

Late arrival of pesticides, delay in test results

Narayanganj Pourashava fails to implement mosquito control programme

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 22: Mosquito menace has taken a serious turn in the district affecting more than six lakh inhabitants of the main town. It is alleged that almost all the main drainage pipelines of the town area have remained blocked for a long period giving rise to accumulation of dirty stagnant waste in open drains in the city road sides. Such stagnation of waste obviously encourage mosquito breeding and it has also proved to be an ideal environment for hatching of mosquito eggs.

Other ponds, ditches and similar water bodies in the town areas are also said to be in similar condition which are often considered as garbage house by local inhabitants. However, most of these water bodies are occupied by water hyacinths which are also considered to be a favourite home of mosquitoes. Altogether, mosquito menace has increased raising the pains of the victims.

To destroy or kill the mosquitoes, dry season of the year is the best time, specially from November to February, according to experts.

Taka one lakh had been allocated for Narayanganj Pourashava to eradicate mosquito during the last fiscal

year (1994-95) but last year, the poura authority failed to initiate timely mosquito control programme due to delayed arrival of insecticides resulting in ineffective insect control system, according to a poura official.

During this fiscal year (95-96) the poura authority allocated Taka fifty thousand to prevent growth and to kill mosquitoes. However this programme has not been started yet which was supposed to start in November last. Meanwhile, the price of anti-mosquito oil has increased much, as a result it has become impossible to continue the eradication programme for more than one month with the budget allotted for 1995-96.

According to poura official, this delay in operating the programme is mainly due to late arrival of pesticide, once again, and time taken for laboratory test results.

So, mosquito control in the town area has been suffering from serious set backs further aggravating the situation.

Poura authority sources said that an Anti-Mosquito Scheme was launched in 1962-63 with 75 staff members which continued till 1980. Later non-availability of

fund from government forced the authority to limit its functions. Besides, few of the staff were transferred to various organisations, due to which the department was close since 1990.

An anti-mosquito scheme submitted to the government from this pourashava several years back is still awaiting approval, the source informed.

At present the poura authority runs this mosquito control operation with, to everyone's surprise, only one supervisor for the whole town area. No other staff have been assigned to help the supervisor, meaning, there is no one to clean the drains or spray with insecticides.

It is quite impossible for a single head to work out the mosquito control operation, the management of the poura authority does not even bother to look into the matter, says one source.

The poura authority covers an area of 4.5 square miles to spray with the insecticide called, 'Neucyde-60' which is imported. This chemical is effective, says one official. Timely spraying can halt growth of mosquito young, consequently, resulting in efficient control of the growth of mosquitoes," he added.

A mosquito has a very short life span — only 30 days. They live 15 days as larvae, the young stage and the rest of the 15 days as adult, the active stage.

Mosquitoes can be destroyed once measures to kill them is carried out efficiently. This process can be carried out alone by the poura authority," says one official. "Inhabitants must co-operate to reduce the burden of destroying mosquitoes," the official added.

The poura authority in a recent notice to its inhabitants asked to clean water hyacinths from the areas owned, by them but the response so far has been quite poor.

"This type of non-cooperation from inhabitants must be removed or the burden will keep on increasing," the official further added.

In reaction to this, the authority has filed several cases against different inhabitants of the town for not cleaning water hyacinths.

Meanwhile, the burden of sufferings of the inhabitants keeps increasing everyday. Malaria has attacked hundreds in areas like Amlapara, Masdair, Isdair, Fatullah, Dharmaganj, Kashipur, Galachepa and Shahid Nagar.

Two boys meet their sudden death in Gaibandha

GAIBANDHA, Jan 22: Two boys were killed when a wheel kept on the rooftop of a running bus suddenly fell on them at Laturbari in Bogra district last Saturday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, the ill-fated boys-Mahmudul, 6 and Mintu, 8, while playing by the side of the road received grievous injuries and were rushed to the local hospital where the attending doctors declared them dead.

Angry villagers beat two alleged dacoits to death

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 22: Angry villagers recently caught two dacoits and beaten one of them to death while the other was left injured.

According to witnesses, villagers chased a group of eight to 10 dacoits during their attempt in the house of Maulana Mustafizur Rahman of Dharandi village under Sadar thana of Patuakhali district and caught two of them.

