

## Industrial waste toxicates river water

## Thousands of inhabitants affected

From Our Correspondent

TANGAIL, Oct 5: The Louhajang river is apprehended to have been badly polluted by industrial waste containing high proportion of arsenic resulting from continuous flow of wastes from allegedly the Textile mill at Khudirampur of the district. Thousands of people have been affected reportedly using water from the river. More-over, the affected people have been using water from other sources.

A large scale mill named, Alauddin Textile Mill Private Limited (ATM) was established in September, 1994, at the village Khudirampur beside the Dhaka-Tangail highway, six kilometre east of the district town. Local people, however, did not oppose at the time of establishment considering employment for locals although it is located in a residential area. The mill, after going into operation started three units, printing, dyeing and finishing at a

time. Many people including the locals are also engaged in production. After sometime, the mill was turned to a profitable business organisation.

According to the Industrial Law, every mill authority is to ensure proper sanitation, healthy residential and facilities for the labourers and to preserve waste product in a closed safe tank or in a closed area so as to ensure that it cannot disturb or harm environmental equilibrium.

It is alleged that the mill authority has been doing brisk business violating all rules and regulations. Huddling in a suffocating area the labourers spend their nights in inhuman condition. There is only one toilet in the whole mill area where other facilities are absent.

What is most surprising and frightening is that all wastes

including from the dyeing and printing process units have been flowing continuously into the Louhajang river through reportedly an underground pipeline. A reliable health officer said, "dyeing and printing wastes of textile mill contains a considerable quantity of arsenic which is harmful for human consumption. Arsenic may easily penetrate into the human body by chain of processes and create incurable diseases and even bring end to life, a senior physician here said while giving their views to this correspondent on the issue.

Local people informed that the river water has already changed and appear almost deep black and at some places, blood red producing pungent smell. This has almost paralysed the entire population of living creatures in the river.

It is learnt that access to water from ponds or other water

bodies are not available for the people living near the river bank. They are totally dependent on river water for domestic use. They are facing various problems because of water crisis. Thousand of people living near the river including Khudirampur, Korotia, Bispushia, Gosiabari, Kumuli, Madarjani, Fuekia, Khakjana, Mirkumuli and other areas have been panic stricken suspecting environmental imbalance to water pollution.

While talking to The Daily Star local people including the farmers, traders and students complained that the mill authority paid no heed to the repeated request of the locals in this connection. Later the chairman and the members of Korotia union council took initiative to solve the problems considering the sufferings of the people.

Two meetings were held with

the affected people, union council chairman and members and mill authority. As per a joint decision the mill authority stopped throwing the wastes. But this was only true for about 30 days. Later they resumed throwing the waste into the river, farmers alleged. The helpless people urged for remedy to the TNO of sadar thana through union council. The TNO, however, gave assurance of immediate action but nothing had yet been done for some reasons still unknown.

Local people are hopeless as they see no remedy from any quarter. They wistfully look forward to higher authority for their protection.

The local Daily Star correspondent met the Deputy Commissioner and the TNO of Tangail and talked to them about the issue. They hopelessly expressed their inability to solve the problem.

## KCC commissioner expelled from AL, arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 5: Mohammad Hossain Mukta, 45, KCC Commissioner elected from Ward No-31 was arrested early Tuesday morning from his residence by Kotwali thana police — 72 hours after his expulsion from city Awami League on charge of criminal acts in which he was involved since 1983.

According to a handout issued by KMP Commissioner, Mukta was arrested along with ten alleged terrorists found in his residence during police operation.

Known as 'king of pirates' of the Sunderbans and ring leader of an organised gang of armed terrorists of Rupsha industrial belt of the city, the alleged ward commissioner was so long on bail in connection with 35 cases including four murder and 16 armed dacoity cases recorded with different thanas of Khulna and Bagerhat districts during last two decades, the handout said.

