

News snaps

Man killed in road accident

SATKHIRA, Sept 19: One person was killed in a road accident near Ghoshnagar area on Sekendar Abu Zafar Road under Tala thana recently, reports BSS. Police sources said, a Paikgacha-bound pickup van from Jessore ran over a man while he was trying to cross the road. He died on the spot. The victim was identified as Ali Mahmud, 60, of village Khalnagar in Tala thana. A case was filed with Tala thana police. Police seized the pick-up van, but the driver managed to escape.

Protest meeting against terrorism

CHUADANGA, Sept 19: A protest meeting against terrorism was held recently at Darshana Rall Bazar Battala under Darshana Paurashava of Chuadanga district, reports BSS. Leaders of different political parties and professional groups including Jubo League leader Matmur Rahman, Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Azizul Hq and Hafizur Rahman, Headmaster, Darshana Ongkor KG School addressed the meeting. The meeting was followed by an anti-terrorism procession which paraded the main streets of Darshana town.

204 development schemes completed

PIROJPUR, Sept 19: District Relief and Rehabilitation Department under Rural Infrastructure Reforms Programmes completed 204 schemes in the district by utilising 1,949 metric tons of wheat in the last fiscal year, reports UNB. Of the total schemes, 28 were implemented in Bhandaria, 16 in Kankhali, 59 in Mathbaria, 23 in Nazirpur, 39 each in Nesarabad and sadar thanas. The schemes included road and cross-dam re-construction and development of various educational institutions.

Tubewells repairing scheme undertaken

RANGPUR, Sept 19: The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has undertaken a scheme of repairing damaged tube wells and installation of new tubewells and sanitary latrine sets in the 30 worst flood-hit thanas in six northern districts, it was told by the PHED, Rangpur, Reports BSS. Under the scheme 4,489 damaged tubewells, are so far repaired, 708 tubewells alleviated, 229 new tubewells installed and 226 sanitary latrine sets distributed among the flood-hit thanas of these six northern districts. The districts are - Rangpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and Bogra.

3 arrested while crossing border

JESSORE, Sept 19: BDR of Eubari Camp near Benapole ICP under Sarsa thana here arrested three Bangladeshis including a woman while going out to India illegally on Sunday night, reports UNB.

BDR sources said they recovered one mobile telephone, 700 US dollar, 8,500 Bangladeshi currency, 155 Indian rupee, 500 dollar endorsed cheque and four passports including two invalid ones from their possession. They were identified as Rajib Ahmed, son of Chandmia of Zigatola, Dhaka, his wife Mohini Sarker of 25-E, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka, Masum Khan, son of Nazrul Islam, of Atharari in Chittagong district. The arrested were sent to jail. A case was filed with the police.

Science building work completed

BARISAL, Sept 19: The Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education completed the construction of seven science buildings at seven government colleges in four southern districts under Barisal Education Zone (BEZ) at a cost of Tk 3,25,02,000 during the 1997-98 fiscal year, reports BSS. According to an official source, four projects were completed in Barisal district, two projects in Pirojpur and one each in Jhalakati and Bhola districts. Work on these projects had started in the 1993-94 fiscal year, the source said.

Body recovered

FENI, Sept 19: The body of a young man was found hanging from a tree at village Nurpur in Fulgazi thana here on Monday, reports UNB.

Police recovered the body of Amzad Hossain, 22, son of Joyal Abedin of Nurpur village and sent it to Feni Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Police suspected that he was hanged after murder by the miscreants. A case was filed in this connection.

Crisis of iodised salt

NARAIL, Sept 19: Crisis of iodised salt has been prevailing in remote areas of the district due to prolonged flood posing a threat to the public health, reports UNB.

Local sources said a section of traders allegedly involved in smuggling into the iodised salt to India. They also heard it, said the sources. Rural people, ignorant of the need for taking iodised salt, used to purchase and take non-iodised salt being marketed by the producers in attractive and colourful packets. Villagers complained that the traders have increased the price of non-iodised salt taking the advantage of supply shortage during the flood.

