

Workers, families suffer as jute mill laid off

MAJUDEE COURT (Noakhali). Mar 12: About 5,000 workers and employees of Delta Jute Mill have been passing miserable life with their families due to the closure of the mill, reports UNB.

The mill, one of the largest jute mills in the country, located at Chaumohani remained closed since last 19 months.

The mill authorities have not yet taken any initiative to re-open the mill even after repeated appeal by the district administration and local leaders.

The jobless workers alleged that some high officials misappropriated the money of their provident fund taking advantage of the situation.

Diesel, petrol sold at higher rates on Dhaka-Ctg route

COMILLA, Mar 12: Diesel and petrol are being sold at exorbitant prices at different petrol pumps on Dhaka-Chittagong highway for the last few days, reports UNB.

It is alleged that cash memos are also not given to the buyers after purchasing the fuel from the pumps at Mir bazar and Choudagram area of the district and also in Noakhali and Feni districts on this highway.

The owners of these pump stations are selling per litre diesel between Tk 14 and 15 against the government rate of Tk 12.82 and per litre petrol between Tk 20 and 22 as against Tk 13.89.

Meeting condemns arrest of editors of national dailies

RANGAMATI, Mar 12: Chattala Reporters' Foundation held a meeting here on Tuesday protesting the arrest of editors and journalists of different national dailies, reports UNB.

The meeting demanded immediate release of Ittefaq Editor Anwar Hossain Manju, Al-Amin Editor Alhaj Makbul Hossain and other journalists detained recently.

Traffic jam—regular feature in Pabna

PABNA, Mar 12: Traffic jam has become a regular feature in the town causing immense suffering to the town-dwellers, reports UNB.

Unauthorized katcha bazars are hindering movement of vehicles and pedestrians at Abdul Hamid Road and Anantabazar at the centre of the district town, local people said.

Rally protesting gas crisis in C'Nawabgonj

From Our Correspondent Chapal Nawabgonj, Mar 12: The Chapal Nawabgonj Gas Consumers Association has organised a protest rally in front of the district press club recently against the artificial shortfall of gas supply in the town.

The speakers alleged that the gas crisis is created artificially by the dealers. They claimed that gas cylinders are available in high rates. They demanded immediate administrative measures to solve the ongoing gas problem.



SIRAJGANJ: POTTERY ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION: This woman is giving finishing touches to her earthenwares. Who knows whether this is the last touch to her traditional profession. —Star photo

Potters see little hope of keeping their business alive

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 12: Pottery business is on verge of extinction in Sirajganj district due to manifold problems including lack of government patronisation and price hike of inputs. The professionals have been giving up the age-old traditional job failing to continue pottery business as the source of earning.

It is learnt that about 3,000 families in Ullapara, Raiganj, Tarash, Belkuchi, Chowhali and Sirajganj sadar thana were engaged in pottery business. Attractive earthenwares including jars, bowls, toys, large bowls (chari) for feeding the cattle were produced in the district. The products were sent to other districts by boats and the earthenwares and toys were the main attractions of village fairs.

Due to manifold problems including government patronisation and abnormal price-hike of inputs, the traditional profession is on verge of extinction. Soil required to prepare the mixture is not always available due to

continuous erosion of Jamuna in the rainy season and drying up of waterbodies in the dry season. The potters tell that 'athali' (sticky) soil is required to make earthenwares. Consequently, soil is collected from distant areas incurring heavy carrying cost. The prices of other inputs including 'rajan', dyes and varnish have also shot up. The professionals do not get any government patronisation and there is no provision of sanctioning bank loans in this sector.

Besides easy availability of different qualities of utensils in the market, the consumers are not much interested to buy earthenwares as the items are fragile. This resulted in fall in the demand for earthenwares in recent years.

Some potters engaged in this profession for generations told this correspondent that aluminium, melamine and other products have been marketed widely. The earthenwares fail to compete in the markets.

In village Garamashi under Belkuchi thana Avoy Kumar Paul, an 82-year old potter, expressed frustration and said that his grandsons have changed the profession and are engaged in handloom industries to earn their livelihood. He said with deep grief that time is coming when the earthenwares producing equipment including 'chaki', 'mugar' and ovens will be unknown to the people and the future generation will be ignorant about the traditional profession which once captured the markets of Bangladesh.

Nitai Chandra Paul, a potter of Hat-Pangashi in Raiganj thana, told that he is still in the profession and prepare the deities during the religious festivals of Hindus. He said that by constructing Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati and other religious idols, he is carrying on this profession even after extreme hardship.

The potters have appealed to the government to extend bank loan facilities in this sector to save the age-old traditional profession of pottery.

Fertilizer crisis disappoints hundreds of farmers

BANDARBAN, Mar 12: Farmers of the district are facing urea fertilizer crisis as the only dealer distributed 20 metric tons of fertilizer against the allotted 700 metric tons in January-February, reports UNB.

