

Tk 2 cr project to promote sericulture in S-dists

JHENIDAH, June 19: The government has taken up a Taka two crore project to set up a modern nursery in the district to expand sericulture in the southern districts, reports UNB.

Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan opened the nursery set up on 9.06 hectares of land at Halidhani area of the district on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Sericulture Board has taken up such projects in 190 thanas under 36 districts of the country in the recent years, said a PID handout.

The programme has been taken under the five-year plan of the government, which is being implemented through the Board at a cost of Tk 55 crore.

Initially, sericulture was limited within Bholahat and Shibganj thanas of northern Chapainawabganj district.

94 fire incidents in 5 months

From Our Correspondent KUSHITIA, June 19: Ninety-four fire incidents took place in Kushtia district during last five months, according to Fire Service and Civil Defence source.

In January 1995, there were 15 fire incidents and properties worth about Taka 83 thousand were gutted.

In February 10 fire incidents took place and loss due to fire was estimated at Tk seven thousand.

In March 33 fire incidents occurred and properties lost in the incidents were estimated to be Taka one lakh 46 thousand.

In April there were 22 fire incidents and loss of properties was Taka three lakh 53 thousand. Fire Brigade men saved properties worth Taka eight lakh 49 thousand for their timely action.

In May there were 14 fire incidents and properties gutted worth Taka one lakh 61 thousand. Fire Brigade officials claim that they reached timely and saved properties worth Taka over 10 lakh.

Of those fire incidents 28 occurred in residential buildings, two in shops, eight in factories, 18 in kitchens, 10 in cowsheds, two in gas cylinder explosion and seven in electric short circuits.

Lack of knowledge negligence, bomb blast, and electrical mismanagements were reported to be the causes of those incidents.

Absence of boundary wall: Noakhali hospital faces manifold problem

MAIJDIE COURT (Noakhali), June 19: Noakhali General Hospital has no boundary wall since last four years causing insecurity to the staff and patients, reports UNB.

The wall was damaged by the severe cyclone that hit the coastal areas on April 29 in 1991.

Doctors and other employees of the hospital alleged that cows, goats and cats move freely in the hospital premises due to the absence of boundary wall.

At night, outsiders, local mastans and drug addicted people enter the hospital and take recourse to anti-social activities much to the disturbance of hospital employees.

Thieves often steal utensils, bedsheets, towels and other materials from the hospital.

People of surrounding areas use the hospital compound as their regular passage.

Doctors, employees and patients have been feeling insecurity following the prevailing situation and they urged the concerned authorities to re-build the boundary wall immediately.

Water level in Surma river continues to rise

Fresh areas inundated in Sylhet, Sunamganj

From Iqbal Siddique

SYLHET, June 18: The Flash flood situation in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts has deteriorated further on Friday and Saturday with continuation of rain and onrush of flood waters from the hilly areas across the Indian border.

At least ten lakh people have been marooned in different thanas of the districts. Eight rescue teams with army speed boats began rescue operations in Gowainghat, Jain-

dwelling houses have been totally damaged in Jaintapur, Companyganj and Gowainghat thanas.

The road communication between Sunamganj and Sylhet as well as with rest of the country have been snapped from Friday afternoon. Besides, the district headquarters of both Sylhet and Sunamganj have also been disconnected as flood waters have marooned different



SYLHET: Young girls walk past a dwelling house at Sobhanighat area of Sylhet town engulfed by recent flood waters. — Star photo

tapur, and Companyganj thanas.

Three persons died in Jaintapur thana as flood waters smashed their houses on Saturday. Official source confirmed the incident. Bodies of two children were seen floating in the Chengerkhal in Gowainghat PS on Friday. A one month old boy of village Lamni under Jaintapur thana was drowned in the flood waters Friday.

More than ten thousand points of the roads. The river Surma is now flowing 39 centimeters above danger-level in Sylhet town while it is 68 centimeters above danger-level in Sunamganj, according to official sources on Saturday night.

In Sylhet, 193 mm rainfall was recorded during the 24 hours on Saturday while it was 165 mm of rainfall recorded in Sunamganj town. The thana headquarters of Gowainghat, Jaintapur,



SYLHET: Some flood affected families of Chalibandar area of sadar thana took shelter in a shop on Sunday. — Star photo



SYLHET: A man pulls his raft to a safer place from the flood ravaged Companyganj thana. — Star photo

Kanaighat and Companyganj were now under 4 to 5 feet water, according to reports received here on Saturday. Flood waters have entered all the government offices and business establishments in these thanas.