LGED implementing uplift schemes

CHUADANGA, Sept 19: The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing a number of schemes at Hizol Gari bazar in sadar thana under Rural Development Project-18 at a total cost of Taka 14 lakh, reports BSS.

The ongoing schemes include constructions of three meat and fish selling shed, open sale platforms of various goods, office building of the bazar, slaughtering shed, toilet, drain and culvert, internal road by HBB and garbage pit and installation of two hand pump tubewells in the bazar.

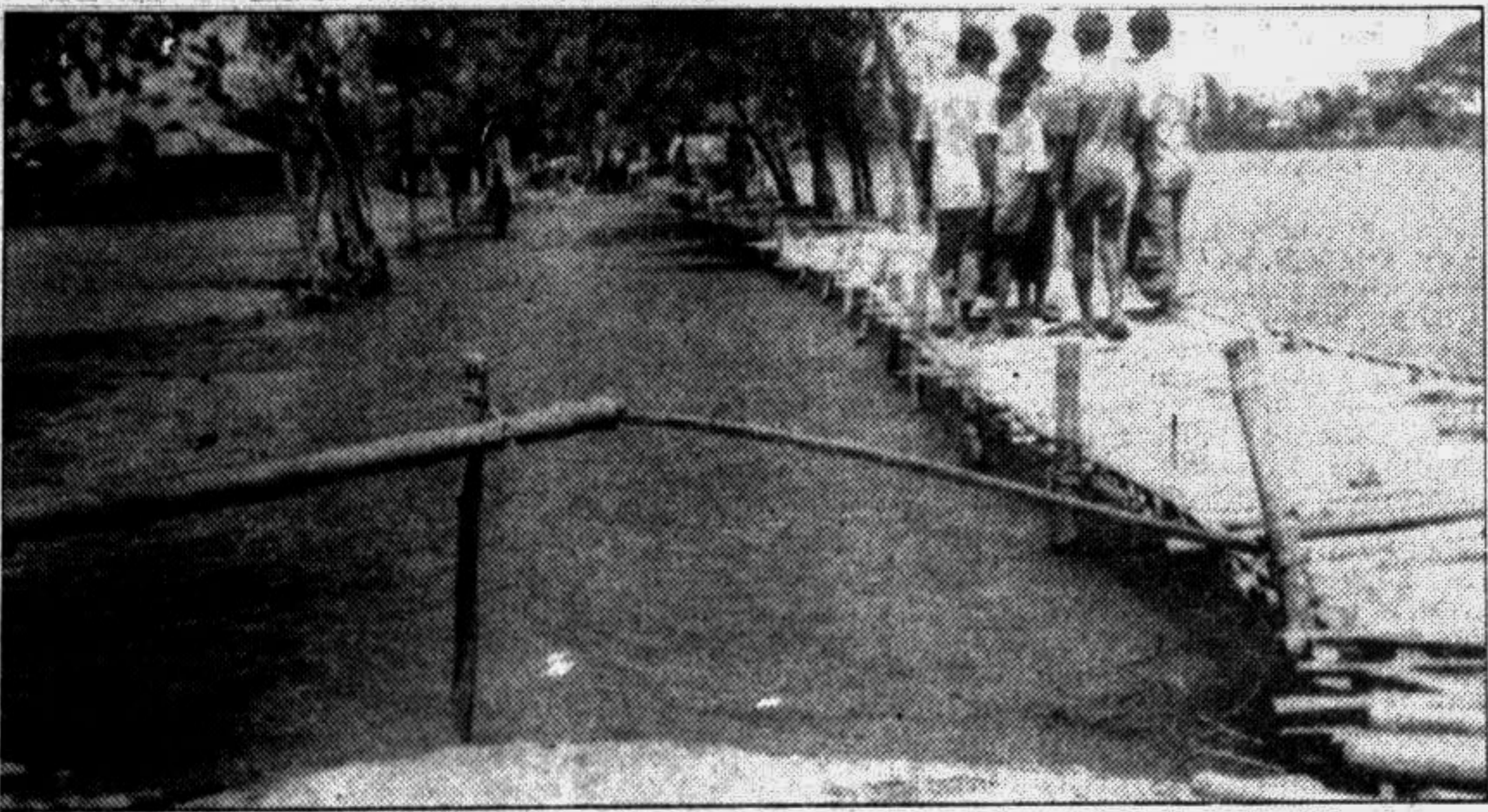
Separate incidents kill 2

JHENIDAH, Sept 19: Two people including a minor child were killed and a woman was injured in two separate incidents here on Friday, reports UNB.

Police and family sources said, a minor child Bipul Kumar son of Bimal Kumar of Debrajpur village in Kaliganj thana was killed and his mother was seriously injured when the wall of their Kutchi house collapsed on Friday night. The house collapsed following the incessant rain. In another incident one Teybur Rahman, 35, was electrocuted at his rental house at Paikpara in the Kaliganj town on the same day. Family sources said the victim met the tragic end of his life when he came in contact with a live electric wire. Another report from Satkhira adds: A woman was run over by a speeding bus at Kushakhali village in sadar thana on Monday.



CHANDPUR: Relief activity of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in the remote areas of Matlab thana. —Star photo



GAIBANDHA: Flood water has washed away a good portion of Gaibandha-Shaghata-Fulchhari road. The local people have erected a bamboo made temporary bridge to restore the road communication at Nasratpur. —Star photo

Flood damages crops worth Tk 25 crore in Sylhet dist

From Iqbal Siddique

SYLHET, Sept 19: Repeated floods have caused extensive damage to crops in Sylhet district this year. Initially the loss in the agricultural sector has been estimated to be over Taka 25 crore 35 lakh 22 thousand and four hundred official sources informed.

According to a report prepared by the district administration, 6,10,509 persons has so far been affected by the floods. As many as 13 people have so far been died by different flood related diseases. In total, 1,430 dwelling houses had been damaged while 'Ais', Transplanted 'Aman' and seabed on 17,322 hectares were also washed away by the gushing waters in the flood-hit thanas of the district, the report said.

