

Two thieves held, security guard involved

From CHT Correspondent
KAPTAL, Rangamati, Oct 29: Two alleged thieves were held here recently with the booties by the workers and were handed over to Kaptal police.

The workers of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC) held recently two thieves with two batteries of a heavy-duty crane which was allegedly stolen away on October 10 last from the workshop depot of BFIDC at Jetttyghat, Kaptal.

The alleged thieves Nazrul Islam and Abu Thayer were handed over to Kaptal police on the same day.

The accused in their confessional statement made to the police said that they had committed the theft keeping contact with a security personnel of the corporation, sources said.

They were sent to Rangamati court for lodging of a case in this connection with the Kaptal police station.

JCD-BCL clash: 3 seriously hurt

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, Oct 29: Three persons were injured in a clash between activists of JCD (Jayotabadi Chattri Dal) and workers of BCL (Bangladesh Chattri League of AL front) at Navaran Degree College of Sharsha thana in the district on Wednesday last.

Tense situation is still prevailing there.

The actual cause of violence could not be known. Police have been deployed to ensure safety and security of people.

Beheaded body of young man recovered

From Our Correspondent
JAMALPUR, Oct 29: Melandah thana police recovered a beheaded body of a young man from a pond of village Adipoth recently.

The victim, identified as Md Abdul Rahim, 30, was allegedly killed by some miscreants.

A case has been registered with Melandah thana police in this connection.

Police arrested one person for being involved in the murder.

Four policemen suspended in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Oct 29: Four police men including a sub-inspector of Shibalya thana were suspended on Friday last for failing to discharge their duties, reports UNB.

They are — Sub-inspector Abdul Razzak, constables Abdul Matin, Abdul Kader and Abdul Bashir.

Official sources said, the action was taken against them after a notorious dacoit Ibrahim fled from the Shibalya thana custody on last Wednesday night.

Ibrahim was arrested on October 22 with a double-barrel shot gun, 27 rounds of cartridges and 15 rounds of rifle bullets. He was on a four-day remand.

Another dacoit Alamgir Hossain also fled from the same thana in last June. Police could not re-arrest them so far.

B'baria Modern Hospital inaugurated

BRAHMANBARIA, Oct 29: The 100-bed Brahmanbaria Modern Hospital was formally inaugurated by State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun-al Rashid on Saturday last, reports UNB.

The hospital was constructed at a cost of Tk 5.22 crore from the government own resources.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation of the hospital in April, 1992. About 27 lakh people of the district and adjoining districts will get medicare from the hospital.

A function organised on the occasion was also addressed by Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare M Sirajul Haq, Advocate Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan MP and Asia Rahman MP as special guests.

The State Minister said the government has undertaken massive programmes for improvement of medicare for the common men, said an official handout.

Deputy Minister Sirajul Haq said, "The government is relentlessly working to ensure health for all by the year 2000."

Mysteries of UD cases not properly investigated

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Oct 29: As many as 42 cases of unnatural death (UD) have been instituted in Chatmohar thana alone under Pabna district during the last nine months — January to September, 1995. Many of these cases occurred due to suicide, secret murder, road or other accidents, undetected diseases but, for want of proper investigation, mysteries behind these cases remain unearched.

It was learnt that suicide is rampant in Chatmohar thana but normally these cases, after recording them as UD cases, are not properly investigated into. A Union Parishad Chairman, Abdul Malek of Chatmohar told this correspondent that in many cases, these suicide occur due to failure in love, illegal sexual relation and subsequent pregnancy of young women but refusal of the men concerned to marry the unfortunate girl, extreme poverty and lack of food, undetected diseases caused by under nourishment etc, absence of treatment due to extreme poverty, secret killing or murder and suppression of fact, family problems, torture upon women for dowry by husbands, lack of peace arising out of mental diseases etc.

While explaining secret murders, the said chairman narrated that these are mainly found when one deliberately kills (mainly within the family) someone but wants to suppress the murder, the murderer or his or her accomplices get it recorded by the police as suicide by winning over the thana officer though illegal gratification and thus the case ultimately goes uninvestigated and never crosses the limit of an UD case. Filing or transforming it into a specific case is generally avoided.

