

## National

## News snaps

## Winter crops under pest-attack

MADRIPUR, Jan 3: Farmers are worried and bad luck looms large as crops and vegetables in different areas of the district, particularly char lands, have come under massive pest-attack, reports APB.

Prospect of wheat, potato, tomato, mustard, and pulses like musur, katal, and khersari has become bleak due to attack by various types of pests, farmers and Agricultural Extension Department officials said. Bands of ledha pokha (a kind of pest) attack the crops after dusk. Pests also emerged from the soil after sunset and eat up the roots of the plants. Use of locally available pesticides did not prove effective, farmers say.

## Skin-grafting on acid victim

JHENIDAH, Jan 3: A successful skin-grafting operation was performed on an acid-burnt patient, Tohura Begum, 23, at Jhenidah Hospital recently, reports APB.

She can now look forward again to a normal life after the operation was performed on her face and other parts of her body by Dr Abdul Latif recently. Tohura Begum is the daughter of Yasin Tarafdar of Phultala village in Moheshpur thana. Her husband had thrown acid on her on the night of October 29 after she divorced him as he tortured her for dowry, she told. She was admitted to the Jhenidah Hospital immediately.

## Drug addiction rising

KUSHTIA, Jan 3: Drug addiction among young men has been rising alarmingly in the district, much to the concern and anxiety of parents and guardians, reports APB.

Phenethyl, hemp, opium, heroin and liquor are sold almost openly in Kushtia and Bheramara towns, local people say. The addicts include school and college students, rickshawpullers, transport workers and unemployed youth. Allegations are also there that drug dealers store and sell these items right under the nose of the law-enforcing agencies. With the increase in the number of drug addicts, the incidence of crime has also gone up in the district and neighbouring areas. Police said they can not control this menace because of "intervention by influential people".

## School dropouts on rise

SHERPUR, Jan 3: Food for Education Programme (FEP) in the district has not been successful as rate of attendance at primary schools is declining due to suspension of its operation for the last six months, reports APB.

An official source here said the distribution of foodgrains among the students of primary schools remained suspended for the period owing to lack of allocations for the district. The programme was introduced to check the rate of dropouts and raise percentage of educated children barring them from child-labour. Under the programme, each student from poor families who attended school on average 85 per cent of days in a year would get 15 kg of foodgrains per month.

## Vegetable farming on 7,000 hectares

KUSHTIA, Jan 3: District Agricultural Extension Department (AED) has fixed a target to bring 7,000 hectares land under winter vegetable cultivation in six thanas of the district this year, reports APB.

About 10,000 metric tons of winter vegetables worth about Tk 8 crore are expected to be produced in the season, said an AED source.

## Kushtia flood victims get 4,900 VGF cards

KUSHTIA, Jan 3: The government has distributed 4,900 Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards among the flood-affected people in six thanas and four pourasavas of this district, reports APB.

Each VGF card-holder will get eight kilograms of rice per month under the programme. About 650 tonnes of rice have been allocated for the purpose. Besides, about Tk 400,000 have already been distributed among the affected people under the post-flood rehabilitation programme.

## Five terrorists arrested

SATKHIRA, Jan 3: Police arrested five terrorists along with firearms from Tala thana of the district in a drive recently, reports UNB.

The arrested are — Khorshed, 24, Wadud, 35, Liaqat, 35, Amirul, 28, and Shamsal Sardar, 20. A revolver, a pipe gun, 11 bombs and four rounds of bullets were recovered from their possession. Another report from Comilla says, Customs and BDR Javans, in a joint raid, seized a truck loaded with smuggled Indian sugar from the Mia Bazaar in Chittagong thana. The smuggled goods of 220 bags of sugar worth Tk 6 lakh were deposited with the district Customs office.

## Three killed in road accident

SATKHIRA, Jan 3: Three persons including housewife was killed in separate road accidents in three thanas of the district recently, reports BSS.

Police and hospital sources said a Kaliganj-bound minibus hit Sharifa Khatun, 42, wife of Sayed Ali of village Moutela near Moutela bazaar on Kaliganj-Shyamnagar road in Kaliganj thana while she was milking her cow on the road side. She succumbed to her injuries at Satkhira Sadar hospital. A Shyamnagar-bound minibus from Munshiganj ran over a bi-cycle rider Delwar Hossain, 21, of village Munshiganj at Munshur Sardar bus-stand on Shyamnagar-Munshiganj road in Shyamnagar thana as the victim was crossing the road.