The report shows, 2199 square kilometre area had been inundated by the floods, while

the number of affected families stands at 94,330. One hundred 48 kilometre pucca road and 1,284 kilometre kutchi road were also damaged by the floods which hit the district repeatedly. The concerned officials also informed, twenty-nine kilometre of the Surma and Kushiara dykes were damaged totally and 143 kilometre partially. Partial damage was caused to 4 bridges and 60 culverts, while 508 primary school buildings and 381 secondary schools and madrasas were also damaged partially. Besides, 367 mosques and 85 other religious institutions were partially damaged by the floods.

The report shows, all the 11 thanas of Sylhet district had been affected by the floods this season. The people in the region extremely suffered due to the damage in the communication

network. The road link of different thana headquarters with the district headquarters remained cut off for days together due to the inundation of roads at many points. The road link of the whole region with the capital remained cut off since the 17th of August. It put the people of 4 districts of Sylhet region into great miseries. The trouble even caused sudden rise in the prices of essentials and foodgrains in the region, sources alleged.

Another reports says: The government has taken up a rehabilitation programme of Taka 25 lakh, district officials informed. Of the total amount, Taka 9,39,600 would be spent for buying DAP fertilisers and the rest Taka, 15,60,520 would be spent for buying different other inputs.



DINAJPUR: Flood water entered into Dinajpur town as a portion of the town protection embankment is yet to be constructed. —Star photo

Work on Dinajpur town protection dam yet to be finished

From Delwar Kabir

DINAJPUR, Sept 19: Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) constructed two embankments, one by the side of the river Gearbeswari and another embankment at the eastern side of the river Punarbhaba at a cost of Taka 19 crore. The 16-kilometre area is under the town protection scheme.

