

## News snaps

### 2,13,000 hectares brought under Aus farming

RANGPUR, May 11: The Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has undertaken a programme to put 2,13,000 hectares under Aus crop cultivation in eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur zone, and AED source told BSS.

About 1,12,000 hectares have so far been brought under Aus cultivation and the rest area is expected to be completed by next month. The districtwise break-up of the cultivation target is as follows: Rangpur target-62,000 hectares, Nilphamari-24,850 hectares, Gaibandha-4,000 hectares, Kurigram-27,500 hectares, Dinajpur-38,500 hectares, Thakurgaon-23,000 hectares and Panchagarh-12,100 hectares.

### Culvert construction project undertaken

CHUADANGA, May 11: The Local Government Engineering Department has taken up a project to construct 20 pipe culverts in Jibannagar thana of Chuadanga district in the current financial year at a cost of Taka 9,80,424 under its rural development programme, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the two roads on which the culverts are being constructed are Shantoshpur-Hashadah bazar road and Banka-Andulbaria road. The construction work of the culverts will be completed by next month.

### Valuables worth Tk 5 lakh looted

FENI, May 11: Valuables worth about Tk 5.3 lakh were looted in three dacoities in the district, police said, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, a gang of dacoits entered into the house of Badu Mia of Alipur village in Daghanbhuiyan thana and decamped with valuables worth about Tk two lakh on April 28. In another incident, a gang of miscreants raided Laskarhat bazar in sadar thana and decamped with valuables worth about Tk three lakh from nine shops on the night of April 22. On the same night another gang of dacoits stormed the house of Shahabuddin of village Alokdia in the same thana and looted valuables worth about Tk 50,000.

### Dispute on construction of road settled

BANDARBAN, May 11: The dispute on construction of Lama-Sualik road through the land of security forces' training centre has been settled amicably, reports UNB.

Local Government Engineering Department and the security forces in a recent meeting have agreed to construct 53-km alternate Lama-Sualik road avoiding the training centre. Earlier the road was passing through the land acquired by the security forces for the training centre. The new Lama-Sualik road may need additional allotment then the earlier allotment of Tk 34 crore, the sources said.

### Construction work of 5 schools completed

RANGAMATI, May 11: Rangamati zone of Facilities Department has nearly completed construction work of five existing government secondary schools at a cost of Taka 14 lakh, according to official sources, reports BSS.

The project included construction of boundary walls of Rangamati Government High School and Rangamati Government Girls' High School in sadar thana, class-room of Marayangiri Government Pilot High School in Kaptai thana and Taindong Government High School in Raganthali thana and academic building of Bhubanjy Government High School in Zurachhari thana of the district, the sources detailed.

### Indian silk saree seized

MANIKGANJ, May 11: Detective Branch (DB) of police of Manikganj seized 190 pieces of Indian silk saree with blouse-pieces, three bottles of whisky and 13 bottles of phenisidyl on May 6 near Tara bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off DB police searched a Dhaka-bound passenger bus and seized the contraband items. None was arrested. A case has been registered with Manikganj police.

### Drug addict kills baby

SHERPUR, May 11: A drug addict in an attack on Wednesday killed his two-year-old niece and injured his sister at Girdanaraypur area of the town, reports UNB.

According to family sources, Haider Ali, 50, after taking hemp returned to his house from outside on the day in an abnormal condition. All on a sudden he attacked both his sister Parman, 35, and her daughter Shahida with lethal weapons. They were rushed to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Shahida succumbed on the following day. Police arrested Haider Ali.

### Manpower shortage in edn deptt

MADARIPUR, May 11: The local Education Department is facing problem due to shortage of manpower, reports UNB.

According to official sources, two posts of district primary and assistant primary education officers are lying vacant for a long time hampering the day to day activities. On the other hand, the post of primary training institute's supervisor is also lying vacant. The posts of two Headmasters of Donovan Government Girls' and Islamia Government High School remained vacant since long causing suffering to the students. The posts of District Education Officer and Assistant Education Officer in secondary have also fallen vacant.

### Diesel price hike hampers farming

MADARIPUR, May 11: Cultivation of IRRI-Boro is being affected adversely due to price hike of diesel and erratic power supply, reports UNB.

