

News snaps

Good harvest of 'Aman' expected

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 31: 'Aman' paddy cultivated on 85,000 hectares, several thousand more than the target fixed by the Agriculture Extension Department, cropped well in Lalmonirhat district in the current season, reports BSS.

Lone teacher for 300 pry students

MADARIPUR, Oct 31: Believe it or not a government primary school with 300 students is run by only one teacher, reports UNB.

Ophthalmia breaks out in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Oct 31: Ophthalmia that broke out in an epidemic form has affected several thousands of people of various ages across the district, reports UNB.

Housewife beaten to death

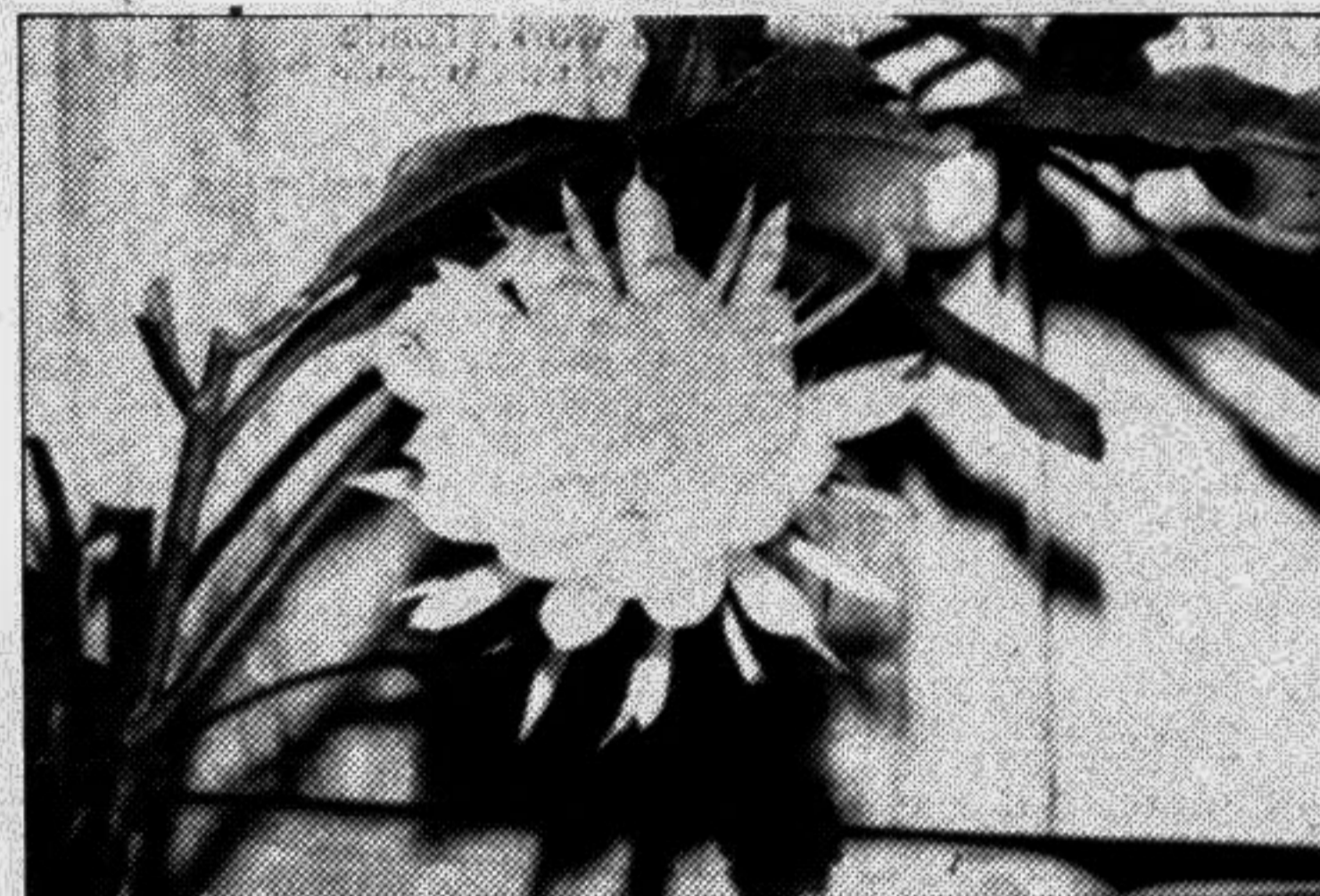
SIRAJGANJ, Oct 31: A pregnant housewife was beaten to death by her cruel husband at Mordia village in Raiganj thana here on Friday, reports UNB.

