

Villagers, police clash in Khagrachhari: 19 injured

• KHAGRACHHARI, May 3: At least 19 people, including three policemen, were injured in a clash between the villagers and police in Dighinala thana on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash erupted at Bhuyanchhara village after police arrested an old man, Shahadat Ali, 75, and his daughter Farida Begum, 12 on charge of harvesting paddy from the land of another person.

The villagers were outraged as police beat up Shahadat and his daughter following the arrest. Later, they were released in the face of strong protest by the villagers.

Seriously injured Alhelal Masud, 21, and Helal, 20, were admitted to Merung Thana Health Complex.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: A student of Sociology Department rendering songs at the freshers' reception ceremony of the department recently. — Star photo

Residential housing problem acute in Rajshahi city

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 3: Residential housing problem has become very critical during the recent years in the city and suburb areas. About half of the total population of the city have no houses of their own, it is learnt.

According to the sources of Rajshahi City Corporation, its population has risen to about five lakh but there are only about 32 thousand holdings in the city. Out of the total about 20 per cent houses are government owned offices. Other 20 per cent houses cover school, college and other institutions of both public and private authorities. That means only about 20 thousand buildings are used for housing.

Due to the rising problem of housing, house rent has increased about two folds in last two years in the city area. Sources said that a flat of three rooms with kitchen, dining space and toilets was easily available at a rate of between Taka 1000 and 1500 per month in the respectable areas two years ago. And many houses were seen lying vacant with "To Let" signboard hanging for months in those days.

The situation has almost completely changed now-a-days. And house rent of a flat has been raised to between Taka 1,800 and 3000 per month.

The main cause behind the existing critical problem of housing in the rapidly growing city of Rajshahi is nonfunctioning of the Housing Settlement Department, Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation and Rajshahi Development Authority which are supposed to solve the housing problem by granting housing loans and establishing housing estates. These institutions could not serve the purposes. Money is the main problem of their failure, it is learnt.

The Housing Settlement Department has an office here but it has no activity. In the late seventies it had established two small housing estates in the city.

The House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) started its function in the late seventies with great expectation. It could meet the need of houses at once but had stopped its credit programme about 10 years ago for want of money. HBFC has started its loan programme in all other cities and towns but for an unknown reason, kept it suspended in Rajshahi.

Rajshahi Development Authority, however, is trying to do something but due to shortage of fund most programmes remained in the file.

RDA made 566 plots in Padma Housing Estate, 117 plots in Bonalota Housing Estate, 56 plots in Parijat Housing Estate and 224 plots in Chayanir Housing Estate. According to the sources, Chayanir has been developed for the people of low income. Its plots are small and of low price.

Another big project named Barendra Housing Estate consisting of 823 plots is awaiting for approval of the concerned Ministry, it is learnt. RDA has some other housing projects in Rajshahi also named Chandrima, Nikunjo, Prantik, Bonasri etc, fates of which have remained undecided by the ministry. RDA was preparing some projects for middle class people and low income people in Aliganj Shibpur, Terokhadia, Chaddopai, Shantoshpur and Kharkhari areas.

RDA sources alleged that the government, in most cases approved a very little amount of money for RDA and suggested to run the projects on self-funding system. Sources informed that RAJUK, Chittagong Development Authority and Khulna Development Authority received fund every year but Rajshahi Development Authority got a small allocation of money once in two or three years.

Recently, different kinds of nongovernment offices are being established in the city for which residential houses are being rented. The common people who are building houses are seen more keen to rent their houses for offices as this brings more money.

Thus, the housing problem is getting worse day by day in the city. To ease the problem, House Building Finance Corporation should start its loan-disbursing function and Rajshahi Development Authority should be allocated sufficient fund, the city dwellers as well as the experienced sources suggest.

191 firearms recovered in Khulna div

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, May 3: Police from different districts of Khulna division have recovered a total of 191 illegal firearms during the special drive last month.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Khulna range, Ashraf Huda told this while addressing local journalists on Thursday at the auditorium of Police Super 6 office, Jessore.

He sought about cooperation from the people in recovering illegal arms. Police Super 6 office, Jhenidah, Magura and Narail were present.

Meanwhile, Chowgachha thana police arrested four miscreants from different parts of the thana and recovered one gun and six cartridges from their possession on Thursday. The arrested are Moln, leader of Purbha Banglar Communist Party of Boro Khunpur and Abu Bakar Siddiqui, Meshbah and Lutfur Rahman, of Bagar Dari under Chowgachha thana.

