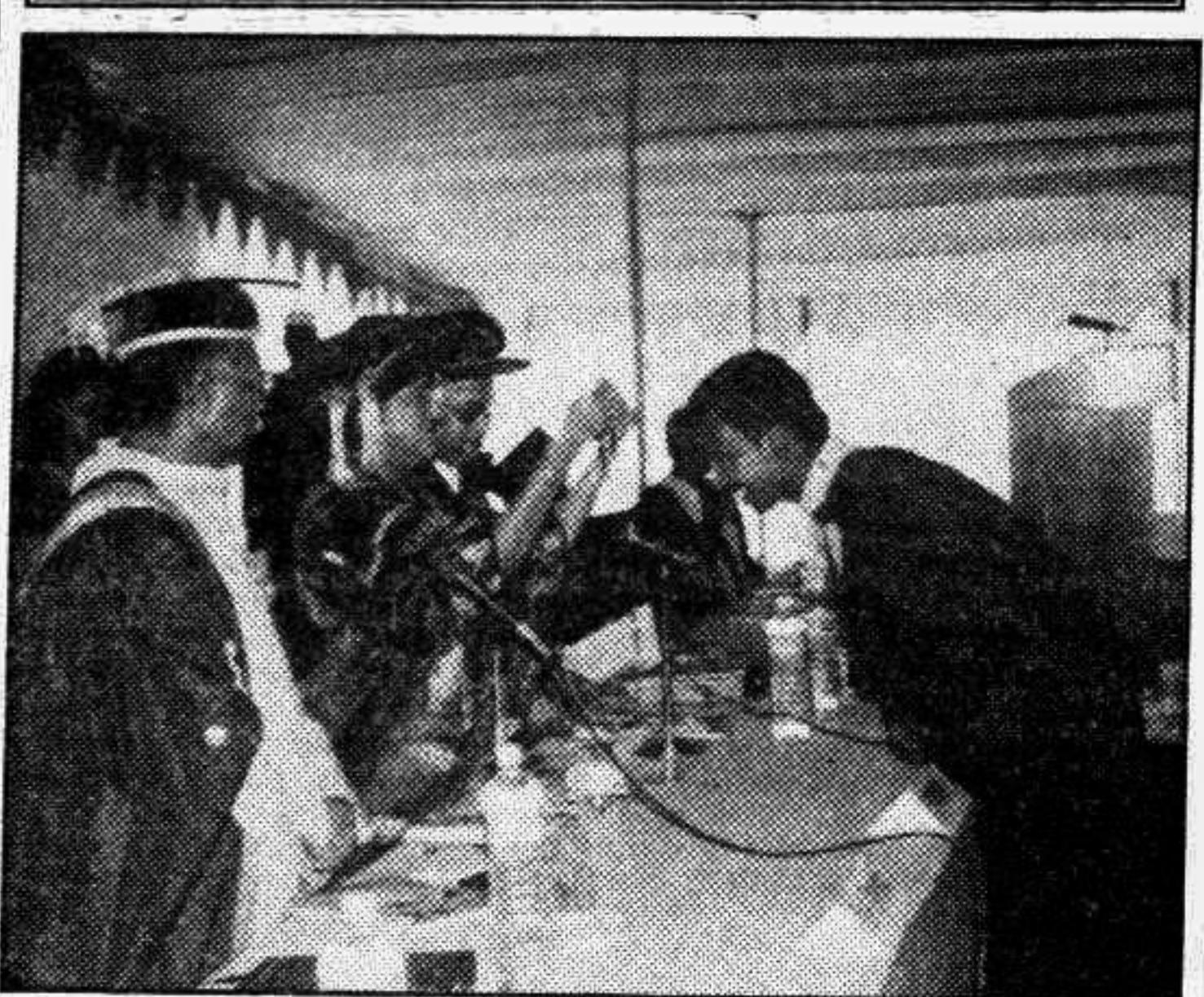


National

News snaps



CHITTAGONG: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday handing over the Chancellor's Gold Medal to Kazi Amdadul Haque at the convocation of Chittagong University.

