

Indian smuggled goods dominate markets in greater Rangpur zone

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Aug 27: The smuggled Indian goods are found flooded in all hats and bazars across the five districts of greater Rangpur zone. Particularly the big markets along the border belts are mostly dominated by the Indian smuggled goods where the smugglers of both India and Bangladesh openly sell the goods without any resistance from any quarters.

Information received here from various parts of the zone say that key routes along the bordering areas are Bhurangamari, Nageshwari, Fulbari, Mughalhat, Patigram, Aditmari, Kaligonj, Chilahati. These areas are used as vital transit points for smuggling.

Besides Indian textile products, agricultural goods, food grains, crop seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, medicines, spare parts of different vehicles and machineries and drugs are abundantly available all the markets across the zone and sold at cheaper rates to attract the buyers in large scale and thus the economic prosperity of the country is now facing a serious set back due to unresisted entry of the Indian smuggled goods.

The law enforcing agencies, district and thana level authorities are allegedly seemed quite reluctant over the free movements and marketings of the smuggling goods in the zone.

There are also information that low quality crop seeds and poisonous insecticides are openly sold to the innocent farmers which are allegedly causing a great damage to the crops and also creating health hazards.

The anti-smuggling task force frequently launched drives and recover huge smuggling goods but it never halted its marketings as yet rather it is gaining momentum gradually.

Rajshahi to have 10,000 digital phone lines

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 27: Works on installation of a digital exchange in Rajshahi are going on in full swing. The exchange will have capacity of 10,000 connections, official sources here said.

It is learnt that the works even after meeting all the demands of telephone connections.

Meanwhile, most of the narrow roads, lanes and b-lanes have fallen in bad conditions for digging every here and there by the contractors.

A part of a road in Rajshahi city dug for installation of phone lines.

— Star photo

on installation of the digital exchange are scheduled to be completed within March 1996. But a competent source believes that it cannot be completed before June as less than one-third of the work has been completed in last six months.

After completion of the works, the newly installed digital telephone exchange will replace the existing analogue system resulting in much improvement in telephone service in Rajshahi. Besides, the exchange will have about 2,000 lines in ex-

oi T&T Board to set new digital telephone lines under ground. Heavy rains have further worsened the condition. The works of digging and setting the lines cannot be completed in due time for rains. It is largely believed.

The ditches and canals have remained open for a long time and made the road communications difficult and even disrupted at some places. As a result traffic jams are occurring frequently which were uncommon in the city.

700 bottles of contraband drug seized

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 27: Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized 700 bottles of phenisidyl smuggled from India and arrested the owner of the contrabands on August 21. On a secret information,

recovered the above amount of phenisidyl worth about Taka 92,000.

The smuggled goods were sent to the Rajshahi office of the Drugs and Narcotics Control Directorate and the



The seized drug bottles along with the arrested person. — Star photo

a special patrol team of BDR stopped a Dhaka-bound night coach of Modern Enterprise near Puthia and arrested accused was handed over to the Puthia police. A case has also been filed in this connection.

Two sentenced for carrying forged notes

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 27: Israel Hossain, Judge of Special Tribunal Court No. 5 Satkhira, convicted two persons namely Rafiqul Islam and Ketab Ali of the village Madra, under Kalaroa thana, on charge of possessing Bangladeshi forged notes de-nomination of Taka 500 and Taka 100 and sentenced them to suffer 7 years rigorous imprisonment.

According to the Matihar thana police a gang of musked dacoits broke the grill of a window of the house of one Abdul Khaleque and tied his minor son Abdul Bari, 14, and using him as weapon they robbed a gun gold ornaments, 2 clocks and Tk 500 cash money.

Robbery in Rajshahi city

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Flood, erosion victims allege A large portion of relief goods misappropriated

From Our Correspondent

Unofficial sources said that with further rise of water level of the rivers Gorai and the Ganges 21 unions have so far been flooded in six thanas of the district covering an area of 80 square kilometre rendering 50 thousand people homeless. Affected people of Kumarkhali thana complained that they have not yet received any relief materials so far.