The handout further said that the expelled AL leader who was elected bagging highest number of votes among 31 wards during last KCC election used to harbour criminals and armed terrorists for suiting ill purposes including extortion, dacoities and muggings.

He joined Awami League in May this year and since then established a self-rule in his ward allegedly by means of armed violence.

Meanwhile, another news adds: Three alleged armed terrorists were severely wounded in explosion of powerful hand bombs which they were making in an abandoned house at Molapara under Kotwali thana. They are Ukiluddin, Ohidul Islam and Bilal Hossain.

Kotwali police also recovered eleven powerful hand bombs from Molapara today.

## Abducted school girl rescued

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 5: A minor girl abducted from village Chowbaria on September 21 was rescued from Village Rokanpur in the district after one week of her abduction.

The victim, Shahnaz Parveen, 15, daughter of Abdus Salam, Village Bhabanpur under Bhagmura thana was returning home after visiting her maternal uncle's house in Saratnagar on the day of her abduction allegedly by eight miscreants.

It was gathered, one primary school teacher was among the miscreants who obstructed the victim on her way. He allegedly tied her mouth with a country made towel (gamchha) and confined her in a house of Menhazuddin of village Rokanpur. The people of the locality somehow came to know of the incident and reported the matter to the chairman of Dantia-Bangangram union parishad. The chairman recovered the girl with the help of the villagers and handed her over to her father.

Meanwhile, the father of the victim, Abdus Sattar, has filed a case with Bangora thana against all the eight persons involved in abduction. They are: Golgar Hossain, Anul Haque and Annull Haque, sons of Khoda Bhai of village Bhabanpur, Siddique Rahman, teacher of Mathurapur Government Primary School and four others whose names could not be ascertained.

Police, however, could not arrest any of the accused so far till writing of the report.

## One beaten to death for uprooting sugarcane

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 5: A youngman was tortured to death allegedly by his neighbours at village Fuli in Katiadi thana on September 30 night.

The body of the victim identified as Dulal, 28, was recovered by the police the following day and sent to the morgue of Kishoreganj sadar hospital for autopsy.

Police sources said, Dulal uprooted a sugarcane from a field owned by Suruj Ali of the village. For this reason, the members of Suruj Ali's family allegedly took him by force to their houses and tied him up. They confined him in a room for the whole night and beat him mercilessly. He succumbed to his injuries there.

A case was filed with Katiadi police accusing 18 persons in this connection. None could so far be arrested as all the accused went into hiding, police said.

## Truck-tempo collision, one killed

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 5: A man was killed on the spot in a truck-tempo collision at Tetutala in sadar thana on Wednesday, reports UMB.

The victim was identified as Mokbul Hossain of village Kharikhali in the thana.

According to police, the tempo passenger Mokbul met his tragic end of his life when a Jehnidah bound truck collided head on with the tempo coming from opposite direction.

The driver managed to flee the scene along with his truck. The dead body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was lodged with the police.

## Ferry service between Aricha-Nagarbari facing constraints

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 5: Due to appearance of innumerable shoals within the river Jamuna along Nagarbari-Aricha river route, ferry services between the two ghats are being delayed much. The water-level of the river Jamuna has been falling rendering an abnormal situation in the plying of ferries.

Shoals, have been appearing not only within the river channel but also at the mouths of both the Nagarbari and Aricha ghats. This has led to frequent shifting of pontoons in the ghats. Massive dredging is being carried out. However, due to shortage of dredgers — specially powerful ones, prompt dredging is not being possible. As a result, the ferry services have been facing immense strains. The vessels were plying at much slower speed. The trip frequency of the ferries is also been affected much. This, in turn, has been affecting the

coach services too. Long queues were seen at both ends of the ghats.

At the mouth of Nagarbari ferry ghat, innumerable shoals have appeared. The channel through which the ferries ply, has also shrunk. The process of emergence of such shoals has been continuing unabated.