A professor of Chatmohar College stated that in Chatmohar thana, suicide cases have increased alarmingly during the last several weeks. Preferring anonymity, the Professor alleged that police hardly sends dead bodies for post-mortem examination. Without holding such examination, they are found to procure an application from the interested quarters and hand over the bodies to them without performing post-mortem examinations. But, he continued, there are some other cases in which police become compelled, to avoid public agitation, to send the

bodies to morgue for post-mortem examinations. In most such cases, the interested quarters rush to the doctors holding post-mortem examinations, get them influenced through various means and procure p m (postmortem) reports favourable for serving their purposes. Thus, many murder cases are virtually killed through unlawful application of laws. Abdul Hamid, a senior journalist and a school teacher of the locality, suggested that unofficial and official investigations should be conducted to find out such cases, reasons and backgrounds of such suicide incidents and to find out solutions. Human Rights Organisation, NGOs and social welfare organisation can render tremendous services, in meeting the alarming situation prevailing since long in Chalmohar thana areas.

Saiful Islam, a young Gano Forum leader stated that poor peoples, specially the women, awareness with regard to the existing laws could be of immense help and for this purpose, the NGOs and the Bar Associations may take law motivation programmes covering upto union level. Self-employment programme, specially for women should be vigorously launched as extreme poverty would ultimately be found to play vital role behind such incidents which, if unresisted for sometime more, might pollute the whole society in Chatmohar thana and the situation might go beyond everybody's control.

This correspondent could collect the following 42 names, 28 of them being women of young age and 14 men who allegedly committed suicide or simply UD cases were recorded in thana with no or extremely meagre follow-up action by the authorities concerned.

These deaths occurred within Chatmohar thana during the period between January and September, 1995.

Mohela Khatoon, 20, of Bahadurpur, Nasima Khatoon, 20, wife of Magbul Hossain of Jhakra, Rasheda Khatoon, 22, of village Dathia Koira; Nasima Khatoon, 13, of village Jharjharria, Gouri Rani Kacmaker, 55, of village Haripur, Salima Khatoon, 18, daughter of Abul Hossain of Chatmohar Natunbazar, Mariam Begun, 30, of village Dayarampur, Noorjahan Khatoon, 18, of village

Charmikol, Lipti, 16, daughter of Saimuddin of village Mathurapur, Nasima Khatoon, 30, of village Par Dhanbilla, Resura Khatoon, 18, of village Bhadra, Ratna Begum, 15, of village Bhadra, China Khatoon, 17, of village Koinura, Begum Khatoon of village Kadamtoli, Shabana, 25, wife of Amzad Hossain of village Charnikol, Bhanoo Khatoon, 25, a divorced woman of village Jabarkole, Shahiron, 12, of village Kathalbaria, Shari-fun Nessa, 35, of village Dantia, Ajufa Khatoon, 20, of village Panchbaria, Moiful Bewa, 60, of village Shri, Sareja Khatoon, 25, of village Chruikole, Aleya Khatoon, 25, of village Dhulauri, Manzoora Khatoon, 15, daughter of Chetan Pramanik of village Lautia Sultana, 22, daughter of Belal Hossain of village Sahapur and Sayeda Khatoon, 16, daughter of Javed Pramanik of village Chhaikhola are among women.

Family particulars and other information with regard to the deaths of these mostly young girls could not, however, be readily collected.

As regards to men who died of similar unnatural deaths with only UD cases lodged in these matters, the following particulars could be collected so far: Samar Nath Das, 13, son of Rabindra Nath Das of Handial, Tofazzal Hossain, 20, of village Narikelpara; Nasim Uddin, 8, son of Abdur Razaque of village Bagholbaria; Hasen Ali, 23, of village Natabaria; Nabir Uddin, 16, of village Jaighar; Sohel, 2, son of Amzad Hossain of village Charmikole; Golam Mustafa, 18, a school student of village Natabaria; Tajul Sardar of village Sonaharpara; Abdur Rahman, 9, son Jahur Ali of village Charmikhola, and Abdus Samad, 45, of village Khatbari.

Besides, two more bodies of unidentified persons were also recovered recently by the police.

As most of the above deaths — either occurring through suicide or by way of murder or illness or due to starvation — have affected mainly young boys and girls.

Guardians are expressing grave concern and all sections of people expressed their apprehensions of grave nature.

All demanded proper and impartial effective investigations into the above cases and that too, without any further delay.