KUSHTIA, Aug 27: Miseries of flood and erosion hit people of three thanas of Kushtia have increased to a great extent as the marooned people are deprived of drinking water, sufficient food grains, adequate medicines for combatting waterborne diseases and scarcity of house building materials for construction of houses damaged by flood and erosion. Many of the people have been shifted to safer places as their dwellings have been devoured by erosion of river Padma.

The relief materials and cash grant meant for them were too inadequate to meet the needs.

The district officials said that considerable quantity of food grains and cash money along with sares, lungis have been distributed among the victims of Daulatpur Thana. They said that all possible steps have been taken to make the relief goods available to the deserving persons leaving no scope for mishandling the same.

But the victims complained that large portion of the relief goods have been misappropriated by the distributing authority keeping them hungry for several days.

It may be mentioned that most of the people in the flood hit areas have become jobless and dependent on relief materials. Hundreds of cattlehead have died due to serious scarcity of fodder in the affected areas.

Meanwhile, cholera, diarrhoea and dysentery have broken out in the flood hit areas particularly in Daulatpur Thana in an epidemic form. Scarcity of drinking water has been attributed for out break of the diseases. Government has claimed that a number of medical team were working in

the flood hit areas and giving inoculation and vaccination to the people against the diseases. But no details has yet been received here.

Meanwhile, prices of rice and other essential materials have gone high beyond the purchasing capacity of the common people. Open market sale of rice by government has not yet started in the affected areas.

If adequate measures were not taken by the government immediately or within near future, famine like condition will prevail and situation would go beyond control.

On the other hand, cattle diseases have broken out in an epidemic form. Acute scarcity of fodder as well as shortage of medicines in government dispensaries to combat the disease have made this situation worse. Continuous rain during the whole month and rise of water level of the river Gorai and the Ganges have submerged vast tract of land in six thanas including the grazing fields and damaged the entire fodder production. For want of proper food, the cattleheads have been attacked with diseases. Due to lack of treatment large number of cattleheads have died rendering the poor farmers in pitiable condition.

Unofficial sources said that with further rise of water level of the rivers Gorai and the Ganges 21 unions have so far been flooded in six thanas of the district covering an area of 80 square kilometre rendering 50 thousand people homeless. Affected people of Kumarkhali thana complained that they have not yet received any relief materials so far.

There have been further breaches in 12-mile long Raita Mohiskundi embankment in Daulatpur thana. More areas

of four unions of Daulatpur thana have been devoured by the erosion of the river Ganges and this has been continuing during last 10 years as a result of bad effect of the Farakka Barrage constructed by India on the other part of the border.

Standing crops over an area of 7,000 acres of land have been damaged rendering the poor farmers in a pitiable condition.

Erosion in Daulatpur thana has devoured 13 villages in four unions covering an area of 1,500 acres of land rendering over 10 thousand people homeless. These unions are Adabaria Praggur, Boalla and Aria while the earlier devoured unions are Philipnagar, Ramkrishnapur, Maricha and Chilmari. Erosion has devoured six primary schools, one madrasa, nine mosques, six high schools and 18 culverts.

A group of journalist from Kushtia visited the affected places on Friday last and talked to the homeless people who have taken shelter in different school premises and on the Raita Bhurka embankment. They narrated their grim battle against the jury of flood and subsequent erosion that have devoured their hearth and homes and vast tract of cultivable land.

They said, the main river Ganges was flowing eight miles away from the present course in 1972 and as a precautionary measure 12-mile long Raita Mohiskundi flood protection embankment was constructed in 1972. But the embankment was engulfed by the fury of erosion as the river changed its course due to effect of Farakka Barrage.

The homeless people have no other alternative place to live in.

They narrated the members were being detached from curse of poverty, illiteracy and adopting family planning methods. Speaking about himself Osman Ghani said, "With the loan that I started taking eight years back, I purchased goats and chickens. I also purchased a small road-side shop and started a small business. The daily profit was Tk 20."

He said, if the big projects, mentioned earlier, come out successful, all the poor people — numbering 236 would no more need to work as day-labourers, but would be able to stand on their own.

The women's society members, he said, were proving more helpful for giving their respective families a new and prosperous look.