In lean period every year, this problem crops up and continues till the arrival of rainy season covering a long period of six months beginning from the month of October to April during this period.

When contacted, Mohammad Ishaque Aili, told this correspondent over telephone that the problem of Nagarbari ferry ghat could be resolved if it was shifted permanently to Nattipur. He further said that it was for this and other problems, the Nagarbari ferry ghat has been permanently abandoned by the government last year.

## In N-region of country

## Financing schemes to promote industrialisation to be introduced

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 5: The IFIC Bank will soon introduce project financing schemes to contribute to industrialisation in less developed northern region of the country.

Abbasuddin Ahmed, Managing Director of IFIC Bank Limited disclosed this here recently while exchanging views with the local business community and clients of the bank at a community centre.

He observed that socio-economic conditions of the northern region had developed much in last few years and the local business community was feeling flow of more capital for rapid industrialisation.

Expressing experiences gathered during his recent visits in Dinajpur, Bogra and Rajshahi, Abbasuddin said that

many entrepreneurs had come to him to press for starting project financing in those areas.

He observed that opening of land ports had developed trading business and the situation seemed favourable for industrialisation.

The meeting was also attended among others by Asaduzzaman Khan, General Manager of Bangladesh Bank, Rajshahi branch, Abdul Halim Bhuiya, GM of Agrani Bank, Rajshahi, Mohammad Ali Sarkar, President of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Kazi Fariduddin, Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi, Abul Kasem, Additional District Magistrate and others.

Abbasuddin Ahmed later met the local journalists at Rajshahi motel.

## Natore town dwellers become hostage to terrorists

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Oct 5: The inhabitants of Meerpara area in the town have become hostages to an alleged group of terrorists. They apprehend violence at any time, said some prominent citizens of the town in a press conference recently.

They alleged, the terrorist group has been continuing their anti-social activities under the very nose of law enforcing agencies for a long time.

According to them, Boro Mayna, an alleged terrorist and gang leader of local terrorist group was arrested a number of times on charge of different anti-social activities like theft, dacoity, rape and killing.

The residents of Meerpara protested the anti-social activities several times. Demanding punitive action against Boro Mayna and his accomplices, a complaint with signature of 52 residents was given to deputy commissioner of Natore on December 5, last year and copies of it were sent to the then home minister, home secretary, inspector general of police, deputy director of anti-corruption department, Rajshahi and SP, Natore.

But the residents could not see the result of the complaint yet.

To run his anti-social activities smoothly, Boro Mayna made his sugarcane field, near his house, round keeping bare at centre point, alleged the local residents.

According to the residents, the alleged terrorist, with a plan to harass them, filed a general diary with sadar police station, after blasting a cocktail in front of his house. Residents said that the incident of cocktail blasting was made by Boro Mayna himself and claimed that they have enough proofs behind the incident.

Following this incident, on August 27, this year the residents filed another complaint with sadar PS. But, the residents alleged that no initiative was taken yet to investigate into the incident. Rather the terrorist group are threatening the area-dwellers and creating pressure to withdraw their complaint, it is alleged.

Though the residents have become impatient due to the anti-social activities in their area, they can not protest it in fear of their lives. They are apprehending that Boro Mayna with his accomplices from outside may launch another attack at any time.

When contacted police said that as there had been no definite complaint against Boro Mayna and his companions, they have nothing to do regarding this matter.

The residents of Meerpara, however, urged the higher authorities to take immediate actions against the terrorists after proper investigation with a view to restoring peace in the area.

## Fate of jute growers uncertain

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 5: Inadequate water reservoirs for processing jute and prevailing low market price is adversely affecting jute growers of the district.

Water from most of the stagnant ditches and ponds are being used in cultivating other crops.

Moreover, rainfall this year was quite insufficient. As a result, most of the reservoirs where jute plants are placed for rotting process are almost empty.