But the BWDB authority could not complete the work of only 11-metre long earth work near Rajpara ghat, about 3 kilometres from Dinajpur town. BWDB sources said, Kaltu Sardar, a local influential person who was served with the eviction notice but he did not remove his house at Rajpara. This is why the work on 11-metre area remained unfinished.

When contacted Abul Kalam Azad, Executive Engineer (XENO) of BWDB, Dinajpur told The Daily Star that they were not in a position to construct the em-

bankment at that place as the district administration could not take measures to evict the occupier. As a result flood water entered into Dinajpur town on September 2 and it was raised to 34.090-metre crossing the danger level 33.50 metre on September 5 last. Flood water engulfed Patuapara, Lalbag and part of Ramnagar in poura area.

The Executive engineer of BWDB Dinajpur said that they had placed blocks near the affected area to protect the town on September 2, but a section of dishonest people removed the blocks and unfortunately flood water entered into Dinajpur town. The Executive engineer further said that the land of Kaltu Sardar was acquired by the authorities and all procedures were completed to compensate the victim. But the victim did not receive the compensation money and did not allow the construction of embankment near his house. He also said that on May 5 last he

(Executive Engineer of BWD, Dinajpur) sent a letter to the Deputy Commissioner(DC) to evict the occupier to ensure construction of the embankment. But the DC did not take any steps to ensure the construction work of town protection embankment at Rajpara through which flood water entered into Dinajpur town. When contacted with Azizur Rahman, DC, Dinajpur he said that he did not receive any letter from the BWDB authorities so far.

When this correspondent visited the spot at Rajpara through which flood water entered into Dinajpur town, he saw some cracks developed at the Punarbhaba Eastern Embankment.

Dinajpur town may once again be affected by flood if the unfinished work of the embankment on only 11-metre area is not constructed which may cause damage to lives and properties.

Ferry service over Gorai suspended

KUSHTIA, Sept 19: Roads and Highways Department has abruptly suspended the ferry service over the river Gorai on Kushtia-Rajbari road from Friday night due to emergence of shoals, reports UNB. Direct road communication between Kushtia and Dhaka via Rajbari has been snapped as soon as the water level of Gorai came down below the danger mark.

The drivers of all vehicles on the road have been advised to go via Jhenidah to avoid the sufferings of the passengers.

Meanwhile, the local people alleged that abrupt suspension of ferry service without prior notice has caused untold sufferings to the passengers and drivers of the trucks, buses and other small vehicles coming from Dhaka via Rajbari.

Our Kushtia correspondent said quoting local people, ferry can be plyed till mid-October if the pontoon can be moved forward and if a kutchi temporary road is built. But the Executive Engineer of Roads and Highways did not do that as the ties between lease holder and the staff members of R&H department including the Executive Engineer is not cordial.

Meanwhile, suspension of ferry service has caused untold sufferings to the travelling passengers. When contacted with the Deputy Commissioner, he told that he would talk to the Chief Engineer of the concerned department regarding the matter.

2 abducted persons recovered

FENI, Sept 19: Police recovered two abducted persons including a teen-age girl from the town on Sunday and Monday, reports UNB.

Police said Aleya Begum, 15, of Bhojosingha area in sadar thana was allegedly kidnapped by Babul, a bus driver, from a bus at Bekerbazar area in Daganbhuiya thana on Sunday.

The victim was returning to her home in Feni from Senbagh. Local people came forward and resisted the abductor who later managed to flee.

Aleya was recovered by the police in unconscious condition from a clinic at Panchgachhia Bazar at mid-night.

Villagers said Babul abducted Aleya after his marriage proposal was turned down by her family.

Police also recovered Fayezullah, Regional Manager of Homeland Insurance, from a house near the railway station and arrested Abdul Momen alias Humayun of Shibpur village on charge of abduction.

Witnesses said the man was abducted by a group of miscreants from his office at Feni Trunk Road on September 14. Separate cases were filed with the police.