Rahima Khaton, 28, mother of two daughters said, her husband with his small and irregular income, could hardly meet the minimum requirements of family until she was approached by an organiser of Comilla Dustha Mohila Samity. She became a member. Now she is the general secretary of the said samity.

"I became the member eight years ago and after some months I was granted a loan of Tk 500 for one year and look lease of 0.08 acres of cultivable land where my husband worked and produced vegetables and I co-operated

with him. I also purchased 3.5 maund of paddy and husked it in a local mill. Then I sold the rice. After repaying the loan money Khaton took fresh loan and invested it into small projects. Ultimately last year she was granted a loan of Tk 7,000 on an one-year term as before. "Meanwhile, I have purchased two bigas of land, one cow and also took lease of nearly one bigha of land, Rahima said.

When asked, whether she wishes to have a son as you have got two daughters already. She replied if her daughter were properly educated they would be no less than a son. Replying to another question she said her husband also holds the same view.

Rahima Khaton said that during the last seven years, after she became a member of the Samity under CCDB, with untiring efforts, she was able to change the financial position of her family. Her husband no longer work outside but in his own land for his own family and our prestige in the society has considerably gone up.

She also said that husband-wife relation between them also improved.

Dulal Chandra Saha, in his late thirties of Gayeshpur, a small trader, became a member of the CCDB sponsored Bitatheen Samity about ten years back. He first took a loan of 500 taka. After annual repayment, the loan amount was enhanced gradually. He last took Tk 7,000. He has a small family that includes his wife and widow mother but no child.

Dulal started making garments as he already had a sewing machine. Later he started a small shop beside the North Bengal high ways and purchased another sewing machine. His wife, Aloka Rani, also works with him. Dulal also took leadership in training from the CCDB and has become a Forum worker of the "Gayeshpur Ichhamati Forum" and maintains all accounts, notice books, proceeding book etc.

Curse of poverty: How they are able to remove it

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Aug 27: Small traders organised in a group named "Gayeshpur Khudra Byabashayee Dal", Gayeshpur Bhumheen Sramajibi Samity and four other women's organisations of the locality, Comilla Dustha Mohila Samity, Comilla Dinmajur Samity, Ekata Mohila Samity and Rahimpur Dustha Mohila Samity have joined the forces of poor traders, landless peasants, day-labourers and poor women Gayeshpur Ichhamati Forum for earning to change their lot.

They took loan individually, contributed individually and thus created a collective fund.

The Forum is some sort of a federation of the six societies, with four members elected from each society to form an executive committee of the Forum which represents over 200 male and female members. The Forum has one president, one vice-president, one general secretary, one assistant secretary, one treasurer and five members including three women.

President of the Forum, Md Osman Ghani, a night guard of the Gayeshpur High School talked to this correspondent in the premises of the Forum office built recently by themselves where they hold meetings — at least once a month.

The President said that from the loan-money received from the CCDB, and NGO, working in their locality, they purchased two tempos at a cost of Tk 2,04,000 and from these two tempos, they were earning a net profit of about Tk 400 to 450 per month which they were depositing in a bank. After repaying the loan-money, they would either distribute the remaining amount among the members, or, they would re-invest the saving for further earning.

He narrated the members were being detached from curse of poverty, illiteracy and adopting family planning methods. Speaking about himself Osman Ghani said, "With the loan that I started taking eight years back, I purchased goats and chickens. I also purchased a small road-side shop and started a small business. The daily profit was Tk 20."

He said, if the big projects, mentioned earlier, come out successful, all the poor people — numbering 236 would no more need to work as day-labourers, but would be able to stand on their own.

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with him. I also purchased 3.5 maund of paddy and husked it in a local mill. Then I sold the rice. After repaying the loan money Khaton took fresh loan and invested it into small projects. Ultimately last year she was granted a loan of Tk 7,000 on an one-year term as before. "Meanwhile, I have purchased two bigas of land, one cow and also took lease of nearly one bigha of land, Rahima said.

When asked, whether she wishes to have a son as you have got two daughters already. She replied if her daughter were properly educated they would be no less than a son. Replying to another question she said her husband also holds the same view.