According to police, they were wanted in a number of criminal cases.

According to another report, Kotwali Police arrested Mollick Mokammel Kabir, former convicor of JCD under Rajshahi University and Zillur Rahman Vitu, President Jessore district committee of Chhatra Maitri from local town and recovered one 303 Rifle and ammunition from their possession on April 30.

Mismanagement alleged Inadequate water supply in Bandarban

BANDARBAN, May 3: The supply target of water is not being ensured in the town due to alleged mismanagement and irregularities of a section of officials, reports UNB.

Local Public Health Department (PHD) sources said, every day about two lakh gallons of water is needed in the town while the dwellers are getting only 50 to 60 thousand gallons.

Moreover, the power pumps of the Tk 4 crore water supply project of the town cannot meet the 12 per cent demand of the water. Lack of proper planning, defect in installation of power pumps and irregularities of the concerned officials were said to be main reasons behind the setback of the project.

According to PHD officials, at present only four out of 14 pumps of the project are in operation. The rest 10 went beyond any repair.

PHD has also established three infiltration galleries at a cost of Tk 14 lakh on the bank of the river Sangu to supply 40,000 gallons of water each. But it is learnt that each gallery can supply only 25 per cent of its target.

Recently, local PHD constructed a well at Cauching area in the town to lift 10,000 gallons of water per hour but finally it managed to lift only 4,000 gallons.

Meanwhile, intestinal diseases including diarrhoea, dysentery have broken out in many area due to scarcity of drinking water.

People are collecting contaminated water from ponds and canals to meet their daily necessities due to inadequate supply of pure water.

One beaten to death in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 3: One Bimal Chandra Hore, 49, a betel leaf cultivator of Khalish Khali village under Tala thana was beaten to death by a group of miscreants recently.

According to police sources, on the day of occurrence, Bimal Chandra came to sell betel leaf at Patkel Ghata bazar under Tala thana. While returning home a group of miscreants attacked him near his village with lethal weapons. They beat him mercilessly. As a result he died on the spot. Previous enmity was the cause of the incident, police said.

A case was lodged with Tala thana.

More villages in Kishoreganj brought under REB plan

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, May 3: Three more villages in Pakundia thana have been brought under rural electrification programme. The villages are — Egarasindhur, Jamalpur and Deokandi.

Md Matur Rahman, Superintendent of Police (SPL) Kishoreganj formally inaugurated the supply of electricity in three villages by switching on the board on April 22.

In this connection, a discussion meeting was held at Haji Zafar Ali College with Matur Rahman Sarkar, Chairman, Egarasindhur union parishad in the chair. It was addressed among others by Md Nazrul Islam, Executive Engineer, Rural Electrification Board (REB) Arif Ahmed General Manager, Kishoreganj Palli Bidyut Samity, Nurullah Mohammad Ansari and Ahmed Fazlul Karim, founder of the Haji Zafar Ali College.

Drought hits boro, jute cultivation Severe water crisis in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, May 3: Excessive drought along with acute drinking water crisis has made the life of the people of Natore district extremely miserable. Present situation may also affect the agriculture sector.

Most of the rivers, beels, canals and ponds have dried up. No sign of rain has been witnessed yet. Due to scorching heat and lack of water, agri-lands has turned as hard as rocks and cracks have developed in the fields.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, jute cultivation during the current season will be greatly hampered if there is no rain within next one week.

On the other hand, irrigation is not possible due to drought. Nagendra Chandra Roy, a farmer of the town said, "Though I irrigate my farm land every day but water suddenly became scarce". "Boro plants are turning yellow as I can not water the plants on time", he added.

Many low lift pumps, shallow tubewells, deep tubewells have already been rendered unserviceable as underground

water level has abnormally fallen throughout the district. Drinking water crisis has become acute both in poura and rural areas.

Water supply in the town can not meet the demand, according to allegations received. According to concerned sources, about 22 lakh gallon of water is required for about 80 thousand people of the town. But only five lakh gallons of water is being supplied in the town at present.

As a result, about 70 per cent people of Natore poura areas are deprived of drinking water.

Many people have tubewells in their houses. But, in some cases, the tubewells can not supply water as the underground water level has further fallen. In most of the cases, the tubewells are to resink and additional 10 to 20 feet deep to get water.