Jamal, 30, was mercilessly assaulted to death while his accomplice Khalil, 32, was left seriously injured.

Irregularities in appointing fertilizer dealers alleged

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 22: Massive irregularities have been alleged in appointing dealers of fertilizers in Sirajganj district.

A total of 136 persons have been appointed dealers but only 35 persons have their own godowns. Following alleged corruption, distribution of fertilizers among the dealers remains suspended in the district.

It was alleged that written scheduled time of application for dealership 123 persons applied. Afterwards 19 applications more were received. An enquiry team, formed for the purpose, suggested to appoint 35 godown holders as dealers. In second phase, more 49 persons and in third phase, 52 persons were appointed as dealers without showing any reason.

The 136 dealers had to pay Tk 5000 each as donation in the Local Requirement (LR) fund of the Deputy Commissioner in STD account no. 12 which amounted to Tk 6.80 lakh.

Violating the rule, eight people from other districts have also been appointed as dealers.

Meanwhile, fertilizer crisis prevails in the district following suspension of fertilizer supply.

603 passports recovered

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 22: Six hundred and three passports, both special and international, including eight Indian passports were recovered by DB and Kotwali police of Barisal from Subarna Store, a shop of Chawkbazar in the town recently.

Police arrested Swapnan Sil, Madan Mohan Saha and Satya Ghosh in this connection.

A case was filed with Kotwali thana and the arrested were sent to court the next day.

10 injured in road mishap

MADARIPUR, Jan 22: At least ten passengers were wounded, one of them seriously, in a road accident near Sanirvar bridge under Sadar thana recently, reports UNB.

The mishap occurred when a bus lost control and fell into a roadside ditch on the Madaripur-Shariatpur road.

Number of crimes tripled last year in Magura

MAGURA, Jan 22: The number of crimes committed in the district increased by about three-fold last year than that of previous year, reports UNB.

Police sources said, they recorded 814 incidents of crime in the district in 1995. The number of crimes recorded in 1994 was only 268.

Some 495 anti-social activities were recorded in sadar, 110 in Sreepur, 138 in Mohammodpur and 71 in Sholaha thanas during the period.

The break-up of the crimes is as follows: murder with dacoity-1, dacoity-11, burglary-13, theft-59, murder-7, women repression-8, kidnapping-14, rioting-85, raping-5, narcotics related crimes-19, smuggling-4 and others 265.

The local peace-loving people have urged the concerned authorities to take immediate steps to nab the anti-social elements to ensure peace and tranquillity in the district.

Booming "check" business in Sirajganj sending back many weavers to work

From Ashit Chowdhury

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 22: Grameen Uddyg, a handloom product manufacturing factory of Grameen Bank has created much sensation among the consumers of handloom products both at home and abroad.

Grameen Bank introduced Grameen Uddyg for marketing country-made products abroad. In 1993, Grameen Uddyg was turned to an independent company to produce handloom goods including "Grameen Check", Grameen Lungi and saree. Grameen Uddyg has set up seven units in the country. One at Aralhar thana in Narayanganj district and six at Belkuchi, Ullapara and a sadar thanas in Sirajganj district.

Main product of "Grameen Uddyg" is "Grameen Check" shirtings which are exported after producing readymade

the selected marginal weavers. The designs are also supplied by the authority. The marginal handloom workers get wages per produced yard of cloth at varied rates. The field workers of the project take keen interest to watch the followups of production. The handloom works deposit the products to the unit offices on the selected dates. In total, about 10,000 handlooms are taken up by the Grameen Uddyg in seven units where about 50,000 people including women and children are engaged from processing to finishing.

When contacted some marginal weavers engaged in producing "Grameen Uddyg" products, informed this correspondent that the handloom oriented cottage industries of the district had been facing closure due to manifold reasons including shortage of running capital, price hike of cotton yarn, dyes, chemicals and open sale of smuggled Indian clothes. The "Grameen Uddyg" have taken over about 10,000 handlooms in production, saving about 500,000 dependents from unemployment. They, however, appealed to the authorities concerned to extend more technical assis-

purchased at Tk 66 in 1993 now costs Tk 91 in the market.