According to the farmers, irrigation on about three lakh acres of land is facing set back as diesel price has soared up during the last three weeks. Diesel is being sold between Tk 17 and Tk 19 as against Tk 13. The farmers are also in hardships as they lost their Aman crops in the last season. The farmers of the area alleged that the power pump owners and Jotars have been taking advantage of the situation. They have already enhanced the irrigation charge abnormally. It is also alleged that frequent disruption of power and malpractice by a section of bank employees in disbursing agri loan are also responsible for the set-back in achieving the target of IRRI-Boro cultivation.

### Outstanding land dev tax unrealised

GAZIPUR, May 11: Outstanding land development tax of over Tk 15.20 crore have been lying unrealised for long with private land owners, government and other organisations in five thanas of the district, reports UNB.

Of the total amount, Tk 14 crore remained outstanding with various government and non-government organisations. Meanwhile, an amount of Tk 3.01 crore has been fixed as land development tax is the current year. Deputy Commissioner of the district expressed his dissatisfaction over poor realisation of outstanding tax.

### 8 drug addicts arrested

NAOGAON, May 11: Police in a drive against drug abuse and drug trading in the last week arrested eight people and recovered a huge quantity of narcotics from different areas of the district, reports UNB.

The seized contrabands included 24 litres of rectified spirit and 47 bottles of phenisidyl syrup. Police arrested three people with 20 litres of rectified spirit from Atrai thana and three youths — Taher, Khaleque and Polash — from the town with 40 bottles of phenisidyl. Earlier, police arrested two phenisidyl traders with seven bottles of phenisidyl from Ukilpara in sadar thana on April 29. The arrested were identified as Motahar Hossain and Babu.

### Villager beaten to death

THAKURGAON, May 11: Shahidul Islam, 45, of village Keshurbari under Thakurgaon sadar thana was beaten to death at Dholahat on May 5, reports BSS.

Witnesses said Shahidul went to Dholahat for marketing. All on a sudden a hue and cry started in the market and people began to beat him as alleged bicycle lifter. He died on the spot. A case was recorded at Thakurgaon Police Station. After autopsy the body was handed over to his relatives.

### Efforts on to make women self-reliant

PABNA, May 11: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believed in empowering the women and pledge-bound to make them self-reliant, reports UNB.

He was addressing a literacy certificate distribution programme of an NGO named "Nijera Kori" as chief guest at Kasinathpur in Sathia thana on Friday. The State Minister said the government has undertaken all out efforts to eradicate illiteracy and make Bangladesh free from poverty.

### Fire claimed 37 lives in 5 years

KISHOREGANJ, May 11: Some 37 people were killed, 44 others injured and properties worth over Tk 3 crore have been gutted in 265 fire incidents during last five years in the district, reports UNB.

District Fire Service and Civil Defence sources said, 25 people were killed and 33 others injured while properties worth about Tk 55.54 lakh were charred in 44 fire incidents in 1993. Seven people died and property valued at Tk 54.50 lakh had been gutted in 97 fire incidents during the year 1994 and 1995. In the year 1996, valuables worth about Tk 1.41 crore were gutted in 64 incidents and in 1997, property worth of Tk 53.35 lakh had been destroyed in 60 separate incidents. Five people died and 11 other injured in these incidents.



SYLHET: MA Majid, Leader Page Editor of The Dawn, famous English daily newspaper of Pakistan, speaking at a function held recently at Sylhet Press Club. — Star photo

## Bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy expected in B'baria

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, May 11: Bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy is expected in all seven thanas of the district during the current season.

According to the Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, initially a total of 79,000 hectares of land had been brought under IRRI-Boro paddy cultivation. Later the cultivation target was increased up to 87,980 hectares of land to achieve the production target of 2,21,055 metric tons of paddy.

Due to the growing interest among farmers the cultivation target was exceeded in all seven thanas of the district. A total of 82,205 hectares of High Yielding Varieties (HYV) paddy field, were cultivated while 5,775 hectares of land were cultivated with the local varieties.

AED sources said, due to favourable climatic condition and enhanced programme of IRRI-Boro cultivation they have been expecting bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy.

