

Temporary production suspension at Baghabari Milk Vita factory

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 7: Production of milk-powder, butter and ghee was suspended since the end of July and would remain so till the end of October this year in the Baghabari Milk Vita Factory, the only such concern in the northern region.

The situation was mainly due to inadequate supply of raw milk by the 150 primary co-operative milk societies functioning in six thanas of the greater Pabna district. The thanas are: Bera, Santhia, Faridpur, Shahjapur, Ullapara and Bhangora.

While visiting the factory recently, this correspondent came to know the latest situation of the factory. When asked about the availability of raw milk from the co-operative societies, supplied every day, a senior assistant manager of the factory told that on an average, they were getting a daily supply of 25,000 litres of milk.

When further asked what was being done with supplied milk by keeping production of milk-powder, ghee and butter closed for months together, the official told that the entire quantity of milk, was being processed in the factory and, in pasteurized form, the produce were being sent everyday to Dhaka Milk Vita company in liquid form for marketing there. This was being done for meeting the growing demand of liquid milk in the capital city, he said. He further said that this was being done as per instructions given by the higher authorities as the sale of liquid milk was more profitable than that of powder milk which was incurring a higher cost of production.

On being asked about milk consumption capacity of the factory, the assistant manager told that the original consumption capacity of the machines were 50,000 litres per day but due to decay in the old machinery, the capacity fell to 40,000 litres per day. The factory, it may be recalled here, was formally inaugurated in early 1975. The daily consumption capacity now-a-days at times comes down to 35,000 litres of raw milk.

The senior assistant manager who talked to this correspondent in absence of the manager who was staying in Dhaka, further stated that the factory since its inception, was incurring a huge loss every year, but since 1991, it has become a profitable concern. He continued to say that the net profit incurred in the financial year 1991-92, amounted to approximately Tk 88,00,000 and during the just-concluded financial year, the profit rose to Taka 2,95,00,000. While disclosing more information, the official told that everything depended on ensuring regular supply of milk in adequate quantity which is not possible for various reasons. He stated that the supply of raw milk increases up to 75,000 litres a day during the rainy season when river communication facilities around the factory improves and also the cattles supply higher quantity of milk.

During the lean season, he said, the supply goes down to only 25,000 to 30,000 litres per day because of the fact that during this season, cattles generally remain pregnant and their

supply also reduce. Moreover, the area around the factory being a riverine one, road communication facilities are also disrupted causing hindrance to reach milk-produces to reach in factory gate.

Discussing on solution of this problem, a live stock specialist told that the traditional breeding pattern of the cattles has to be improved so that a minimum number of cattles supply the minimum required quantity of milk everyday. He said that this could be ensured by providing regular artificial insemination of the cattles through proper planning and proper health care of the cattles.

Touching upon the health condition of cattles and also of their breeding, the specialist further said that proper cattle fodder was so scarce and costly that the cattle-owners do not find it profitable through their experience and hence they were increasingly becoming attracted towards supplying natural and traditional food to their cattles.

Another official of the factory told The Daily Star that more than two decades back, the Milk Vita company took lease from the government of over 15,000 acres of khas land adjacent to the factory for using as pasture land.

He said that there were days when the Milk-Vita could not consume the entire quantity of supplied raw milk, but now-a-days, the situation has reversed.

Among other reasons of shortage of fodder in the adjoining areas, he disclosed that

about 600 acres of land, out of 1500 acres leased land were lost because a section of local influential, by preparing false deeds or by fraudulently obtaining decrees, or by preparing a number of false records in collusion with a section of dishonest officials and employees of the revenue or settlement department, have gone out of the possession of the Milk-Vita.

Through such forged papers and documents, many influential people have obtained so-called ownership over about 600 acres of the Pasture land in flagrant violation of laws of the land and also to the detriment of the national interest. Litigations in different courts of law were pending over the same.

Meanwhile, the factory has imported highly modern machinery for producing powder milk, ghee and butter at a cost of Tk 11 crore. The machines would be installed by the end of 1997 with the help of engineers of Denmark, from where those machines were imported. It was also disclosed that the new machine has got a capacity of consuming 1,00,000 litres of instant milk-powder. It was expected that by that time, scarcity of raw milk would also be removed by providing higher variety cattle in larger number through massive use of artificial insemination procedure.

The number of regular employees and labourers was below 170, whereas there were one manager, two deputy managers, seven senior assistant managers and 11 assistant managers. The number officials should be reduced, experienced circle viewed.

The allegations are baseless : VC Corruption charges against Khulna University VC

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 7: The Vice Chancellor of Khulna University, Dr. Golam Ali Fakir has been facing allegations of politicising the university administration from the teachers, students and local elites.

His alleged direct participation in political affairs has been tarnishing the image of the VC of Khulna University.

Dr. Fakir who hails from Fokirat thana of Bagerhat district was blessed with this coveted post during last BNP rule. He has been fuelling political clashes on the campus and has already made it a hot-bed of filthy politics, it has been alleged. His action against 13 students on reportedly false charges heated the campus to such an extent that guardians expressed grave concern over the fate of their sons and daughters.