When contacted some marginal weavers engaged in producing "Grameen Uddyg" products, informed this correspondent that the handloom oriented cottage industries of the district had been facing closure due to manifold reasons including shortage of running capital, price hike of cotton yarn, dyes, chemicals and open sale of smuggled Indian clothes. The "Grameen Uddyg" have taken over about 10,000 handlooms in production, saving about 500,000 dependents from unemployment. They, however, appealed to the authorities concerned to extend more technical assis-



SIRAJGANJ: Women in village Chala making Benarshi saree at a factory run by the Grameen Uddyg.

While visiting some units of "Grameen Uddyg", it was learnt that Doulatpur (Belkuchi) unit, Chala (Belkuchi) unit, Bura (Belkuchi) unit, Gopalpur (Belkuchi) unit, Neorgacha (Ullapara) unit, Saidabad (Sirajganj) unit and Saidabad (Sirajganj) unit in Narayanganj district have been producing 70,000 to 80,000 yards of handloom goods including Grameen Check, Lungi and sarees every day.

Every unit of the company consists of 1,300 semi automatic handlooms on average.

The Grameen Uddyg authorities supply raw materials including coloured cotton yarn and other re-agents to

clothes in the garment factories. Every yard of Grameen Check in sold between Tk 40 to 45 depending on quality and colour. Check Saree and Lungi are sold at local markets also. One piece of saree, is sold between Tk 100 and Tk 350 and one piece of lungi is sold at Tk 125 in the wholesale markets. The "Grameen Uddyg" collects 40/1 count cotton yarn from Padma Textile Mills and 20/1 count cotton yarn from Nahid Textile Mills.

Following price hike of cotton yarn, the cost of production has also shot up causing problems in marketing. A source close to the company told this correspondent that one pound of cotton yarn was

tance to the weavers to improve skill and to boost the prospective sector of production.

The Grameen Check now faces competition with few other similar products in Sirajganj district. With flourishing of "Grameen Check", some local entrepreneurs and handloom factory owners have started producing "Sirajganj Check" and "Belkuchi Check". However, the "Grameen Uddyg" authorities have expressed satisfaction over expansion of "check" production and expressed the hope that open competition in production will improve the quality of products and more marginal weavers will be benefited.

Sugar worth Tk 12 crore remain unsold in Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Jan 22: Huge quantity of sugar worth about Taka 12 crore are lying unsold and Taka one crore 12 lakh sugarcane bills remain unpaid at Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills in Dewanganj of Jamalpur district.

The huge amount of sugar is lying in the godowns of the sugar mills which was crushed during the current sugarcane crushing season. There is no buyer to purchase the sugar due to import of low cost Indian sugar.

The authority of the Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills cannot pay the arrears bills of the cane-growers for fund crisis, it is informed. The amount of arrears bills is increasing every year in the mills, and no possibilities are noticed to mitigate the crisis. In this situation, salaries and allowances of the employees and labourers of the mills have not been paid yet.

The demand of local sugar has not increased even after the government's decision to reduce rate twice.

The loss at the mills will

stand at more than Taka 4 crore. In spite of this the produced sugar is not being sold.

The growers have to collect money from negotiators or money lenders by selling their cane on cash payment receipt with reducing 20 per cent to 25 per cent of their bills.

Some sugarcane growers are selling their cane to the local money lenders at below production cost due to fund crisis in sugar mills, it is also informed.

The cane growers are incurring huge losses in this connection. If this situation continues, the growers will give up the cultivation in future, it is expected.

The Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills is facing versatile problems and crisis. It is gathered that markets are flooded with smuggled Indian sugar. At the same time locally made sugar are being sold at Taka 30 to Taka 32 per kg whereas imported Indian sugar per kg is sold at Tk 27.

Alleged snatcher held in Comilla

COMILLA, Jan 22: District police, at last, have managed to arrest the main accused who went into hiding since the looting of Tk 3.50 lakh two months back, reports UNB.

Police said, the gang leader Nahi and his accomplices snatched away the amount from the Rajganj area of the town on November 14 and they came to learn that he took refuge at Mirpur area of Dhaka.

Police engaged some youths to help round him up and accordingly the youths contacted and invited Nahi to a lucrative secret gambling at Comilla town.