While talking some farmers informed this correspondent, they hope an enhanced production of IRRI-Boro paddy. If the climatic condition is favourable up to the harvesting time, they hope to have a good production of IRRI-Boro paddy.

Meanwhile, the farmers of the district did not get expected production of Transplanted

Aman paddy during the last season. The farmers gave a special drive for IRRI-Boro production is the current season to recover the losses incurred during the last Transplanted Aman cultivation season.

According to AED, Brahmanbaria district office sources, they will obtain a good result is IRRI-Boro cultivation during the current season. They fixed up their achievement target of production to 2,43,768 metric tons in the previous target 2,21,055 metric tons in the current season.

Out of the total target, officials have been expecting to achieve 2,35,106 metric tons of paddy from the fields where HYV of paddy have been cultivated and 8,665 metric tons of paddy from the fields where local varieties of paddy have been cultivated.



BRAHMANBARIA: A field of IRRI-Boro paddy under Joydorkandi-Sunamura Irrigation Project in Sarail thana. — Star photo

## Arsenic panic grips Chandpur

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, May 11: Arsenic panic has gripped seven thanas of the district.

Arsenic content has been found in most of the tubewells in the district. According to the local Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) sources, the whole Chandpur district has already been plagued with arsenic contamination.

The local PHED started testing arsenic content in tubewell water in different thanas since last year.

PHED authority examined water of about 50 per cent tubewells of the district. Almost all tubewells, so far examined, are found more or less arsenic contaminated.

But local PHED officials are

unable to tackle this alarming situation. The places where arsenic contents are detected are: Faridganj, Haziganj, Matlab, Shahrasti, Kachua, Haimchar

### Youth drowns

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, May 11: A young man named Shiraj, 25, drowned on April 3 in a tank opposite to Katwali thana while he was swimming along with his friends there.

Later his body was recovered by the Fire Brigade personnel and sent to Faridpur General Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Shiraj left behind his widow and a son.

and Chandpur sadar thanas.

A large number of people have been suffering from arsenic related diseases. Meanwhile, 25 per cent tubewells have been sealed-off in the district.

According to PHED, the danger level of arsenic contamination in the water is .05 mg. This is dangerous to human body. Besides, arsenic content was also found below danger level up to .02 mg in some areas of the district. Local PHED sources told this correspondent that steps were taken to examine water of most of tubewells of the district.

But no measures were taken as yet by PHED to check the arsenic contamination further.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Prof Abdul Khaleque, Vice-Chancellor of the university speaking at a farewell function and freshers' reception ceremony held recently at the Genetics and Breeding Department. Treasurer Prof Abul Fazal Huq, departmental chairman Prof O I Joarder and Dean of Biological and Geological Sciences Prof Abdul Khalek are also seen. — Star photo

### Clashes over Jalmahal continue

NARSINGDI, May 11: Clashes continued for the third day over the possession of a Jalmahal at Harirampur in Raipur thana of the district, reports UNB.

At least 35 people were injured, three of them seriously, in the clashes which erupted at about 10 am between the supporters of Nannu Bepari and Lal Mia Master.

The series of clashes which began on Friday, continued throughout the day.

### 2 killed in Feni road accident

FENI, May 11: Two people were killed and seven others injured when a microbus, carrying a bride party, fell into a ditch near Muhuriganj on Kharachhari road night, reports UNB.

Of the victims, Joyanal Abedin, 27, died on the spot while Sarwar Hossain, 30, succumbed to his injuries in Feni Sadar Hospital.

The injured were also admitted to the hospital. They were on way to Comilla to join a marriage ceremony.

### One killed in blast while making bomb

SIRAJGANJ, May 11: A young man was killed in a bomb explosion at Sabuj Kanon Preparatory School at Mujib road in the town early reports UNB.

Police said Zakaria Masud, 27, died on the spot when the bomb he was making along with his associates in a room of the school went off at about 2:30 am.

On information, police rushed to the school and recovered the bomb.

## River erosion Modern tech-based pilot project to protect Bhola

BHOLA, May 11: A modern technology-based pilot project has been undertaken to protect Bhola island from river erosion, reports BSS.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak and Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed inaugurated the pilot project here on Sunday.