Best college teacher of Chuadanga

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 19: Bijoy Kumar Saha, Principal of Jibannagar Degree College in Chuadanga district was selected as the Best College Teacher of Chuadanga district. Saiful Alam, Deputy Commissioner, Chuadanga declared Saha as the best college teacher at a simple ceremony held at Chuadanga Srimanta Town Hall recently. Shamsuzzaman Duda, local MP attended the function as the chief guest.



Prisoners leading a sub-human life

PABNA, Sept 19: Prisoners in the district jail are leading a sub-human life due to shortage of accommodation, food and medical support, reports UNB. Some 914 inmates, including 751 undertrial prisoners are now living in the century old jail building against its capacity of 521 inmates.

The dilapidated two-storied district jail is on the verge of collapse as no significant renovation work was done since its construction in 1882.

Inadequate bathroom and toilet facilities are causing serious health hazards to the prisoners.

Moreover, the sick prisoners have also been facing various problems due to irregularities in allocating beds for them in the jail hospital.

There are allegations that the genuine patients can hardly avail of the opportunity to get admission into the hospital as the unscrupulous officials admit the sound prisoners by taking bribe of Tk one to three thousand from them.

The prisoners also alleged that shortage of medicines, supply of low quality food, misbehaviour with the patients are regular phenomena of the authority.

While contacted the jail authorities denied any irregularities and said the hospital has only 20 beds which is quite inadequate to meet the demand.

Number of drug addicts on rise in Jamalpur dist

JAMALPUR, Sept 19: The number of drug addicts is increasing alarmingly in the district giving rise to anti-social activities, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that various types of smuggled narcotics are coming into the district through different routes from the neighbouring country.

The routes include Sanandobari, Bahadurabad ghat, Guthail and Jagannathganj ghat.

Moreover, hemp is being cultivated in many villages illegally.

Various drugs are being sold almost openly at different markets and huts in the rural areas as well as in the town.

There are many dens of drugs at Railgate, Bajrapur, Langoljora, Malgudam road, Old Gudaraghat, Bus Terminal

and Raniganj red light areas. The addicts also use rectified spirit available at many pharmacies and homeopathic drug stores.

The people specially the youths and the students are becoming addicted with the easy availability of drugs.

Many have involved themselves in various criminal offences in order to collect money for the drugs they are habituated with.

The drug traders sell ganja almost openly by putting it in the cigarette sticks, alleged the people adding that this drug has gained much popularity due to its cheap price.

The Department of Narcotics Control has arrested five people and filed 19 drug related cases from January to August this year.

Vast tract of khas land occupied illegally in N-dists

NATORE, Sept 19: A vast tract of khas land in 16 northern districts are being occupied illegally by the influential quarters depriving the government of huge revenue, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, the collection of revenue from the leased out khas land and property is reported to be very poor.

Officials said there are 112,534 acres of khas land in the region, of which only 24,058 acres have been leased out so far while the rest have been occupied illegally.

They said revenue worth Tk 90 lakh was realised so far while Tk 4.6 lakh is lying outstanding against the leased out property.

Besides, there are 3,587 abandoned buildings in the region, of which only 2,310, units have been leased out.

Revenue worth Tk 5 lakh was realised against the amount of Tk 10.96 lakh, said the officials.

A Revenue Department statistics shows that there are another 1,927 abandoned houses in the region, of which 1,154 can be given lease. But the houses are possessed illegally by some people.

There are 480 abandoned industrial units in the region. Of them, only 107 have been sold out, another 107 were taken under government possession while the rest 266 are being occupied illegally or lying unused.

An official of the Revenue Department told that processes of most of the cases, filed earlier in this connection, are continuing for many years without any disposal.

The occupants, losing legal battle in lower courts, go to the higher courts with a view to keeping the properties in their possession for indefinite period.

As a result, the government cannot take any effective step to recover the occupied properties, the sources added.

Loadshedding hampering production in ice factories

BARGUNA, Sept 19: Erratic power supply and recurrent load-shedding in the coastal areas have been hampering production in the ice factories and preservation of fish, reports UNB.

Hilsa and other varieties of fish are being perished due to supply shortage of ice depriving the country of huge export earnings.