According to district Agriculture Department, the fertilizer have been allotted for the boro cultivation on 4,400 hectares of land in the district during the current season.

But, in the absence of godown of the dealer, local farmers cannot contact with him and consequently they are not getting fertilizer during the peak season, it is learnt.

There is only one signboard of Azad traders of fertilizer dealer hanging in front of a thatched house at Balaghata where no one is available to contact.

The farmers alleged that the dealer sold out the fertilizer outside the district at high prices.

The matter was informed to the Deputy Commissioner of the district who assured the farmers of proper inquiry.

Excise duty worth Tk 2cr remain unrealised from brickfield owners

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 12: Custom and Excise duties worth Tk 2 crore have been lying outstanding with the brickfield owners of 16 northern districts including Sirajganj, reports UNB.

Custom officials said the outstanding taxes could not be realised after repeated reminders given to them in different times during the last five years.

They also alleged that the owners who are running these brickfields by taking loans from the government have been depriving the government by expressing their unwillingness to repay the taxes showing various excuses.

Besides, the owners have been using firewoods instead of coal in their brickfields defying the government ban.

A recent NGO report said lakhs of trees have already been cut illegally for using in different brickfields causing environmental imbalance.

The report also said if the cutting of trees continued for the next two years, the region would face serious environmental hazards.

Local elite urged the authorities to take measures to realise the taxes from the brickfield owners and give exemplary punishment to those who use firewood to manufacture bricks.



smuggled into the country from India

—Star photo

Construction work of 8 thana health complexes going on

BANDARBAN, Mar 12: The construction works of 8 thana health complexes in Bandarban, Rangamati, Comilla, Sylhet, Chandpur and Feni districts are now going on in full swing, reports UNB.

The thanas are — Alikadam and Thanchhi of Bandarban, Rajshahi of Rangamati, Companiganj of Sylhet, Nagolkot and Brahmanpara of Comilla, Shaharasti of Chandpur and Daganbhuiyan of Feni district.

The each thana health complex will have a 31-bed hospital building, dormitory for doctors and nurses, staff quarters, mosque and garage.

The government has sanctioned a total of Tk 39.83 crore for the construction of these hospitals, expected to be completed within the current fiscal year.

About Taka one crore will be spent in consultancy for these projects being implemented with the financial assistance from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Official sources said, Tk 4.70 crore has been sanctioned for each complex: But, due to excessive transportation cost, the health complex at Thanchhi will cost Tk 6.70 crore.

Road communication is yet to be established between Thanchhi and Bandarban. The only mode of transport is boat, which is usually disrupted during dry season.

Poultry farming in Narail faces setback

NARAIL, Mar 12: Poultry farming of the district has been facing a serious setback due to inadequate treatment facilities, reports UNB.

There are no veterinary doctors and hospitals in Lohagara and Kalia thanas of the district where rural people have taken up poultry farming as their only source of income.

The only veterinary hospital in Sadar thana headquarters cannot provide treatment facilities to a large number of ailing poultry birds when diseases like ranikhet, fowlpox, duck plague and fowl cholera break out in an epidemic form.

The drugs — cosmex plus, ESB weper and Embazine are not available in the market of the district, local owners of poultry farms said. Besides, ranikhet disease vaccination (RDV), fowl cholera vaccination (FCV) and duck plague vaccination (DPV) are rare in the hospital.

Family Planning: No longer a social barrier in villages

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Mar 12: Fundamentalists no longer resist me and now I can move freely in remote areas where I work. This was expressed by a field level worker of Family Planning Department of the district. "People who noted us now-a-days extend hand to me to get information and contraceptives," said Sufia Kabir, a Family Welfare Assistant (FWA) of Saikupa Poura area. She said, earlier she had to face troubles as the people were not much aware about the merits and benefits of Family Planning methods. Now, even the illiterate people or least educated people are conscious and keenly interested to keep their families small. Life style or pattern of living in rural areas has already been changed. Sufia Kabir, informed that she had been serving in rural areas for last 16 years. The newly married women were keenly interested to accept temporary methods of family planning. Radio, television and other electronic medias are playing key roles to grow awareness among the people, Kabir said.



Akiron Nessa



Sufia Kabir

Akiron Nessa, in her mid-thirties, mother of two sons and a young daughter of village Jhaudia under Saikupa pourasabha said that she accepted a permanent method 'tubectomy' about 8 years back. When the matter was circulated among the local people, she was abhorred by the village members (headmen) even by her close relatives. But the mentality of the people gradually changed and a good number of women accepted permanent method of tubectomy being motivated, Akiron said.