The pilot project, with the financial assistance from Denmark and the Netherlands, will cost less than the cost of the methods usually applied to stop river erosion in Bangladesh, officials said. The project will also help save agricultural land, they added.

Another such pilot project has been undertaken in Haimchar under Chandpur district. The pilot project at Bhola,

officials said, would be implemented to protect one kilometre area from erosion of the river Meghna in Kachhi union of sadar thana.

During a briefing on the occasion, the ministers were told that when implemented the project would completely stop river erosion resulting in emergence of new land.

The project would cost Taka one crore 20 lakh, officials said. Secretary to the Ministry of Water Resources Dr. ATM Shamsul Huq, and Ambassador of the Netherlands in Bangladesh Dick Den Haas were, among others, present during the briefing session.

Inaugurating the project, Abdur Razzak said the govern-

ment of Bangabandhu had implemented different projects immediately after the independence to reconstitute the island of Bhola which was affected by 1970 cyclonic storm. The present government, he said, would continue its efforts for the development of Bhola.

Speaking on the occasion, Tofael Ahmed said sufficient power stations were being installed in different parts of the country, including Bhola with the help of available adequate gas reserve.

He said 17 per cent growth was achieved in the exports. The minister urged all, irrespective of party affiliations, to help lead the country towards progress.

### Jamuna bank protection dam threatened

SIRAJGANJ, May 11: The Jamuna bank protection embankment here is being threatened due to massive erosion, reports UNB.

A foreign consulting firm started the project work in 1996 with a view to protecting the area from river erosion with an involvement of Tk 22 crore.

For this reason, construction of a 2.5-km embankment from Rangam area to BL High School in the town has been started.

The project work included earth filling with normal sloping, laying of six-inch brick chips on the synthetic cover on the slope, geo-textile. The work is expected to be completed by November next.

Local people alleged, proper construction work is being hampered as the consulting firm is doing the work hurriedly without maintaining proper rules.

Meanwhile, water level on the river Jamuna has increased due to incessant rain and on rush of hilly water and massive erosion has threatened the area which may hit the embankment any moment.

### Shelterless families on rise in Noakhali

NOAKHALI, May 11: The number of uprooted shelterless families due to river erosion and natural calamities is on rise in the district, reports UNB.

According to a survey conducted by a social welfare organisation, some 5,000 such destitute families who wanted to settle temporarily on government khas lands are being harassed by touts and influential people.

Some of the distressed families said they were evicted from their dwelling houses by terrorists of vested quarters who also took away their harvests forcibly from their cultivated land.

They said these vested quarters occupied hundreds of acres of khas land in Hatiya, Companiganj and Sadar thana by fraudulently means with the connivance of section of dishonest officials.

They also said musclemen of Jotedars raided Kochchapia, Diara and Balua villages, set ablaze 20 dwelling houses and injured six destitute people recently. Another three houses and four shops were burnt to ashes by them at Charnajid village in Sudharam thana.

Meanwhile, poor and marginal farmers of different char areas are also being evicted forcibly and their own land properties are being grabbed by influential people creating a reign of terror.

### 17 hurt as BCL factions clash at Shahjadpur College

SIRAJGANJ, May 11: A clash between two rival groups of BCL centering panel projection in Shahjadpur Government College Student Union elections left 17 students injured, reports UNB.

The clash erupted at about 10 am when Baki and Abir groups of Chhatra League went to the college campus for their panel projection meetings.

The election to the college student union on May 21.

Of the injured, six were admitted to Shahjadpur Thana Health Complex.

### Mother, daughter killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 11: A mother and her daughter were killed while 20 others were injured, five of them seriously in a road accident at China More under Sadar thana on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road recently.

According to police sources, the accident occurred when a Kishoreganj-bound passenger bus coming from Mymensingh turned turtle as the driver of the bus lost control over the steering wheel.

The dead were identified as Shahera Khatun, 28, and daughter Halani Begum, 5. Seriously injured, Abdul Aziz, 40, Mustafa, 35, Moazzam, 40, Rouf, 40, and Raib, 22, were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) while other injured persons were released after first aid treatment.