Erosion victims being rehabilitated

NOAKHALI, Oct 31: The river erosion affected people have started constructing their houses in the newly emerged 15 acre Boyar Char in between Hatya thana of Noakhali and Ramgati thana of Laxmipur district, reports UNB.

258 pucca roads affected by Habiganj flood

HABIGANJ, Oct 31: A huge number of bridges and culverts including roads across the district have been destroyed by the long lasting recent flood, reports UNB.



JHENIDAH: Night Queen in full bloom on October 19 night at the residence of Aminur Rasul, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jhenidah. — Star photo

Tribal housewife eloped with fiance

RANGAMATI, Oct 31: A tribal housewife eloped with her fiance, a Bangali timber trader, on Monday morning following an affair with him for about five months, reports UNB.

Body recovered

FENI, Oct 31: Police recovered the body of an abducted youth from the river Muburi in Chhagalnaiya thana of the district Monday, reports APB.

'Boro' farming programme in Narail

NARAIL, Oct 31: The Agricultural Extension Department will bring some 600 acres of land in the district under 'Boro' paddy and winter-crop cultivation, reports APB.

15 killers get life-term

JAMALPUR, Oct 31: A court here awarded life term imprisonment to 15 people in the sensational Jahir murder case, reports UNB.

1,81,700 flood victims get VGF cards

COMILLA, Oct 31: A total of 1,81,700 flood affected distressed families have been given VGF cards here under the post-flood rehabilitation programme of the government, reports UNB.

Tea garden employees' money looted

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET Oct 31: Armed miscreants looted an amount of Taka two lakh from the employees of a tea garden in Jain-tapur thana on Wednesday afternoon.

The employees of Lalakh Tea Estate drew the amount of money for payment of staff salary from a bank at the thana headquarters of Jain-tapur on the day, when they were on way to garden, they came under attack of an armed gang of miscreants in the river Sari.

The miscreants managed to escape after the dacoity. A case has been started, but no arrest has yet been reported, police said.



MAGURA: Straw crushing in progress following harvesting of early variety of 'Aman' like Nayanmoni, IR-50, IT and Ratna. — Star photo

Erosion renders one lakh people homeless at Ramgati

RAMGATI (Laxmipur), Oct 31: Continuous erosion over the years by the river Meghna has caused heavy losses to life and property in the thana rendering over one lakh people of about 20,000 families homeless, according to official sources, reports UNB.

People of 1,000 families fell victim of erosion during the current month. Besides, a vast tract of croplands, schools, madrasahs, bazars, religious institutions and cyclone shelters have been devoured by the river.

Two cluster villages in the thana — Ananda and Sabuj, built for homeless people, have also been devoured leaving the dwellers homeless again.

The erosion after the prolonged flood this year along with tidal surge of the sea inflicted irreparable losses to the people of the thana and created a pall gloom for the farmers.

Official sources said 20,000 acres of land were devoured in

Char Abdullah union, 600 acres in Char Sagore, 750 acres in Patar Char, 250 acres in Char Gazaria, 750 acres including Ananda and Sabuj cluster villages in Char Krishnapur, 950 acres in Char Alexander, 390 acres in Char Gazi union, 295 acres in Kalkini union, 195 acres in Char Algi union and 250 acres in Char Ramiz union.

Some years back, 19,754 acres of land at the thana headquarters were devoured and the administrative offices were shifted to Alexander.

According to an official estimate, 1,07,317 people of 19,974 families were affected and government and private properties worth about Tk 2,000 crore were damaged.

Flood protection embankments constructed at a cost of Tk 157 crore were also devoured by the river.

Some 54 educational institutions, 291 mosques and 107 temples, seven cyclone centres,

29 bazars and 475-km kutchra roads were also affected.

Unofficial sources, however, put the figure of various losses much higher.

Officials of Poor Development Programme (PDP), an NGO engaged in rehabilitation and development of the erosion-hit people here, said the number of families affected by the erosion will exceed 50,000.

The well-off families have rehabilitated themselves. Many went to the cities and some have taken shelter to the relatives in neighbouring villages and other places.