In spite of those difficulties, growers who have been able to make their crop ready for sale, are not getting fair prices due to absence of government agencies and other private parties in the market who buy raw jute at market value. The middlemen are reportedly taking the advantage of low market price of jute. They allegedly hoard the raw jute and sell them whenever the price goes up.

Good quality of jute are being sold in the markets of the district at between Taka 350 to Taka 375 per maund which does

not cover the production cost. This situation has caused widespread disappointment and dissatisfaction among the jute growers who are often found coming back with their products unsold.

Jute is widely regarded as the main cash crop of this area. Some farmers told this correspondent that they had spent between Taka 800 and Tk 900 to cultivate jute one bigha of land as labour cost fertiliser, seeds, and harvesting. On an average, four to five maunds of jute are produced from a bigha of land. But price of four maunds of jute is between Taka 1400 and Tk 1500.

When contacted some professional jute traders said that Bangladesh Jute Marketing Corporation which opens jute purchasing centres every year during the season in the region has not opened it yet. They also informed that if purchasing is not started soon, which is already delayed, there is a possibility that raw jute may find customers in neighbouring West Bengal in India.

## From The Court Room

## Three get life term for violating girl

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 5: Three persons have been convicted for raping a girl and sentenced to suffer transportation for life recently. Another accused of the case has been acquitted as the charges brought against him could not be proved beyond doubt.

They have been convicted under Section 6 (1) of Repression on Women's Act.

Muhammad Shafiuddin, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Pabna delivered the judgment in his court.

The convicted persons are: Babu, Akmal and Zezul. They were tried in a session. The acquitted person is Mohammad Musa.

The prosecution story in brief, is that on January 17 this year, the above mentioned accused persons went to house of Moslem Uddin of village Brishapatpur at dead of night. They forcibly entered into the room of Mamata Khatun, daughter of the house owner, and at gun point caught her and gang-raped the girl.

Mamata Khatun cried out for help and the villagers rushed to the spot, but the miscreants managed to escape. Meanwhile, Mamata lost her senses.

When she regained her senses, Mamata narrated the story to the villagers.

On January 24, Mamata herself proceeded to Santhia thana and lodged an 'ejahar'. Police recorded the same, took up investigation and, thereafter, submitted charge-sheet against the accused persons.

## One sentenced to life for murder

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 5: One Fariduddin of village Sarulla under Tala thana was awarded life term for killing his brother recently.

The case in brief is that the accused Fariduddin tried to sell his late elder brother Serap Uddin's land that was resisted by his another brother Komoluddin and on March 5, 1988 following dispute over the land Fariduddin stabbed Komoluddin with a sharp knife. As a result he died on the spot.

A case was filed with Tala thana.

## One convicted for possessing forged currency notes

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 5: One person was convicted and sentenced to five year rigorous imprisonment for possessing forged notes on September 29.

According to prosecution the accused Dayem Ali of village Arashinagar under Dumuria thana in Khulna district was caught with forged notes amounting to Taka 2400 by Tala thana police from Patkelghata bazar of the same thana on November 17, 1993.

A case was lodged with Tala thana. Md. Alauddin Sardar District and Session Judge Satkhira found him guilty and awarded him the said punishment.

## Narcotics seized in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 5: Kotwali police recovered on Sept 29, 310 bottles of phenisidyl, 20 bottles of foreign liquor, 15 litres of rectified spirit, one kg of opium and sixty cocktail bombs from railway market area under Kotwali thana. Seven persons were arrested in this connection.

Police sources said the special team during the operation which began from September 15 recovered one revolver, two pipeguns and a gun cartridge from West Banikamhar area. Twenty alleged muggers were also rounded up during the same period.



PABNA: The local BRTC bus terminal was once a busy one in this region. But due to withdrawal of bus services from here during the last BNP regime the terminal now wears a deserted look. Photo shows (left) abandoned office building and (right) workshop which are now safe haven of 'nastans' and anti-social elements.