According to official sources, out of 2,348 shallow tubewells (STW) 102 have gone out of order in Natore Sadar thana while out of 2,392 STWs, about 50 have gone out of order in Shingra thana, out of 1,877 STWs about 70 have

gone out of order in Lalpur thana, out of 1,844 STWs 54 have gone out of order in Borrairang thana, out of 930 STWs, 36 have gone out of order in Bagatipara and out of 1,294 STWs about 74 have gone out of order in Gurudashpur thana.

There are at least 3,620 "lara" pumps throughout the district. Of them only 111 pumps are remaining out of order.

But, unofficial sources informed this correspondent that about 40 to 50 per cent of shallow and tara pumps have been choked up.

The miseries of the people became further acute due to erratic supply of electricity. People living in rural areas are the worst sufferers. Demand for green coconut and have increased.

According to Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), underground water level has fallen by 6 to 8 feet in this region during the last one month.

Prayers are being offered at different mosques and temples for rain.



NATORE: The prevailing drought and heat situation has forced many cattle like these buffaloes to cool down in water wherever available, even if much away from the field. — Star photo

May Day observed in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 3: The historic May Day was observed here with renewed pledge to protect and uphold the fundamental rights of the working people.

Different Trade Unions and Socio-cultural organisations chalked out elaborate programmes which included rallies and discussion meeting.

The day being observed every year signifying the great sacrifices of the working people of Chicago in United States in 1886. On this day 110 years ago workers of Chicago Bread Factory fearlessly protested against works for more than eight hours a day and embraced martyrdom to establish their rights.

Kushtia Motor Samik Union held a day long rallies and discussion meeting on the occasion. Workers of Industries also held discussion meeting on the occasion in memory of those who laid down their lives for the cause of establishing their rights. Journalists of Kushtia Zilla Press Club had a discussion meeting in the evening with Mizanur Rahman in Chair. Abdur Rashid Choudhury, Touhidul Karim, Hamidur Rahman and Konok Choudhury spoke on the occasion. Speakers laid emphasis on proper implementation of ILO Convention and International Labour Laws for guaranteeing the rights and facilities of the workers in the country.

One commits suicide in Jhalakathi

JHALAKATHI, May 3: A farmer allegedly committed suicide following a dispute over land at a village in Sadar thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said Kanchan Ali Malik, 35, son of one Hasan Ali Malik of Sugondha village, killed himself by taking poison at his father-in-law's residence at Dohopara village on Tuesday night.

Non-iodised salt being sold in Narail

NARAIL, May 3: Non-iodised salt is being sold at random in different hais and bazars of four thanas of the district. It is alleged, reports UNB.

The government has made mandatory to sell iodised salt for human consumption to eradicate various physical disorder like goitre, dwarfism and deafness.

Shopkeepers said that they have adequate stocks of iodised salt but people particularly the lower income groups are not interested to purchase the same due to its comparative higher price.

According to them difference of price between iodised and non-iodised salt is Tk four to five. For this poor people prefer non-iodised salt.

50-bed hospital in Moulvibazar beset with manifold problems

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, May 3: The 50-bed Sadar Hospital of the district is beset with manifold problems which include shortage of specialist physicians, accommodation, medicines and absence of blood bank.

The hospital was upgraded as modernised hospital with 50-bed in 1984 and relocated to new area. Now, preliminary works like development of infrastructure has been completed to convert the hospital into a 100-bed one. But due to lack of funds, proposed new 50 beds are yet to be installed.

At present the existing beds of the hospital can meet only 40 per cent requirement of the patients. Most of the cots and bedsheets have become worn out and these are rarely replaced by new ones. It is alleged.

Bumper aman production in Patuakhali

PATUAOKHALI, May 3: Patuakhali has set a record of bumper production by harvesting 7,37,624 metric tons of paddy in last Aman season, reports UNB.

Official sources said some 21,36,397 metric tons of Aman paddy, including 6,94,775 metric tons of high yielding variety (HYV), were produced in six districts under Barisal division during the season.

The district wise break up is 3,15,977 metric tons were produced in Barisal district, 1,81,892 tons in Pirojpur, 1,23,764 tons in Jhalakathi, 2,71,522 tons in Barguna and 4,20,476 tons in Bhola districts.

Barisal Division 42,194 more enrolled in voter list

BARISAL, May 3: A total of 42,194 persons have been enrolled afresh in the voters list in the six southern districts under Barisal division till April 27 under the voters list correction programme, official sources said, reports BSS.

The election officers received 69,278 applications of which 42,194 cases were settled down, 3,193 rejected and 13,891 remained disputed.