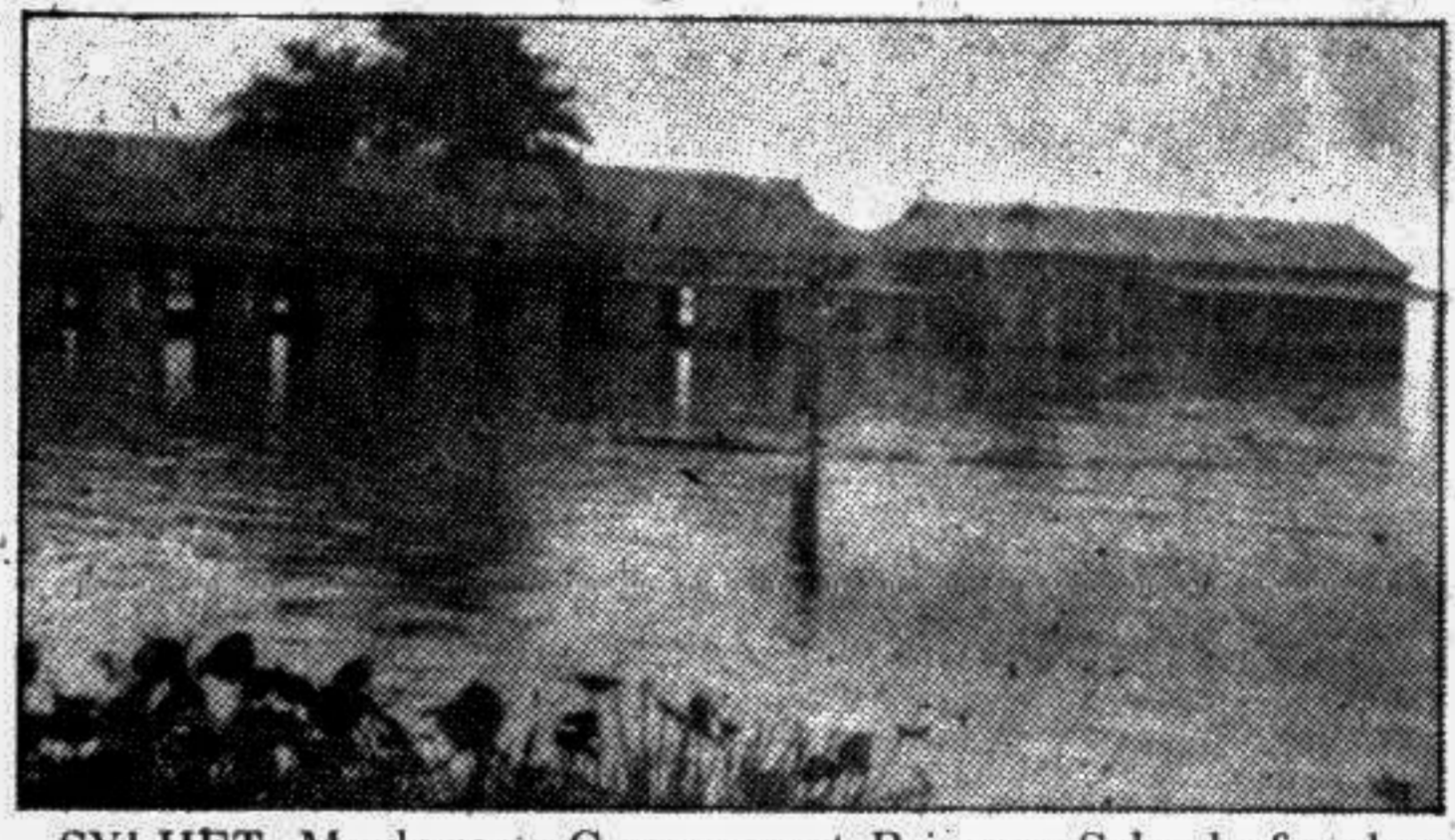
Thousands of flood-hit people have taken shelter in the two-storied buildings at the thana headquarters of Companyganj. Villagers of Takerbazar, Mollargaon, Jalalabad, Matkhela and Khadimnagar unions under Sylhet sadar thana have also



SYLHET: Flood waters marooned the newly constructed Kampasha-Biswanath-Lamakazi road on Sunday. — Star photo

been flooded. Meanwhile, as flood waters receded from the runway of Sylhet MAG Osmany Airport Saturday, Biman started its flights after it remain suspended for one day.

All the educational institutions in Gowainghat, Jaintapur and Companyganj thanas have been closed following the emergency. The police station of Companyganj has been shifted to the first floor of the former Upazila parishad building. Flood waters have also entered into the



SYLHET: Moglagaon Government Primary School of sadar thana inundated by flood waters. — Star photo

Gowainghat police station. Breaches have developed in the Water Development Board Embankment of Sari river in Gowainghat causing inundation of new villages.

