of basic appliances, reports UNB.

Local people said, all these schools have been facing fund shortage for a long time and cannot provide necessary furniture and accommodation for the increasing number of students. The schools established by local initiative are in deplorable condition in absence of repair and renovation.

Shortage of teachers have aggravated the situation. Many teachers meanwhile left the schools due to irregular and poor salary.

Moreover, most of the schools have no science laboratory and necessary equipment hampering science education greatly.



FARIDPUR: Police recently arrested one Volanath Shaha with ganza plants and processed ganza from Kristapur village of Sadarpur thana. — Star photo by Abdul Matip Fakir