## Valuable timbers seized

RANGAMATI, May 11: Forest officials in a raid recovered about 5,000 cubic feet of valuable timbers worth about Taka 25 lakh from different areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts, reports BSS.

Seven timber traffickers were rounded up, one truck and nine engine boats seized in the drive conducted by the special team of Chittagong Hill Tracts south forest division led by its divisional forest officer.

Twenty-five forest cases were lodged, officials said.

On re-establishing control over government reserved forests in the region following the signing of the CHT peace accord, officials of the south forest division recovered about 50,000 cft of timbers, mostly teak, worth about Taka 2.5 crore till April, 1998 from mid December 1997, Tapan Kumar Dey, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) said.

Forty-eight timber smugglers were arrested, 24 engine-boats, five buses and nine trucks were seized in a number of raids conducted in the reserve forests while about 200 forest cases were lodged in these connections till the end of last month, DFO said.

"As our access has been secured to our reserved forests with the restoration of peace following signing of the peace accord on December 2 last year, pilferage of forest produces from the government reserved forests has virtually come to a halt in the face of intensifying patrol round the clock," DFO said.

Inadequate manpower, insufficient vehicles and watercraft and absence of modern communication facilities have been hindering the protection of forests, Tapan Dey maintained.

Raised in 1909, CHTSFD-one of the major territorial forest divisions in the country — has got a forest cover of 6,29,537 acres, including 2,02,937 acres of reserved forests and 4,29,537 acres of unclassified state forest, divided into 17 units manned with only 233 officials. The number of manpower needs enhancement, the DFO said.

## Lightning claims life of army officer

From Our Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, May 11: Lightning has claimed the life of an army officer at Palashpur area under Matiranga thana. The incident occurred recently.

The victim has been identified as S A Raihanul Alam, 28, a Second Lieutenant of 11th Battalion of army.

Officials said, the victim died on road when he was being shifted to Chittagong Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after the incident.

## 50 pe travellers going thru' Benapole are patients

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, May 11: Number of patients going to India for treatment from Bangladesh is on sharp rise in recent time

According to unofficial report more than 50 per cent of total passport holders moving out of the country through Benapole check-post are patients.

On average nearly 500 persons move out to India through this route every day. Even for minor cases having minimum financial ability patients are going out for thorough and investigative medical check-up with a view to regaining satisfaction and restoring confidence.

According to patients, better medical facilities are available there at a cheaper cost.

Despite government assurance of making medical facilities available at cheaper cost in the country, the trend to go on visit to India for medical purpose still goes on unabated.

When asked why this situation prevails in the country though there are a good number of doctors, academically better qualified and equipped with latest type of instruments, some doctors replied that the situation was not as grove as a section of people made it sound.



CHAPAINAWABGANJ: Officials of IPM project recently visited the cultivation plots at Kalyanpur horticulture farm in the district. — Star photo

## IPM project begins at Chapainawabganj

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, May 11: The Ministry of Agriculture started Integrated Pesticides Management (IPM) project in Chapainawabganj last month with the financial assistance of Danida. The project aims at achieving permanent self-reliance in food.

It also aims at building up favourable pesticide management for fresh environment. With this end in view, a training course has been started at Kalyanpur Horticulture Centre. It is a five years' project and the only project in Northern area. Another project has been established in Joydevpur under Gazipur district.

Under this project every year two training courses will be held each for 110 days. A total of 50 trainees will be trained in each course. They will train the farmers following conclusion of their training. After finishing training these trainees will train the farmers in field.

Under the programme 812 government and 120 non-government employees will be trained up. A total of 3,320 field schools will be established and 83,000 farmers will be trained up during the whole season. Through establishment of 500 farmers' field schools 15,000 vegetables farmers will be trained up.

Pesticides are being used widely on crops fields to save crops from pest-attack. But pesticide has a long lasting effect on human health. So the training is mainly based on the research as to how crops can be saved from pests without using pesticides.

Use of pesticides will be decreased by 80 per cent and IPM project will create enthusiasm among people. For comparative study separate plots of paddy of different varieties have been selected under IPM and non IPM management.