Sufia Kabir, further informed that apart from Family Planning activities they have been trying to motivate people

to take part in national building activities. They are (Family Planning Department workers) advising people on seven plus points. Safe delivery of pregnant mothers, immunisation of children and mothers, distribution of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) for protection of diarrhoeal diseases, distribution of vitamin-A capsules, removal of malnutrition of children, give knowledge to illiterate women, tree planting and use of hygienic sanitary latrines.

Abul Hossain, Deputy Director (DD) Family Planning Jhenidah told that the growth rate of population in our country is 2.2 per cent per year. They hope to bring down the rate to 1.8 per cent.

The Deputy Director informed, in fiscal year 1994-95, 721 women accepted permanent method of tubectomy, 22 men were operated upon with vasectomy, 3,989 women accepted IUD or copper-T method, 65,324 women received injection, 558 women were treated with Ministration Regularisation (MR), 6.85,145 pieces of condoms and 9,66,683 cycles of oral pills were distributed during the period. In July, 1994 the Contraceptive Acceptance Rate (CAR) was 60.71 per cent and the rate increased to 63.33 per cent in June, 1995, sources said.

In Jhenidah the number of total married couples were 2,77,404. The authorities had taken a target for sterilization of 4,188 persons, 4,383 IUD cases, 14,054 doses of injections, distribute oral pills to 56,015 women and condoms to 9,979 men in current fiscal. The target of CAR was fixed at 65.50 per cent, sources informed.

Talking to Dr Saiful Haq, Assistant Director, Clinical Contraceptives (ADCC), Jhenidah it was learnt that they will be able to achieve the target by the end of this fiscal. ADCC also informed that they have been running the activities with 341 Family Welfare Assistants (FWA), 92 Family Welfare Visitors (FWV), 72 Family Planning Inspectors (FPI), seven Medical Officers (MO), six Thana Family Planning Officers (TFPO), six Assistant Family Planning Officers (ATFPO) and 48 Medical Assistants (MA). Positions of six FWA, two MA, 38 Pharmacists, 22 FWA, three FPI, 22 FWA, one MO and one ATFPO are lying vacant in the district.

Headquarters Bangladesh Coast Guard Naval Headquarters Complex Banani, Dhaka-1213 Tender Notice. 1. Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide traders/manufacturers/stockists for purchasing the undermentioned goods in local currency for Bangladesh Coast Guard. Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of goods & quantity, Date of selling tender up to, Date of opening tender. 2. Tender with necessary terms & conditions can be collected at prescribed price (non-refundable) from the Coast Guard Headquarters on any working day during office (0800-1300) hours. The tender will be opened on the abovementioned date at 11-00 am before the tenderers present. 3. The Director General, Coast Guard reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer Tangail PWD Division Tangail Notice Inviting Tender of PWD No 43 (1995-96). 1. Tenders in sealed cover in Bangladesh Form No 2911 are hereby invited from the enlisted sanitary & plumbing contractors of all classes of PWD according to their financial limit and power for the undermentioned work. The tenders will be received by the undersigned and by all the Executive Engineers under Mymensingh PWD Circle, Mymensingh from purchase of schedule date up to 12-00 Noon of 31-3-96 and will be opened on the same day at 12-15 PM in presence of the intending tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be submitted in a sealed cover with the name of work, Sl No./name of contractor and address superscribed on it. Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of work, Estimated cost, Earnest money, Time allowed, Eligible contractor to participate in the tender. 1. Water Supply & Sanitary Installation for Academic & Administrative Bldg. 2.13,820/- 4,277/- 60 days Class I & Class II. 2. Water Supply & Sanitary Installation for Student Hostel (Girls) above the existing Head Master's in the Institute of Textile Engineering & Technology at Bajitpur under Tangail District during the year 1995-96. Tk 49,565/- Tk 992/- 45 days Class I, II & Class III. Contract documents consisting of BD Form No 2911, Tender Notice, schedule of items, additional terms and conditions etc can be seen and purchased from the office of the undersigned and all the Executive Engineers under Mymensingh PWD Circle, Mymensingh on all working days during office hours up to 30-3-96 on cash payment of usual charges of Tk 400/- (Taka four hundred) per set of contract document and Tk 25/- (Taka twenty-five) per copy of BD Form No 2911 (both non-refundable) by the contractor/firm himself/herselves or his/her representative (in case of representatives authorised letter bearing the signature of the representative duly attested by the contractor/firm required to be produced along with the enlistment/registration book and other documents). VAT registration certificate (attested copy) will be enclosed with the tender documents. In case of the lowest by quoting the same rate, the selection of the contractor will be made through lottery and the lottery will be held on 16-4-96 at 11-00 AM in the Office Chamber of the undersigned in presence of the tenderers who may like to remain present. No Tender Form will be sold on the date of opening of tender. Notice inviting tenders, schedule of items, additional terms and conditions etc duly signed by the tenderer in cash and every page provided for and will form a part of the tender agreement and binding upon the tenderers. Executive Engineer Tangail PWD Division Tangail