



A potter in Hatia who has been working on his wheel finds his trade at stake as the use of earthenware is declining in the region. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin.

**Lack of pucca drainage
Town dwellers
facing health
hazards**

PATUAKHALI, Mar 15: The town dwellers here have been facing health hazards due to lack of pucca drainage system, reports UNB.

Local tax payers alleged the pourashava has already been upgraded to a category in 1988, but so far no initiative has been taken to improve the civic amenities of the dwellers.

They said the kutcha drains of the town remained filled with filth and garbage, vitiating the surroundings. Stagnant contaminated water is the breeding centre of mosquito.

Moreover, during the rainy season the shallow drains overflow the area causing untold suffering to the pedestrians. Many kutcha latrines by the side of two canals in the town are also causing health hazards.

Local residents informed that Sabujbagi, Gulbagh and Arambagh areas in the township lacks drainage facilities, causing accumulation of filth and muds.

**Construction of
5-km road
completed in
Bandarban**

BANDARBAN, Mar 15: Construction of 7-km long Roan-gchhari-Banchhari road under the Friendship Programme of Security Forces in Bandarban region is going on at a cost of Tk 5 lakh, reports UNB.

Officials said the construction of 5-kilometre road has already been completed.

At present, people of remote hill areas of Raychandra-para, Banchharipara, Pratik-bhapa and Doakumarpara come to the Roan-gchhari thana headquarters through narrow hilly roads amid great difficulty.

About 10,000 people of the localities will get better communication facilities after completion of the road.

Lt Col Aminul Karim, Commander of the Sadar Zone, told UNB that construction works of 20 km road from Banchhari to Tarachanuk via Mohendra-para and Chimbuk-Tanchi road began under the programme.

**Mango production likely
to fall this yr**

From NSM Mahbubur Rahman

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 15: Mango production have likely to fall this year than the previous season, experts predict. At the beginning of the season this year budding is not satisfactory in different mango gardens in the district. During the last decade it was found, better production of mango was recorded in every alternative year. Last year there was a

bumper production in the district. As a result there is a possibility of production shortfall this year.

It is learned from the mango-research sources that Bangladesh's position has been dropped to the 14th from its previous 4th position in the world in respect of mango production.

But on the other hand up-

ward trend is observed in US mango production due to their better research and developed technology.

At present India tops the list. USA, Mexico, Brazil, Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, Thailand are also in advanced position than that of Bangladesh in case of mango production.

Average production in Bangladesh is 1 to 1.50 tons per acre. On the other hand, other countries produce 5 to 7 tons per acre.

Chapainawabganj is considered as the best mango growing region in Bangladesh. Chapainawabganj produces one-third of the country's total mango production. But the production is threatened as the trend of bumper production is not regular. It is known from the aged observers that only a decade ago bumper production was common in every year. Recently the mango research authorities have discovered a certain disease named 'powdery mildio' as the prime cause of the shortfall of production. But they could not find out why the production is being hampered in every alternative years.



JHENIDAH: A mango tree in bloom. —Star photo

**Tk 127.67 lakh pure
drinking water
project**

JHALOKATHI, Mar 15: Work on sinking and resinking of 572 tubewells are progressing fast for ensuring pure water among the rural people, reports UNB.

Public Health and Engineering Department is implementing the programme with the financial assistance from UNICEF. Saudi government and Bangladesh government at a cost of Tk 127.67 lakh.

Under the programme 292 deep and 155 shallow tubewells are being sunk at 125 resunk in Kathalia, Nalcity, Rajapur and Sadar thanas.

Of them, 195 deep tubewells have already been sunk. After implementation of the programme, about 50,000 people of the district will get drinking water facility.

**Bank loan
defaulter gets
4-month term**

PATUAKHALI, Mar 15: A bank loan defaulter has been sentenced to four months' imprisonment for misconduct with a bank official in Kalapara thana of the district, reports UNB.

Court sources said Magistrate Abdus Salam Miah also fined the accused, Md Delwar Hussain, Tk 3,000, in default, to suffer four months' more rigorous imprisonment.

According to prosecution, Hussain, who took loan from Kalapara branch of Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) tried to assault its Manager and field staff as they asked him to repay the overdue loan amounting to Tk 28,000.

Later, the bank manager filed a case against Hossain in this connection.

**IB branch
demanded in
Patuakhali**

PATUAKHALI, Mar 15: People of Galachipa thana of the district have demanded a branch of Islamic Bank for interest free business transaction and investment, reports UNB.

Local people said Galachipa has become the business hub of the area as the traders from about 70 bazars, including Dashmina, Khepupara, Gopaldi, Atipura, Ulania, Chiknikandi, Kalagachia, Kalyan Kalash, Char Biswas and Char Montaz visit the thana headquarters regularly.

They said businessmen of Islampur, Babubazar and Munsiganj also were maintaining their trade link with Galachipa thana while more 25,000 people carrying out their business transaction outside the thana due to inadequate banks.

**Fuel prices
double in
Sirajganj**

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 15: The prices of fuel have shot up in the district due to the opposition's non-stop non-cooperation programme since March 9, reports UNB.

A litre of petrol is now being sold at 35 as against the government rate of Tk 13.75 and diesel at Tk 30 as against Tk 14.