Later, students launched an agitation against the vice chancellor compelling him to withdraw expulsion order earlier served on 13 students. The VC blamed the expelled students for resorting to violence on the campus.

Earlier, Khulna Nagarik Samaj, a body of local elite of Khulna city, submitted a memorandum to the Education Minister for investigating into his alleged corruption, irregularities, nepotism and politicisation in almost every sphere of the university affairs.

In the memorandum, submitted on September 4 last, the Nagarik Samaj alleged that a total of 50 teachers, officers and employees were appointed by him illegally. Most of them were allegedly his relatives, people of his own region and

supporters of a certain political party.

He has allegedly given contract of developments works to his nephew. He reportedly destroyed the healthy teacher-student relation as he had taken decisions to ensure the interest of a coterie.

In the memorandum, Khulna Nagarik Samaj demanded of the government to form a high-power investigation committee to probe into the allegations against him and take necessary step.

When contacted, the VC, over telephone at the university Uttara rest house in Dhaka denied the allegations against him terming those as totally baseless and fabricated.

The VC also disclosed that he would convene the Syndicate meeting of the university on October 8 to review overall academic atmosphere of the university.

The VC categorically said that a certain quarter is engaged to tarnish the image of the university. They are trying to vitiate the congenial atmosphere of the university," he added.

He also claimed that no untoward incident occurred in the university recently. "A total peaceful atmosphere has been prevailing on the university campus," he asserted.

In an interview with The Daily Star in December 1994 the VC had categorically mentioned that students in principle agreed that they would not indulge themselves in politics. The VC claims that student politics is still absent in the campus.



SYLHET: A big anti-terrorism rally was brought out by Terrorism Resistance Committee in the town on Thursday. — Star photo

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission

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BAEC/SI-1(2)/94-143
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PABNA: A two-day workshop on "Problems of Land Reforms" held under the joint auspices of Samata Samaj Kalyan Samity and ALRD in cooperation with PRIP-TRUST concluded in local Zilla Board auditorium recently. (Non-government Organisations (NGOs) of the northern region took part. Magrub Morshed, Secretary, Ministry of Land (L) and Deputy Commissioner (DC), Pabna (R) are seen in the picture. — Star photo

Traders' unions call half-day hartal in Khulna city

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 7: A half-day hartal was observed here peacefully.

The strike began at 6 am and ended at 2 pm. During the hartal period all kinds of activities including business activities of the port city came to a standstill.

Khulna Traders Union, Station Road Traders Union, Ghat Road Traders Union and Skid-ghat Handling Workers Union jointly called the hartal in protest against alleged terrorism, illegal toll collection in the city.

It is worth mentioning, a number of home-made bombs were exploded during the last few days centering forceful occupation of the Skid-ghat by a section of people backed by reportedly an influential quarter.

Arms, ammunition recovered

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Oct 7: Police recovered two fire arms and 50 round bullets from village Kupuria under Sripur thana in the district recently, police sources said.

According to the police, acting on a tip-off, a contingent of police led by Fakir Saleh Muhammad, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Magura raided the house of Nikhil Kumar Mondal and Ranjan Chandra Roy of village Kupuria in Sripur thana of the district and recovered two rifles and 50 round bullets. None was arrested.

A case was lodged with Sripur thana.

Rain paralyzes life in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 7: Incessant rain has paralysed normal life in the town as well as part of Chokoria thana of the district.

The rain has caused water-logging in the town and many roads have gone under three feet water. Weathermen said that the rain was due to the recent depression over the Bay.

Life has virtually come to a halt in the town. Attendance at schools, colleges and offices was thin today. Chokoria has been flooded by waterlogging. Weathermen said that between 6 am to 9 pm today 100mm rainfall was recorded while it was 65mm yesterday.

The Dhaka-Cox's Bazar flight of Biman was delayed for more than one hour today due to the rain.

One arrested for alleged murder

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Oct 7: Daulatpur thana police arrested Karim son of Khoda Hakhsh from village Gangarampur on charge of alleged murder of Zahidul, 22, son of Nasir Molla recently.

It was reported that Zahidul allegedly beaten to death on September 22 afternoon at Taragonia Dak Bungalow by some miscreants who asked him to surrender illegal arms he allegedly possessed.

Police said that more arrest are likely very soon in this connection.

Road construction work left incomplete for last 21 years

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Oct 7: The construction work of the Rajoir-Kowtalpara road has not been completed in the last 21 years and as such two lakh people of Kowtalpara thana are deprived of easy communication.

The twenty kilometres long road from Rajoir to Kowtalpara thana headquarters of Gopalganj district is under construction for the last twenty-one years. The earth work of Rajoir-Kowtalpara road was completed in 1976. Then the work of constructing bridges and harring bound of the road was started in 1995 after the long cessation of 20 years. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) completed the construction of Ramnagar, Kalabari-1, Kalabari-2, Petkata, Khejurbari, Radhaganj and Parkona bridges of the harring and started the work of its harring bond.

The Roads and Highways Division told the Local Government Engineering Bureau/Department that it would complete the rest of the construction work of the road.