Most of the 200 ice factories in the coastal areas have been facing closure due to erratic power supply. A number of factories have already been closed.

The owners said they need uninterrupted supply of power for 72 to 100 hours to produce ice. They also need to run their machines four more hours in case of load-shedding for only one hour.

But the owners complained that they even face power failure for 10 times in 72 hours. The load-shedding continues to 30 hours on an average during the period, they said.

Due to disruption in the power supply, they need to operate the machines for about 18 hours instead of 72 hours to get the water iced. The owners said their expenditure goes abnormally high due to the extra power consumption.

PDB officials said they can not create pressure on the ice factory owners to pay their outstanding bills as the board is unable to ensure uninterrupted power supply which is their prime need.

The hilsa fish is available in abundance now in the sea and the rivers in the coastal areas, said the fishermen. But they cannot preserve their catches due to shortage of ice and are forced to sell the fish at throw-away prices incurring huge losses.

A source said the fishermen catch over 2.5 lakh metric tons of hilsa every year. Some 90 per

cent of the catch comes from the nets of the fishermen in the coastal belts and from the sea.

In the south-western coastal area, about 10,000 boats, 3,000 engine-driven trawlers and over 100 automatic trawlers have been engaged in fishing, said the source.

The number of fishermen involved is about 1.5 lakh. Both the numbers of fishing vessels and people involved in the business are increasing every year.

But the production and preservation this year are being hampered seriously due to erratic power supply.

Three killed in 3 Sirajganj thanas in 2 days

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 19: Three women were killed in three thanas of the district on Tuesday and Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police arrested two people on charge of one of killing incidents.

A group of miscreants slaughtered Mahila Bewa, 60, of Purnaghosh village in Tarash thana on Wednesday.

The motive of the killing could not be known immediately.

In another incident, Rahima, 30, of Joypur village in Shahjadpur thana, was killed while she was trying to quell her quarrelling neighbours on Tuesday.

On the same day, Anguri Khatun, 25, of Konabari village in Kamarkhand thana was strangled by her husband over a demand of dowry.

Police arrested the husband of the victim Abdul Mannan and one Rubel in this connection.



BRAHMANBARIA: Abdul Quddus Makhon Smriti Parihad distributed relief materials among the flood-hit people of the district. —Star photo



PABNA: Pabna Pioneer Lions Club recently distributed relief goods among the flood victims of the sadar thana. —Star photo

Erratic power supply

70 cold storages on brink of closure in northern dists

NATORE, Sept 19: About 70 cold storages in the northern districts of the country are on the brink of closure due to erratic power supply, reports UNB.

The owners of the cold storage and potato growers expressed their deep concern over the existing power supply situation and said they have incurred huge losses for this.

Storage owners also cautioned the growers about their possible loss as there was no sign of improvement in the power supply situation.

Local people complained that power failure has become regular phenomenon now-a-days badly affecting the production in the mills and factories and other economic activities.

An official sources said only 50 to 100 megawatts of power

are being supplied in three northern circles covering 16 districts here against a daily demand of 350 to 400 megawatts.

Cold storage owners said a huge quantity of potato preserved in different storage valued at about Tk 275 crore would be perished if the situation continued.

Another report from Khagrachhari says: The farmers of the three hill districts are being deprived of fair price of their products as there is no cold storage in Khagrachhari district.

Local farmers and traders said agriculture products including crops and fruits worth over lakhs of taka become perished every year as these can not be stored properly.

They said no entrepreneur has so far come forward to es-

tablish cold storage in Khagrachhari, Bandarban or Rangamati districts causing sufferings to them.

The producers said they have to sell all of their perishable products to the middlemen and the trade syndicates at a much lower price as they can not store these.

Besides, the marketing and transportation facilities in these districts are inadequate depriving the farmers and small traders.

Local people have demanded of the authorities of the Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board and others concerned to encourage the investors to set up cold storage here.

They said the initiative will help the poor farmers from being deprived of their prices of the products.