But the destitute families without any alternative scope to cope with the situation have taken shelter on the embankments and roads and in open places beside the dwelling houses of others.

The number of affected families who need emergency help in Ramgati thana is 35,000. Most of these families have taken

shelter at Char Shevez, Chardua, Char Gazaria, Char Krishnapur, Balur Char, Char Abdullah, Char Bara, Char Baga and DS Falcon.

Some 12,774 families have taken shelter on the embankments. The landless families can not be rehabilitated as the government policy for distribution of khas lands could not be implemented properly, said another source.

Some of the families even remained landless for over 10 years, they added.

Mostafa, a leader of landless people in Bayar Char, told that the influential land owners and terrorist groups have been creating pressure on the landless families who have taken shelter on different khas lands.

Members of the landless families in the char areas of the district told the same tale of their fate and demanded of the government to rehabilitate them for the sake of humanity.

With beginning of 'Aman' harvesting season

Musclemen establish supremacy in shoal areas of Laxmipur

LAXMIPUR, Oct 31: With the beginning of 'Aman' paddy harvesting season, the hired musclemen have established their supremacy in different char areas of the district creating panic among the genuine farmers, reports UNB.

Local people apprehended bloodshed in different char areas as both the poor farmers and musclemen backed by influential land owners are going to face each other.

Poor farmers alleged that a section of big land owners try to grab the newly emerged chars by hiring armed goons although the government allocated some of the land to the landless families. Taking due permission as per law from the government poor and marginal farmers

have cultivated the char lands. But the influential quarters sometimes demand the possession of chars as successors producing fake documents in connivance with a section of dishonest officials and employees of the Revenue Department and claim the crops of the char land during the harvesting season.

They alleged that the musclemen have already started brandishing arms at Char Bara, Char Gazaria, Char Baga, Char Abdullah, Char Sevej, Char Kalakopa and cluster villages in Ramgati, Char Ramonimohan, Char Manasha, Char Uvuti, Miarver, Andharmanik and Jhaudogi and Sadar and Char Bangshi, Char Pata, Char Kaichha and Char Laxmi in Raipur thana.

Clashes and bloodshed among the farmers and musclemen are common in the char areas during paddy harvesting season claiming a number of lives every year.

The armed hooligans first demand toll or a portion of the harvest from the farmers. If refused, they attack the farmers and unleash a reign of terror by setting on fire their houses, filing false cases against them and attacking other family members.

Poor farmers have demanded of the authorities appropriate measures including sending magistrates and setting up police camps in the troubled char lands to avert the bloodshed.

Medicare for 10,000 people of Nijhum Dweep is a distant hope

NOAKHALI, Oct 31: Medicare for nearly 10,000 inhabitants of Nijhum Dweep in Hatya thana of the district is still a distant hope as there is no government or private health centre in the island apart from a medicine shop, reports UNB.

Populace of this small isle, most of whom are landless and fishermen, cannot even avail themselves of modern health services going to either district or thana headquarters simply because of poor communication systems.

There is only one mechanized boat in the island which ferries people only two times a day, leaving its helpless inhabitants on the mercy of Quacks and Ayurved physicians, and the high charging medicine shop.

According to official statistics, 18 people died of diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases this year alone, a figure contradicted by unofficial sources.

They said that the number of deaths is much higher than the official one. Nijhum Dweep is no exception.

Our correspondent from Comilla adds: Thousands of people in 33 unions under 10 thanas are being deprived of medicare facilities as there is no health and family welfare centre there.

The unions are Durgapur (north and south), Zorkaran in sadar thana, Kalikapur in Chowddagram, Uttarda, Gobindapur, Hasnabad, Laxmanpur, Sarashpur, Uttar Hawla and Bipularsar in Laksam thana.

The unions also include Madhabpur, Sidlai, Chandala and Shashidai in Brahmanpara thana, Purba Dhalor, Paharpur, Kabpur and Zahapur in Muradnagar, Bhani, and north and south Gunanagar unions in Devdwar, north Daudkandi,

Karikandi, Bhitkandi and Iltananda in Daudkandi thana, Mathabhangra, Chandanpur, Garmara in Homna and Mokra and Adra in Langakot.

Diarrhoea: 7 die in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, Oct 31: With the recession of flood waters, diarrhoea situation turned grave in the deluge affected areas of the district, reports UNB.