Of the total, 22,062 cases were settled in Barisal district, 1,404 cases in Jhalakathi, 3,829 cases in Bhola, 2,810 cases in Pirojpur, 3,392 cases in Patuakhali and 8,697 cases in Barguna districts of the division, the sources said.

Now the total number of voters stands at 34,97,709 including 17,58,518 women in six districts of the division, the sources added.

Dairy farming gaining popularity in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 3: Dairy farming is gaining popularity in seven thanas of Satkhira district and the number of farms is increasing every year.

According to reports, before 1993, the number of dairy farms in Kalaroa, Tala, Assasuni, Debhatta, Kaligoni, Shyamnagar and Sadar thanas was 21. In 1994, the number rose to 53 and last year it increased to 96.

District Livestock Department sources said, the number of registered dairy farms is now 96 and the population of improved cows in those farms 476.

According to sources, the demand of milk in the district is about 13,500 metric tons every year, but the registered dairy farms and milkmen can supply only about 9,500 metric tons of milk is being sold at Taka 12 to 14.

District Livestock Department sources said that due to short supply, the price of milk is increasing gradually.

Abdur Rahim Master of Debhatta, owner of a dairy farm, told this correspondent that he has 12 improved cows that give him one maund of milk daily. He sells milk for Taka about 20,000 a month.

Abdur Rahim said that just a year ago, the dairy farm owners were in trouble as there was no clear prospect for the farms. They had to sell milk at a lower price. But, now they have been gaining confidence again as the demand of milk has increased recently.

S M Nur Islam, owner of a farm at Satkhira town, said that he had been running his dairy farm with eight cows. He gets 35 litres of milk daily and earn about Tk 8000 per month as profit.

The farm owners are also suffering from the scarcity of fodder.

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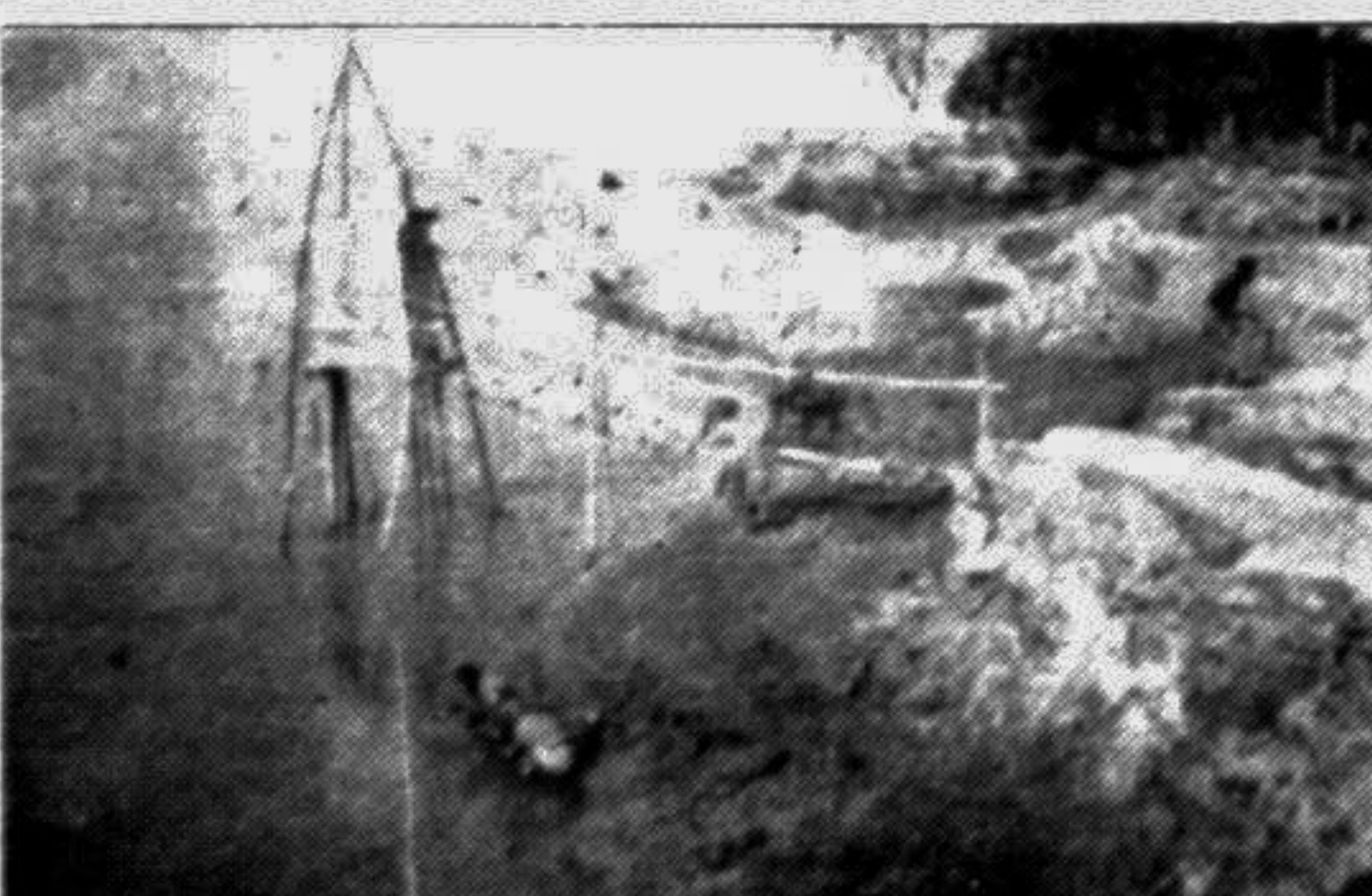
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JAMALPUR: Erosion in river Jamuna near Bahadurabad ghat has started to engulf fresh areas. Water level in the river is gradually rising threatening more areas of embankment. — Star photo