A health complex lacking basic needs to serve patients

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Oct 29: The 31-bed Chowgacha thana health complex in the district is groaning under scourge of manifold problems for quite sometime past. Insufficient number of doctors, acute shortage of medicine and paucity of fund have brought this situation, said a source.

According to information, patients with serious injuries are being referred to Jessore and Khulna hospitals immediately after their admission here. General patients are also leaving the complex at their own, in search of better treatment elsewhere. Lack of doctors, medicine and proper medical facilities, have been the cause of the alarming situation, the report added.

When contacted Residential Medical Officer (RMO) Dr Mostian Billa told The Daily Star that medicine shortage was no longer a basic problem. It was largely met by good supply made by donors from time to time in the form of relief.

During a visit to this health complex recently, different patients and their guardians informed The Daily Star correspondent that they were in the complex for long but no improvement of the diseases showed up. They said that lack of specialist to diagnose the case, give proper prescription and medicine were main causes of this situation. They also remarked that so long as the crisis of doctors, medicine and treatment remained unresolved mere big signboard of the health complex will do no good.

When contacted Thana Health and Family Planning Officer (THFPO) Dr MA Mannan briefed that despite formal opening by Post and Telecommunications Minister, Tariqul Islam in August last year, this health complex was yet to get administrative approval and budget.

Detailing the actual position, he said that the annual grant of Taka thirty thousand for the defunct Chowgacha union charitable dispensary from the concerned depart-

ment was still the only source to run this complex. He said the Chowgacha union charitable dispensary was abolished long ago.

He said that attendance of patients at the outdoor section of the health complex was rising. At present it varied between two hundred fifty to three hundred per day.

Dr Mannan stressed for administrative approval and budget for the complex immediately to run it as a full fledged health complex. He also informed that shortage of doctors was somewhat overcome following recent posting of three more doctors here in addition to existing four doctors.

DG (Director General) Health, Professor AK Shamsuddin Siddique, when contacted over phone told The Daily Star, that the case of administrative approval and budget of Chowgacha thana health complex was forwarded to health ministry. It was pending with them for final decision.

Forest resources — an important sector people ignored for long

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Oct 29: "We may see more green plants in this village provided the afforestation programme already implemented runs smoothly, hoped an old man of village Sailkupa." Ramjan Ali in his mid-seventies expressed that a few years back he was in doubt that the country would almost be treeless as the people were not aware about afforestation. But his apprehension was not true. "People are now much conscious about afforestation in rural areas", Ramjan Ali said.

To make afforestation programme a success Forest Department has taken an ambitious plan in all six thanas of the district. According to Forest Department authorities they had planted 40,576 saplings on seven kilometre long canal, seven kilometre long roads and highways, 11.47 kilometre feeder roads and 9,000 saplings were planted in different educational institutions in Jhenidah sadar thana, 43,600 saplings on 25 kilometre long canals, two kilometres feeder roads including some educational institutions in Harinakundu thana, 34,000 saplings on 16 kilometre canals, 8.00 kilometre feeder road including 2,000 saplings in different educational institutions in Sailkupa thana, 35,000 saplings on 13 kilometre roads, 14 kilometre feeder roads and some educational institutions in Kaliganj thana, 10,200 saplings on 2 kilometre roads including some educational institutions in Kotchandpur thana and 42,000 saplings on 10 roads, 25 kilometre feeder road including some educational institutions in Mohespur thana of the district, it was learnt.

KAF Sharfuddin, Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF)



JHENIDAH: Forest Department has created a forest by the side of Kaliganj-Arpara road in Jhenidah district which was started in 1992-93. — Star photo



JHENIDAH: A partial view of a forest on a canal side of Ganges-Kabadak (GK) Project in Harinakundu thana of the district. It was established by the Forest Department. — Star photo

Slaughtered body recovered

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 29: The slaughtered body of Habibur Rahman, 12, of the village Dhukuriabera in Belkuchi thana of the district was recovered from the yard of his neighbouring house.

According to the victim's father, Habib was called out of his house by some persons in the night. The following morning his body was recovered.

A case was lodged with the police and the body was sent to Sadar Hospital Morgue for autopsy.

Clash leaves five injured in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Oct 29: At least five persons were injured, one of them seriously in a clash between gamblers and villagers at Kazir Bazar under Polashbari thana recently.

The clash ensued when local people asked gamblers to stop their game on the night of Friday last. The gamblers flew into rage and launched an attack on the people with deadly weapons resulting in the injuries of five persons.