Electricity supply to all these affected thana headquarters have disconnected for the last three days.

In the district of Sunamganj, four lakh people have become marooned. Makeshift Flood shelters have been started in most of the government offices and educational institutions in these thanas. Fifty shelters have so far been opened in those places, informed the Sunamganj district control room Saturday.

The source further informed that, more than five thousand dwelling houses had

totally been damaged in different thanas. More than forty per cent tubewells in those areas have gone under water causing an acute crisis of drinking water.

Our Correspondent from Sherpur adds: Severe erosion by the river Brahmaputra devoured at least 76 houses in sadar thana of Sherpur district rendering about 300 people homeless.

Balayer char, Kulurchar, Satpaktiya, Kashipara Beparipara and Pokkhamari were disconnected from the Sherpur town as the erosion intensified with the abnormal rise in flood waters.

If the water continues to today (Monday) communication between Sherpur and Jamalpur will be snapped.

In absence of preservation facilities

Mango worth Taka 100 crore spoiled every year

NATORE, June 19: In spite of bright prospect, a mango processing industry is yet to be set up in the country although Bangladesh is the fourth largest mango-producing country in the world, reports UNB.

The country's northern region, specially Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Natore district are wellknown for producing a huge quantity of quality mangoes.

Experts said a lot of foreign

exchange could be earned through exporting mango juice and other by-products by setting up mango processing industries in the country.

On the other hand, they said the country imports a lot of mango juice from foreign countries every year.

According to growers, mangoes worth about Tk 100 crore are spoiled every year due to lack of proper preservation facilities.

The number of cold storages is not adequate for preserving huge mangoes produced in these areas.

According to Mango Research Institute, there are at least 4.25 lakh mango trees on about 21,000 acres of land in these districts.

The average annual yield of a mango is about three lakh tons which is purchased by the mango traders at about Tk 100 crore every season.



SYLHET: Alhaj Mubashwir Ali, President of greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad speaking at a meeting arranged to protest the construction of Barak Dam in India recently. — Star photo

Massive programme in Khulna Div

Over 2 lakh hectares of land to be used for aus cultivation

From Our Correspondent

local variety. In Magura, two thousand hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of ufashi variety while twenty thousand hectares under local variety.

In Narail, three hundred hectares of land have been brought under ufashi while eighteen thousand hectares

Groundnut cultivators need patronisation

PATUAKHALI, June 19: The cultivation of groundnut in the char lands of different districts of Barisal Division has been hindered due to lack of proper patronisation from agriculture department, reports UNB.

Local sources said the char lands of Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Barisal and Rajbari districts are favourable for groundnut cultivation.

But many farmers of these area are not coming forward to cultivate the crop as they are not getting any facilities from the concerned authorities.

under local variety. In Khulna, one thousand hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of ufashi variety and ten thousand hectares under local variety.

In Bagerhat, ufashi has been cultivated on four thousand two hundred hectares of land while local variety on nine thousand hectares.

In Satkhira, ufashi has been cultivated on two thousand five hundred hectares while local variety on one thousand three hundred hectares of land.

In Kushtia, ufashi has been cultivated on seven thousand six hundred sixty hectares of land while local variety on forty thousand hectares.

In Chuadanga, four thousand hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of ufashi variety while twenty-four thousand hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of local variety.

In Meherpur, a total of one hundred seventy hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of ufashi variety while seventeen thousand hectares of land under cultivation of local variety.

Hoodlums attack newly married couple

COX'S BAZAR, June 19: A newly wed couple who are also field workers of an NGO came under attack on their way to office by a gang of armed hoodlums at Mogdail under Moheshkhali thana on Sunday, villagers said, reports UNB.

Attackers, failing to abduct the bride Rokeya Begum, snatched away her gold ornaments after severely beating her husband Abdul Matin.

The villagers rescued the couple and sent Matin to thana sadar hospital in a critical condition. A case was filed with the police.

The couple married last week are the field workers of Bangla German Samprity.

Phensidyl syrup bottles seized

PATUAKHALI, June 19: Police seized 15 bottles of phensidyl syrup and arrested one person in this connection from the T B Clinic Road of the town recently, reports BSS.

The contraband item was seized while it was being taken the market for sale.

The person was sent to the court.

Sharp decline in mineral content in soil

From Our Correspondent MEHERPUR, June 19: Crop production has decreased alarmingly due to sharp decline in the mineral contents in soil in Meherpur district, according to agriculture experts.