The Local Government Engineering Bureau/Department completed the work of harring bond from Kowtalpara headquarters to Petkata and it could not complete the rest work of the road at the Roads and Highways Division's embargo and the harring bond work of ten kilometres from Petkata of Kowtalpara thana to Senkhali of Rajoir thana of the road has not been completed yet. As such no vehicle can run on the road. But the Roads and Highways Division has not started the rest work of ten kilometres from Petkata to Senkhali of the road.

Jamuna, Old Brahmaputra river basins Heavy siltation threatens navigation

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Oct 7: Emergence of chars on the belts of Brahmaputra, Jhenai, Jingir and Jamuna have been creating obstacles to the riverine transports in the Jamalpur district to a great extent.

The depth of the rivers at some points has reduced to such a level that even the small boats can not ply. The absence of dredging has aggravated the situation further.

Chars have emerged in many places in the river Jamuna and old Brahmaputra due to heavy siltation.

An official source said that an additional amount of over Taka five lakh is required for keeping the rivers free of silt.

According to the Water Development Board sources, water level has dropped in the Brahmaputra at Dewanganj, in Jamuna at the Bahadurabad ghat, Jhenai near at Jamalpur, Lulijan at Sarishabari and Jimgir near at Baskishganj.

The Water Development Board sources said 15 feet layer of silt have been carried along in the Brahmaputra at Dewanganj and 10 feet layer of silt in the Jamuna at Bahadurabad ghat.

In the coming lean period, the ground and surface water levels will go down further seriously affecting the ecological balance and causing crisis in availability of water for both drinking and irrigation purposes, the source said.

The water transports including ferries and country-made boats plying between Jagannathganj ghat to Sirajganj ghat, Bahadurabad ghat to Shanandabari ghat, Bahadurabad ghat to Chilmari ghat Bahadurabad ghat to Teestamukh ghat, Outhail to Sariakandi ghat, Dewanganj thana ghat to Jamalpur-Kalibari ghat every rainy and dry seasons is suspended due to heavy siltation.

Besides, movement of water vessels through the narrow passage near Kallasuna, Fulfuler char, Bubuler char, 10 miles upstream from Bahadurabad ghat is very difficult.

It was learnt that BIWTA has undertaken plan for dredging of the rivers. Dredging is necessary at some places along the 32 km long Bahadurabad ghat to Teestamukh Railway ferry ghat route to keep it navigable.

Meanwhile, country-made mechanized boats have become the main river line transport for carrying passengers and commodities. At present over one hundred such engine boats have been plying on different routes in Jamuna river of the district. But journey by these boats is very risky. Accidents

occur frequently, dacoities are also being committed on these routes.

Moreover, the connecting canals and beels have also dried up. As a result the irrigation of the locality is being hampered to a great extent.

13 policemen suspended

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 7: Some 13 police personnel of two thanas of Chapainawabganj district were suspended for their negligence of duty.

According to the official sources, Jahangir Hossain, Superintendent of Police of Chapainawabganj, during his surprise visits to Nachol and Gomostapur thanas on September 20 night did not find the 13 on duty.

After completion of official processes, ASI Mustafizur Rahman and five constables of Gomostapur thana and ASI Khatir Rahman and six constables of Nachol thana were suspended for negligence of duty.

Meanwhile, SP Jahangir Hossain was withdrawn from Chapainawabganj and posted at the Dhaka Police Headquarters, the source said.

The ferry service of the Jagannathganj Ghat is also facing closure.

A large number of fishermen has also become unemployed due to large scale siltation of the rivers.

A comprehensive dredging is

needed on emergency basis, the experts expressed.

The authorities concerned have been urged to take immediate steps to dredge the silted up points of the river to mitigate the sufferings of the people of the locality.

128th meeting of BUC held

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Oct 7: The 128th meeting of the Bangladesh University Council (BUC) was held at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) on Tuesday reports UNB.

President of BUC and Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Prof M Shahjahan presided over the meeting, said a press release.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Vice-Chancellor of BAU Prof Shah Mohammad Farooq, VC of Rajshahi University Prof Muhammad Yusuf Ali, VC of Jahangirnagar University Prof Anurul Islam, VC of Khulna University Prof Golam Ali Fakir.

The meeting discussed the problems of education and research in the country's universities. The meeting also discussed the proposal for membership of the country's private universities in the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

3 commit suicide in a single day

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Oct 7: Three persons committed suicide yesterday, hospital source said as post mortem of three bodies were performed.

Khosbur, 35, son of Abdul Gofur of village Nagar Sautu under Sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison. Cause of suicide was suspected to be family feud, police source said.

Wahida Akter Ranu, 15, a student of class eight of Gorosthanpara of Kushtia town committed suicide by hanging herself. Cause of her suicide was stated to be love affairs, police source said.

Sampati Khatun, 20, daughter of Ummat Ali of village Sukgripur of sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison. Cause of suicide was stated to be family feud, police source said.

Three separate UD cases were filed with Kushtia police station in these connection.



CLEAN UP THE WORLD: Thousands of school students participated in the Environmental Programme and Cleaning Day under the banner 'Clean up the World' in the rural area of Gazipur district recently organised by Grameen View. — Grameen View photo