Construction work in Kushtia affected as prices of materials go up

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 3: Continuous price hike of construction materials like cement, rod, brick, sand and CI Sheets as well as carrying cost has been hampering construction work in the district. The enhanced price of rod has been attributed to the shortage of raw materials like scrap iron from Chittagong. Continuous load-shedding has been causing work stoppages and work on most of the re-rolling mills remain suspended for want of raw materials. This results in the scarcity of materials in the market.

Demand for this materials has increased with the start of development work in the district. Similarly, price of brick has increased manifold as large quantities of bricks were consumed in reconstruction work. Price of cement has shot up abnormally due to the failure of the TCB to meet the demand. Cement in Kushtia shot up from Tk 270 from last week. Carrying cost of materials have also increased for shortage of trucks. At present a bag of cement is being sold at Tk 280 instead of Tk 195 while price

Skilled manpower needed to boost agri output: BAU VC

MYMENSINGH, May 3: Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) has underscored the need for building skilled manpower to help the country's farmers to boost production, reports UNB.

"We will have to develop the country by using our own knowledge, merit and devotion," he said while addressing the installation ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of BAU Employees Association.

The VC also called for coordinated efforts of BAU students, teachers and officers to achieve its goal in agricultural extension, research and education.

Presided over by Muhammad Idris Ali, the function was addressed by Registrar Muhammad Abdul Hannan Khan and Prof Dr Muhammad Hossain.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD) Road Division, Perojpur

Notice of RHD Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No. 66 PRD 1995-96	Construction of double soling at part of 19th & 20th KM of Togra-indurkani-Kaloron sanns Road under Perojpur Road Division, Perojpur during 1995-96.
2. Name of work	9.64.348/19.287/-
3. Estimated cost	19,287/-
4. Earnest money	35 (Thirty five) days
5. Time allowed	Executive Engineer (RHD) Road Division, Perojpur/Bansal/Patuakhali/Bhola/Planning and Design Division, Barisal/Planning Division, (P&D) Dhaka/Sub-Divisional Engineer (RHD) Road Sub-Division, Perojpur/Kawkhali during office hours on all working days. No tender form will be sold on the opening date of tender.
6. Name of offices where tender documents will available	Additional Chief Engineer (RHD), Barisal Zone, Barisal/Superintending Engineer (RHD) Monitoring & Evaluation circle (P&D) Dhaka/Superintending Engineer (RHD), Barisal Road Circle, Barisal/Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Perojpur/Barisal/Patuakhali/Bhola.
7. Name of office where tender bids will be received	Up to 12-30 pm on 16-5-96 E/2-2-1403 B.
8. Last date and time of receipt in sealed cover	At 12-45 pm on 19-5-96 E/5-2-1403 B.
9. Date and time of recording in the office of the undersigned	21-5-96 E/7-2-1403 B at 10-30 am.
10. Date of lottery	'A' to 'C' class enlisted contractor under general category of RHD, 'D' class enlisted contractor under general category of Barisal Road Circle, Barisal.
11. Eligibility of contractors	Md Jalilur Rahman Pramanik Executive Engineer (RHD) Road Division, Perojpur