## 'Resume BRTC service', demand people of Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 5: The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) bus terminal constructed at the cost of over Taka 70,00,000 on the eastern side of the town has now become a safe haven and den of armed 'nastans' and anti-social elements.

The BRTC terminal was inaugurated in 1981. However, only after one and a half years of its service, it was closed at the end of 1982 as the BRTC bus, coach and truck services were suddenly stopped in spite of the fact that the local BRTC bus depot, unlike many other bus depots of the country, was all through a profitable concern, statistics show.

From then the depot has remained closed without giving any prior official notice to the members of the public throwing thousands of its regular passengers, traders and industrialists in misery.

Before its closure, a total of 40 buses and coaches used to ply regularly on different inter-district and internal routes. The traders were also benefited much through the BRTC truck services.

In mid-eighties when the martial law regulations were relaxed, people of all shades of opinion in Pabna started holding meetings and demonstrations demanding resumption of BRTC bus and coach services and re-opening of the BRTC depot where a modern workshop was also set up. The demand became gradually intensified because there was no other means of communication except in road communications for the people of Pabna.

In absence of BRTC services, the people of Pabna have become completely dependent on the private bus, coach and truck

services. These services were doing monopoly business in Pabna. But, taking advantage of monopoly passengers were being deprived in many ways as no time-schedule is being maintained. Passengers were being harassed frequently, enhanced fare were being demanded showing utter disregard to the existing laws of the land.

Being disgusted with such anarchic situation a long with frequent strikes, the people of Pabna have become captives in the hands of the private transport owners and employees.

In such a situation people intensified their movement for resumption of BRTC service. As a result, the last BNP government introduced a skeleton BRTC bus service with only four buses and assured services of more buses and trucks in Pabna soon. But nothing tangible was done after wards, rather it was found that within a short span of several months, the bus services were suspended as all the four buses were too old and unserviceable. Those were also found to be beyond repair. During the tenure of the last BNP rule, no new bus was added — rather all the said four abandoned buses were shifted to Dhaka.

Thus Pabna BRTC depot has turned deserted.

The workshop was also removed to Dhaka. All the officers and employees, excepting only three, have been shifted. Now the BRTC terminal, constructed over an area of about one acre of land, has been lying completely abandoned.

This correspondent, while visiting the terminal a few days recently found a guard sleeping in a nearby road-side tea-stall. According to him, there was one

care-taker and two guards sat for them it was almost impossible to look after the properties.

According to him, one of the guards works during the day and other one at night. But as their official duty is supposed to be for eight hours. However, there should be at least three guards. He further added that for a single guard it was impossible to do the job at night.

In fact, the entire terminal area has now turned into safe shelter for criminals, armed hooligans and anti-social elements. Extortion of money from passengers, traders, abduction of women and incidents of rape, robbery and dacoity and other crimes were being committed from here, many alleged.

Police patrol is irregular especially at night.

Meanwhile, the Pabna Chambers of Commerce and Industries, the District Bar Association, Pabna Press Club and other professional bodies have demanded immediate reopening of BRTC bus and truck services, reopening of the BRTC depot and terminal in the greater interest of all sections of people.

They informed that there was no railway link, or riverine route connecting Pabna with the rest of the country.

The political parties namely, Awami League, BNP, Gano Forum, Left Democratic Front have also raised the demand.

Five members of Parliament elected from the district, Wazuddin Khan, Shamsur Rahman Sharif, Dilu Ahmed Talifuddin, Rafiqul Islam Bakul and Begum Zannatul Ferdous have also supported the demand.

— Star photo



JHENIDAH: Trucks, minibuses and other vehicles are parked by the roadside in the town creating traffic jam frequently. Authorities constructed a terminal for the trucks at Hamdah in the town and asked the drivers not to rush in the town. But who cares? This photo was taken from Jhenidah Agrani Square.

— Star photo