On the night of January 14, when Nahi was engaged in gambling behind the Hosa Mia High School of the town, police gheraoed the area and managed to arrest him.

Two accomplices of Nahi are yet to be arrested.

Farmers not receiving loans

BARGUNA, Jan 22: The farmers who lost their standing crops in the recent devastating floods now need financial support for their agricultural rehabilitation, reports UNB.

The affected farmers alleged that instead of giving loans to genuine people, the officials of the district were distributing loans to the 'non-productive' sector.

The existing rule for giving loans to small and marginal farmers is not being maintained properly while some rich and middle-class landlords are taking loans in fictitious names, they alleged.

Meanwhile, the farmers, including small cultivators in the district received notices from the district administration to pay arrears loans, land revenues and UP taxes.

58 firearms recovered from Barisal Div

BARISAL, Jan 22: Law enforcing agencies in their combined drive seized 58 firearms and 150 ammunition from the six districts under Barisal Division during the current nationwide hunt for illegal arms, reports UNB.

Oxbow fishery project — a unique water resources management plan

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Jan 22: Completion of development work on 23 baors covering 1400 hectares in five districts including Jessore, Jhenidah, Kustia, Chuadanga and Faridpur, taken up in second phase of 'Oxbow Lakes Small Scale Fishermen Project,' has brought radical change in baor fisheries management in the area recently.

Funded by IFAD, and supported by DANIDA with financial aid for technical assistance, the project has introduced the system of self-management of lakes by local people themselves. Functioning of the project will continue till end 1997.

Reports say that a total of 7000 fishermen and fish farmers including women are enjoying benefits now from these baor projects directly.

The project is being implemented jointly by Fisheries Department and BRAC, the report added.

All 23 baors have been handed over to DOF (Department of Fisheries) by Ministry of Land for 59 years for development in the form of aquaculture, a source said.

It also said that BRAC is providing training and credit facilities to the interested group.

Oxbow Lakes Project is primarily a 'Social Fisheries Project' meant for poor people to manage baors in such a way as to spread the benefits equally among them by maximising aquatic production, report says.

According to another source, both fishermen and fish farmers are members of lake management group. They work on the District Water Body Committee under chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner. The lake management group pays annual lease money of the Oxbow Lake to DOF.

Species like silver carp, catla, grass carp, ruhi, mrigel and common carp, are stocked in the lakes.

As a result of earlier project implementations (1st phase) thriving fingerling producing industry has developed in different places in the district and large-sized fingerling of all these species are available.

Average fish yield in 1994-95 was 436 kg per hectare. Marudia lake, measuring 26 hectares in Jhenidah district, under the baor fisheries management project reported 1206 kg per hectare. It is all time high as reported from Oxbow Lakes in the area, so far.

Fish farming in the lake compartment is semi-intensive. Beneficiaries are generally reluctant to provide inputs such as fodder and fertilizer. Active project support is necessary to motivate them to apply sufficient inputs to increase fish yields. Ponds, dikes are used for vegetable cultivation which offers rare opportunity for the landless group to be allured.

According to latest reports, more women are taking part in management of these oxbow projects. It is a project policy to involve about 70 per cent women in the project in order to remove gender imbalance in family income.

The implications of developing women are more important. Bangladeshi women usually don't have ownership over land while as approved men are entitled licence from DOF confirming right to raise fish in a pond on public land. It is proved women of the country are capable of fish farming when given chance.

IFAD and DANIDA missions have recently concluded that this form of management of water resources for landless people organised in lake management groups involving DOF leads to maximum fish production as needed in densely populated Bangladesh, while spreading

benefits to vast bulk of poorer population aiming at alleviating poverty.

It is hoped that achievements of Oxbow Lakes Project are eventually incorporated in government's policy guidelines and implemented on much larger scale in the country. There is potential to

extend baor management concept to all closed water-bodies and non-flowing river channels in the country thereby boosting national aquaculture involving large number of landless men and women. Oxbow Lakes Project is something that is unique to this area of the country.



River Bhairab is being excavated under food for work programme conducted by Jessore office of Baor Fisheries Management project.



Fishermen and fish farmers are participating in a training programme, conducted by Dr Hans.



Women are taking part in awareness training programme, held recently under the initiative of Jessore Baor Fisheries Management project.