Gambling in still going on in the area it was learnt. Local people urged the authority concerned to put an end to such anti-social activities.

Distribution of voters' ID cards in CHT uncertain

From A K M Zahoarul Huq

RANGAMATI, Oct 29: The distribution of Voters' Identity Cards (VIC) has become uncertain in Chittagong Hill Tracts as neither any accord has yet been initiated by the selected institutions nor the Deputy Commissioners concerned scrutinised locally any new contractors even after running out of eleven days time.

Concerned sources said, the contractors earlier selected, were scheduled to sign the agreement by September 25 last in the regard.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) was supposed to scrutinise the contractors locally, in case the earlier selected firms failed to sign the agreement by September 25, the sources said, adding that none of the DCs in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban has so far expedited any initiative, which has caused uncertainty in preparing and distributing VIC to some 5,65,000 voters of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Jhenidah told that a total of 2,05,376 saplings were distributed free of cost upto August this year as a part of afforestation programme. About 2,00,000 saplings were raised from the seeds of Babla and Ipil Ipil. Survival of the saplings is 98, ACF informed. He further informed that their activities were started in the district in 1992 and a good number of people have been benefited from the programme. The scheme this year was completed recently, it was learnt from the sources. The sources also informed that at least 200 group societies which is locally known as samity were formed where at least 3,000 members were enlisted to maintain the saplings on different banks of canals and roads in all the thanas. The group members are liable for maintenance of strip plantation and care. After 10 to 15 years when the saplings mature the caretakers or the group members will get 65 per cent from the sale proceeds, 10 per cent for the land owners, 10 per cent for the NGOs (if any) and the rest 5 per cent will be given to respective union parishedas (UP).

over populated trees of Babla, grass, sun grass and other plants free of cost which might help them financially, it was learnt.

ACF informed that the main crop of saplings were Shishu, Mehaguni, Babla, Karoi, Rain tree and Ipil-Ipil here. The group members already were benefitted who received at least Taka 10 lakh, he added.

A High Official of Forest Department informed that at least 25 per cent of forest is required to survive. But in Jhenidah district the amount of forest area is only 3 to 4 per cent. If the mentality of the people is not changed, the per cent of forest in the district may be raised to eight per cent within coming seven to eight years, the source hopes.

Forest Department authorities further informed that they have been motivating the people specially the rural people to plant saplings around their homes and other places to feed their children with fruits and to become solvent financially in near future. Further the natural balance might be ensured through the programme, sources said.

ACF further informed that the number of nurseries in the district was about 200 in private sectors. Six more government nurseries were established in the district. Two range offices of the forest department is producing saplings to supply the same at a lower price among the people to make the afforestation programme a success. Last year Forest Extension

Department (FED) produced 2,50,000 saplings through Jhenidah and Kotchandpur ranges. FED earned Taka 1,50,000 by selling the saplings, it was learnt.

Atiur Rahman, 35, owner of Karjan nursery at Sailkupa informed that they are deprived of fair price and he is losing interest to produce more saplings in his nursery.

Another nursery owner, Abdul Mannan, of the same village informed that they have been facing troubles for selling the saplings as there is no market here which throw them to sale the saplings at a lower rate through the mediators to meet their needs.

The ACF further informed that the number of nurseries in the district is increasing every year as the people were motivated. While this correspondent visited Jhenidah-Garaganj road, Sailkupa-Hat-fajilpur road, Jhenidah-Harinakundu road, Kaliganj-Arpara road and some other roads of the district many nurseries were seen established by the both sides of the roads.

Abdul Haq, 75, of village Garaganj in Sailkupa thana of the district while returning home from a local hat with a sapling of coconut told that earlier people like him normally returned home with fish in their hands. But the habit has changed and now they atleast buy a saplings instead of fish. Abdul Haq showed a place where a small bazar was installed for selling saplings and a good number of people were seen there to purchase the same.



JESSORE: Outer view of Chowgacha Thana Health Complex in Jessore. — Star photo



SYLHET: M A Razaque Chowdhury, President, Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI) speaking at a workshop on "How to start export business" held here recently. Organised by the SCCI with assistance from the German Federation of Small Business and Technonet Asia (ZDH/TA), the function was inaugurated by Md Habibur Rahman, Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet, as the chief guest. — Star photo