Over 2,000 people of eight thanas fell victim during the last one month and official sources put the death toll to seven so far.

Civil Surgeon office sources said, 375 in sadar thana, 595 in Madhabpur, 175 in Chunarghat, 350 in Bahubol, 348 in Nabiganj, 260 in Baniachang, 55 in Ajmiriganj and 150 in Lakhal thanas were affected by the disease, most of whom are children and old.

Local people said shortage of oral saline and necessary medicine aggravated the situation.

In absence of medical teams at the field level the affected people have been facing difficulties to get proper treatment, it is learnt.

The villagers are forced to go to the village quacks for treatment and are buying saline packets at high prices.

Best Scouts in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Oct 31: Faridpur High School Scouts group was adjudged the best scouts group in the district. This was decided at a district-level competition held here recently in observance of National Education Week '98.

Enamul Hasan, a member of Faridpur High School Scouts group and Muzaffar Hossain, scout teacher of the school were adjudged the best scout and the best scout teacher respectively in the district.

20,000 children die of malnutrition in 11 dists

NOAKHALI, Oct 31: Some 20,000 children died of malnutrition in 11 south-eastern districts including Feni, Noakhali and Laxmipur during the last five years, reports UNB.

This was revealed in a survey conducted by some non-government organisations of the area. The survey also said over 10 lakh children of various ages have been suffering from malnutrition.

The report also revealed that about 9,000 children have become victims of blindness due mainly to malnutrition.

The Poor Development Programme (PDP), a local welfare organisation, along with a foreign and 13 other local organisations conducted the survey in Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, Rangamati, Bandarban, Comilla, Chandpur and Brahmanbaria districts.

It said ignorance of parents and lack of treatment facilities are the main reasons for the sufferings and death.

Apart from this parents ig-

norance has also caused for birth of 10,000 children with different kind of deformity at remote, slums and char areas of the districts.

Besides, 13,000 children have become physically retarded after birth due to lack of proper diet and medical facilities.

These malnourished children belong to poor families and landless farmers living in riverside and cross-dam in an unhygienic environment who hardly get proper diet during their childhood.

The study also revealed various causes for the malnutrition including less practice of breastfeeding and malnourished mother of the babies, ignorance, negligence of health department and other concerned people.

The report also said 11 char areas of Noakhali and Laxmipur districts have no maternity and health care centres causing suffering to more than 2 lakh inhabitants.

Amartya Sen invited to visit RU during convocation

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, 31: The Rajshahi University (RU) authorities have congratulated this year's Nobel laureate in Economics Dr Amartya K Sen and invited him to be the speaker in the ensuing Seventh RU Convocation scheduled to be held on November 29.

The congratulatory and invitation letter, signed by Vice-Chancellor, (VC) Prof Abdul Khaleque, has already been sent to Dr Amartya Sen at Trinity College, Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

The letter congratulated Dr Sen as saying, "we all the Bengalees are proud of you. May God give you a long active life," a press release issued by the Press, Publication and Public Relations Department said.

The VC said in the letter that

the presence of Dr Amartya K Sen in the university, on the occasion of Seventh RU Convocation, will open a historic chapter in the achievements of the university.

The university will bear all the expenses of his visit along with his entourage.

Meanwhile, the university authorities have invited the Egyptian Nobel laureate Nagib Mahfuz and former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali on the occasion of Seventh RU Convocation.

However, the university authorities are yet to receive any response from them. It is mentioned, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, President of Bangladesh has agreed to be present at the university on this occasion.



CHANDPUR: Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Planning recently distributed agricultural loan of Janata Bank among the flood affected farmers of Palakhal in Kachua thana. — Star photo



FARIDPUR: A rally was brought out in the town recently on the occasion of White Cane Safety Day. — Star photo



CHANDPUR: A colourful procession was brought out here recently on the occasion of Natural Disaster Reduction Day. — Star photo



JHENIDAH: Dr Sardar Badar Uddin, Civil Surgeon, Jhenidah inaugurating a programme of folk song session held at Hamdah stand in the town recently. Robert Jenkins, Deputy Chief of UNICEF, Dhaka and Khulna and Mohammad Barkatullah, Project Coordinator of UNICEF, Jhenidah are also seen. — Star photo



RANGPURA: A large number of boys and girls gathered recently on Teesta Flood Control Embankment at Gangachhara in the hope of relief goods. — Star photo