It is gathered that about 70 per cent land of the region has deficiency of minerals like sulphur, zinc and other essential minerals which caused adverse effect on soil fertility.

Officials of the local Agricultural Department, at tributed the mineral deficiency in the region to the unrestrained and over use of the chemical fertiliser in the land.

Cultivators of the district said, paddy, jute and other crop production has decreased to a great extent due to mineral deficiency in soil. Experts suggested that cultivators should be encouraged to use natural fertiliser in the interest of maintaining fertility of the soil.

Use of cowdung in the cultivation lands in Kushtia district has decreased and production of crops has become inadequate. Cowdung can be used to raise crop output without any bad effect. It provides nitrogen to the soil and helps in growth of the plants.

But use of cowdung as fertiliser has shown a gradual decline in the district. Now it is mostly being used as fuel. Almost all the families of the district make dried cake of cowdung and use as fuel due to acute scarcity of fire wood. By burning cowdung as fuel cultivators are destroying an important natural manure for their soil.

Environment Day observed in Khulna, Rajshahi

KHULNA, June 19: The World Environment Day was observed here today with a call for taking a vow to keep the environment free from pollution to ensure ecological balance, reports BSS.

The day-long programmes were drawn up by various government, non-government, social and voluntary organisations.

Jointly organised by the Environment Department and district administration, a students' rally was held at the Khulna Circuit House maidan while a colourful procession paraded through the main city thoroughfares.

A seminar on "combating pollution and development vis-a-vis environment" was held at the local Zia Hall. Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman attended the seminar as chief guest.

A two-day divisional workshop on the "importance of participation of youth organisations in maintaining environment" began here at local CARITAS auditorium under the aegis of Asia Centre of Commonwealth Youth Programmes and the Youth Development Department. Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman formally inaugurated the workshop.

Another report from Rajshahi adds: The day was observed in the city in a befitting manner.

The main programmes, included a juvenile rally, procession, bi-cycle rally, poster distribution and discussions.

A colourful juvenile rally along with banners and festoons and placards, organised by the district administration, was brought out from the Rajshahi Collegiate School premises and paraded through the main city streets.

Recent tidal surge totally disabled life in 3 dists of Barisal Div

BARISAL, June 19: Over 300 kilometres of embankments, a vast area of arable land and roads and highways were damaged in three southern districts of Barisal Division during the recent tidal surge, reports UNB.

Regulators and sluice gates constructed by WAPDA were heavily damaged in these districts, local people said.

According to a primary survey, nearly 150 kilometres of embankment in Patuakhali, over 130 kilometres in Bhola

and about 5 kilometres in Barguna districts have been damaged along with road-side trees planted for the protection of the embankment.

A preliminary estimate reveals that about Tk 10 crore will be required for the repair of the embankment, sources said. Besides, a vast area of Bhola has been devoured by the mighty river Meghna during the last two weeks. A large portion of Bhola-Laxmipur highway of the district has already been engulfed

by the river.

Local people said, erosion by the rivers has been intensified due to recent tidal surge that swept over Bhola district like other coastal areas of the country. With the advent of the rainy season the river has turned furious.

Local leaders called for immediate steps by the R & H or WDB authorities to check the erosion.

Meanwhile, the Shikarpur ferry ghat of Barisal district is

threatened by the river Sandhya, according to latest information.

Mohiuddin Ahmed, MP of Mehendiganj constituency informed the UNB that during the last tidal surge, crops on hundreds of acres of land have been damaged and over 15,000 people of at least 7 unions out of 12 unions of the thana were rendered destitute during the recent tidal surge. He urged for immediate rehabilitation of the affected people.

The erosion of Meghna in different areas of Mehendiganj thana and that of Barisal sadar by Kirtankhola river has continued to devour fresh areas.

The existence of steamer ghat, launch ghat and the char areas is at stake, say official and unofficial sources.

A total of 5,79,000 people of some 84,600 families in seven thanas of Barisal have been badly affected by the erosion. Standing crops on

36,750 hectares of land were completely and on 29,400 hectares partially damaged. About 8,000 dwellings were completely damaged, official sources said.

Besides, about 1300 domestic animals were also killed in the tidal surge while 25 educational institutions were damaged totally and about 350 partially.

In the wake of the tidal surge water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery have broken out in the districts in

an epidemic form which has already claimed a number of valuable lives.

The severely hit areas by diarrhoea are Dhalchar, Char Kukri Mukri, Charpatila of Charfassion thana, Char Zahiruddin and Char Motahar of Tazumuddin thana, Char Naldugi of Daulatkhana thana of Bhola, Chikankandi, Chakamaia and Lalua of Patuakhali district.

Scarcity of drinking water has further worsened the situation.