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Illegal occupation of cremation site Justice done: But will it sustain?

By Morshed Ali Khan

TANGAIL, Aug 27: Nikhil Saha left his village home of Bharra under Nagarpur thana of Tangail district five years ago and settled in the capital with his family. Few months back he heard an unexpected news.

A group of influential people have forcibly occupied the cremation site of his family and built shops at the site. Nikhil rushed to the village only to find shops doing business in full swing.

The small altar that Nikhil had constructed there in memory of his grandmother was left intact but closely around it structures were built to install shops and the occupiers claimed that the land belonged to the government and the village market adjacent to it.

Nikhil's desperate pleas to the occupiers to vacate the site, he had inherited from his mother, went unheard. The villagers who had known him since his childhood dared not open their mouth, for the people in question could do "anything, anytime."

Now the family cremation site and a place for worship for the Sahas belonged to Ratan Mian, the Union Parishad member of Bharra, Aziz Mollah, a rich land owner, Mithol and Dithol, the two notorious brothers who had recently been prime suspects of a murder case.

Nikhil could not turn to the police for help in fear of reprisal haunted him day and night. Then, in Dhaka he sought help from a human rights organisation called, Manob Adhikar Samonny Parishad. The Parishad, after few efforts in vain to solve the problem, arranged a trip to Bharra accompanied by



This is a common scene at Nagorbari ferry ghat in Pabna. A 36-seater luxury passenger coach with passengers on roof top from Dhaka bound for Ishurdi is disembarking from a ferry under the very nose of police and BIWTA men. Thousands of such buses overloaded with passengers disembark from ferries this way risking lives. — Star photo by Ranesh Maitra

Angry mob gheraos local thana office

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 27: Some angry people gheraed the local Kaliganj thana office of the district in protest of mass snatching and terrorism in Kaliganj on August 24, it is learnt.

According to reports, some miscreants looted all belongings from Ramjan Ali and Abdul Kader Mollah of village Manoharpur and Alauddin of village Fatia in Kaliganj thana in the night of August 23. In protest of the incidents hundreds of people rushed to the spot and gheraed local thana office. The angry mob were assured by the Assistant Superintendent of Police that drastic action will be taken against the accused persons without delay then mob later withdrew their gherao programme.

Huge arms, ammunition recovered.

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 27: Jhenidah police recovered huge quantities of arms and ammunitions and arrested one young man from Jhenidah Bir Shrestha Hamidur Rahman stadium on August 23.

According to police sources, acting on secret information a gang of police forces led by Sub Inspector Masud recovered a pipe gun, bullets, seven randaos, wofalli, chapati and other sharp weapons. Police then arrested a youngman namely, Shaeb Ali of village Kalikapur in Jhenidah thana.

Housewife beaten to death in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 27: One housewife was beaten to death by her husband recently.

According to police source, one Anowar Hossain of Chaltetala under Satkhira pourasava married Fazila Khatun, 17, as his fourth wife in July. Following family troubles, the husband beat his wife Fazila mercilessly and as a result she died on the spot. Later the husband tried to suppress the killing, by hanging her in a branch of a tree, near the residence and informed the villagers that his wife has committed suicide by hanging her.

Bank's cash reserve empty

From Our Correspondent

THANCHI (Bandarban), Aug 27: Due to exhaust of cash money is the only branch of Sonali Bank at Thanchi thana headquarters; the officers and officials serving there with the installations irrespective of government, semi-government and private could not draw their salaries for the month of July '95 till August 22 making their life miserable.

The manager of Sonali Bank, Thanchi branch told informed that sending of money to Thanchi branch by river from Bandarban branch of Sonali Bank is kept in abeyance on the apprehension of robbery in the face of intensifying armed activities stepped up by the tribal insurgents.

Armed activities including looting, extortion of tolls and abduction have become regular and routine activities of the tribal insurgents at and around Thanchi, 105 kilometres from Bandarban district headquarters on the privilege of the inactivation of security forces during the on-going ceasefire, local people alleged.

No other banks except Sonali Bank has been operating a branch at Thanchi.

Two sentenced for carrying forged notes

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