Police sources said about 150 tank lorries loaded with petrol and diesel awaiting at Baghabarighat of the district are yet to move for their destinations in 16 northern districts.

Tank Lorry Owners Samity, meanwhile, refused to drive these lorries due to security purposes as their five lorries came under attack by the opposition activists in Rajganj thana during the March 6 hartal.

Agricultural Extension Department said due to fuel crisis, about 21,000 tubewells of the region remained inoperative and the target of production might not be achieved this year.

The price of Kerosene has also increased and is being sold at Tk 32 against the normal rate of Tk 16 per litre.

**Sale of ganja,
liquor rises
in Rajbari**

RAJBARI, Mar 15: Illegal business of liquor and ganja in slum area in the poura areas is going on unabatedly giving rise to anti-social activities, reports UNB.

Local elites alleged that no action has yet been taken by the law enforcing agencies against the illegal liquor traders.

Residents here alleged that the drunk and ganja-addicts gather at the western side of the Yasin High School in the town from morning to late night. Besides, some illegal liquor and ganja shops have sprung up in northern parts of the fish market.

It is alleged that a section of day labourers, rickshaw-pullers as well as the unemployed youths are the main customers of these drugs.

Guardians expressing their concern urged the concerned authorities to stop selling of the drugs and save the youths from further ruination.

**Acute fertiliser crisis in
Pabna, Jhenidah**

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Mar 15: Cultivation of IRRRI and boro is being hampered as acute fertiliser crisis has been prevailing throughout the district.

The prices of fertiliser have also shot up as its supply to different markets are scanty.

Urea is now being sold here at between Tk 400 and Tk 450 per bag, potash at Tk 500 per bag and TSP at between Tk 500 and Tk 550 per bag.

The official sources said some 102 fertiliser dealers have lifted their quotas from the mills and added that there was no reason for any sort of

crisis.

However, the dealers' association leaders said their stock has been exhausted. They also attributed this crisis to the opposition's non-cooperation programme as transports are off the roads.

But, it is reported that the unscrupulous traders are hoarding fertiliser and taking advantage of this opportunity by selling fertiliser at higher prices.

But no official action has yet been taken against such traders.

Our Jhenidah Correspondent reports: Acute urea fertiliser crisis is prevailing in different areas of the district.

According to reports, per bag of urea is being sold at between Tk 250 and 260. In remote areas, the price is Tk 270.

According to district Agriculture Extension Department Sources, the ex-mills price of urea is Tk 186.25 per bag.

The sources said they submitted a requirement of total 10,900 metric tons of urea to Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

But only 7,000 metric tons of urea was supplied to the whole sale distributors so far.

Most of the wholesale dealers selling urea at higher prices.

Some retailers alleged that they were compelled to sale urea between Tk 250 and 260

as the wholesale dealers are not supplying sufficient quantity of urea to them.

Sources said five dealers in Kaliganj, three dealers in Salkupa, four dealers in Jhenidah Sadar and one dealer in Moheshpur thana were selected to run the wholesale business of fertiliser this year.

It is reported that unscrupulous dealers are selling urea at higher prices taking advantage of the fertiliser crisis.

**Roadside trees
being felled
in Narail**

NARAIL, Mar 15: The valuable Mehagani and Babul trees planted on both sides of Narail-Lohagara highway are being felled by an organised gang, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that the chokidars (guards) and Roads and Highway Department do not take action against the organised gang who are selling those to the market as firewood.

The officials said the department has been facing a huge loss due to indiscriminate cutting and pilfering of valuable roadside trees.

**Edn dev project likely to
be completed next yr**

NATORE, Mar 15: Construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation works of 35,528 school buildings of the country including Natore are progressing fast at a cost of Tk 1,214 crore, reports UNB.

Officials said Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing the comprehensive development programme under the Education Development Project-10.

The project included construction of 3,856 primary school buildings, reconstruction of 19,094 school buildings and rehabilitation of 12,578 school buildings which were

damaged by natural calamities. Besides, furniture like table, chair and benches will also be supplied in these schools.

So far, construction of 846 school buildings have been completed, 12,510 school buildings reconstructed while 10,408 damaged school buildings rehabilitated.

Some 15,260 school buildings have so far been provided with furniture since the beginning of the project from the fiscal 1990-91.

The project is expected to be completed by June next year and after completion about 1 crore students will get better education facilities.

**Sweetmeat traders
depriving govt
of huge VAT**

PATUAKHALI, Mar 15: The sweetmeat traders in the district are depriving the government of huge Value Added Tax (VAT), reports UNB.

Customers alleged it is an usual practice that the shop owners do not fee the necessity to give the cash memo after selling their sweetmeat. They are evading VAT in collaboration with some dishonest officials.

According to a local estimate more than a dozen of sweetmeat shops are being run in the district town which sell huge sweetmeat daily. But a meagre amount of VAT is being realised from these shops.



Madrasah students being taught under open sky in Nijhum Dwip due to lack of rooms. — Star photo



Survey work is going on in Nijhum Dwip. — Star photo



Paddy-laden bullock carts on their way to the village markets in Hatia. — Star photo