## Corrugated iron sheets donated

CHANDPUR, Jan 3: The Lion's Club of Chandpur has donated eight bundles of corrugated iron sheets among some flood-affected families in Nanupur village in Sadar thana, reports APB.

The CI sheets were handed over to the families at a simple function recently. Club sources said.

## 143 cases pending

Kushtia, Jan 3: A total 143 cases under the Women and Children Oppression Act are pending with courts in greater Kushtia district, reports APB.

Of those, 91 are in Kushtia and 42 in Meherpur. As per law, a case under the Act is supposed to be disposed within three months. A police source told the agency that many of the cases have been delayed because of alleged false statements of victims which damage their merit and lead to legal tangles.

## Bid to realise PDB dues failed

JHENIDAH, Jan 3: The local Power Development Board (PDB) has Tk 5 crore dues with consumers, according to official sources, reports APB.

Of the amount, Tk 2 crore is due with consumers in Jhenidah Sadar thana, Tk 2 crore in Magura Sadar thana and Tk 1 crore in Kaliganj, Shalakupia, Moheshpur, Harinakunda and Kotchandpur thanas. There are about 30,000 consumers in Jhenidah Sub-division of PDB. In Jhenidah Sadar thana, 70 per cent of the dues are with the PWD, Collectorate and other government departments. Ashraf Ali, Executive Engineer of local PDB, told that repeated attempts to realise the dues failed.

## No progress in rice procurement drive

PIROJPUR, Jan 3: The government has failed to purchase any rice or paddy in six southern districts under its food procurement programme, launched on November 1, reports APB.

There was a plan to procure paddy and rice worth one crore taka from the districts during the current 'Aman' season. Food Department sources said that 500 tonnes of paddy would be bought from the farmers directly and another 500 tonnes of rice from rice mills. They said the procurement drive is scheduled to continue till February 28. The price of paddy has been set at Tk 7.6 per kilogram and that of rice at Tk 12 a kg this season, they said.

## Unscrupulous people producing molasses

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 3: A section of unscrupulous people are producing molasses in the district mixed with harmful ingredients to make the commodity brighter one to draw the attraction of customers, reports UNB.

These people are manufacturing molasses mixing with poisonous ingredients including a kind of powder, urea fertiliser and pesticide for brightening it to earn a windfall profit at the cost of public health. The whitened molasses sells at higher price than that of the blackened one. The physicians said with the intake of such molasses a man may be attacked with complicated diseases including serious stomach ailment. Apprehending the danger many people in the district totally gave up the habit of using molasses for making their nutritious foods on the occasion of various festivals.

## Shrimp farm owner killed

SATKHIRA, Jan 3: A shrimp farm owner of village Aulatpur in Sadar thana of the district was killed by unknown assailant recently, reports BSS.

Police said the victim Ashraf Hossain, 38, was stabbed to death while he was sleeping at the 'tonga' of his shrimp farm. The motive of the murder could not be ascertained. A case was filed with Sadar thana. None was arrested in this connection.

## Rivers need immediate dredging

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Jan 3: Plying of riverine vessels is becoming risky gradually due to emergence of numerous shoals along the river routes to and from Barisal, Dhaka, Bholia, Patuakhali and Pirojpur during this inter season.

Now, more than 50 passenger launches, both small and double deckers and cargo vessels are plying between Dhaka, Barisal, Jhalakati, Patuakhali, Bholia, Pirojpur, Madaripur including some other destinations in the southern region.

Mentionable, riverine routes are the main routes for thousands of people moving to and from different destinations in the riverine districts.

Launch and cargo vessel owners and their 'Sarengs' said, many of the river routes have no necessary depth of water for smooth plying of riverine vessels.

At different points in the Meghna, Padma near Chandpur, Dera point of Areal Khan river, Kirtonkhola of Barisal, Ilisha, Tetulia rivers of Bholia many underwater shoal lands have been emerged hampering smooth and regular plying of marine vessels, particularly at night time.

Every year the routes are becoming narrower as the rivers are not dredged out when it is necessary.

In such cases passenger launches are being delayed in their journey to reach the destinations causing immense sufferings to the passengers, particularly women and children on board due to shortage of food and drinking water.

According to a source of Bangladesh Inland Water

Transport Authority (BIWTA) here, for smooth plying of big marine vessels it needs at least eight feet deep water along the

WDB. Its office is at Dhaka. As a result, it is getting difficult to work or their negligence sometimes worsens the condition. He

this way several lakhs of takas are spent in dredging.

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