— Star photo

Piyai river becomes people's sorrow

NETRAKONA, Mar 15: Piyai river is a 'sorrow' for the people of three thanas in Netrakona and Sunamganj districts as crops on 6,000 acres of land are damaged almost every year in absence of a sluice gate and an embankment, reports APB.

Only one crop, locally called "Bor", is cultivated in Khalajuri thana in Netrakona and Shalla and Dirai thanas in Sunamganj. But in absence of a sluice gate and an embankment in Piyai river, water from Dhoni river flow in and flood the three thanas every year, damaging the crop, local people said. Some 25,000 people in the three thanas have become landless after a long fight against this over the years.

Labour leaders kidnapped

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 15: Two labour leaders working in a flood protection embankment at Maheshkhali island were kidnapped by some local goons on Thursday for realising toll, police said here on March 12, reports APB.

The goons had demanded Tk 1.5 lakh toll from a contractor of the Water Development Board's project, but he refused to pay. Not finding the contractor, the goons kidnapped Mohammad Hossain, 30 and Jalal Ahmed, 32, on gun point from the construction site at Hatalia in front of about 150 labourers, police said.

Work on Shaheed Minar begins

JHALAKATI, Mar 15: Construction of a Shaheed Minar at Nalchiti Sadar to commemorate the martyrs of the Language Movement and the Liberation War began on March 12 with contributions from local people, reports APB.

The cost has been estimated at Tk two lakh. The local pourasabha has provided one bigha of khas land for the Shaheed Minar. Nalchiti Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) AFM Imam Hossain inaugurated the construction work, expected to be completed before March 26, the Independence Day.

Administrative activities hampered

SUNAMGANJ, Mar 15: A total of 13 posts of officials have been lying vacant in Tahirkpur thana hampering the administrative as well as development activities, reports UNB.

Most of the posts of the officials, including Thana Nirbahi Officer, are lying vacant in the thana for long, official sources said. The other posts lying vacant included Thana Health and Family Planning Officer, Thana Engineer, Revenue Officer, Settlement Officer, Statistics Officer, Livestock Resources Officer, Thana Subject-matter Officer, Social Service Officer, Fisheries Officer, Project Implementation Officer, Gano Sasthya Engineer and Thana Youth Development Officer. When contacted, an official said most of the officers have managed their transfer elsewhere due mainly to bad communication system in the thana.

Record of highest revenue collection

BANDARBAN: Mar 15: Tarachhamukh check post in Bandarban Pulwpark Garden Department has set a record by realising revenue of Tk 2 lakh in last three months from December 11 to March 10 this year, reports UNB.

It realised Tk 24,000 and Tk 20,000 during the same period in 1997 and 1998 respectively, pulwpark department sources said. The check post, situated on the bank of the river Sangu 5 km off the town collected the revenue from forest resources such as bamboo and thatch.

Two killed in road accidents

CHUADANGA, Mar 15: Two persons were killed and eight others injured in two separate road accidents during the last two days on Chuadanga-Jessore Road, reports BSS.

According to Damurhuda thana police, one Abdul Latif, 55, of village Bishnupur in Damurhuda thana of Chuadanga district was run over recently near village Fakirpara on Chuadanga-Darsana Road. He was run over while he was crossing the road.

One Mozibor Rahman, 35, of Chuadanga Kederganjpara met a tragic death and eight others were injured when they fell from a wood-loaded truck when the truck hit a road side tree recently near village Akondobaria on Chuadanga-Jessore road.

Efforts on for massive uplift

BAKERGANJ, Mar 15: Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Alhaj Abul Hasanat Abdulla has said BNP and its opposition allies want to create obstacles in the way of development through their non-issue political programme, reports BSS.

Addressing as the chief guest a large public meeting at Bakerganj thana, he said Begum Khaleda Zia was out to create anarchy to save the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government was carrying out massive development activities throughout the country. Local unit of Awami League organised the meeting which was also addressed by Sayed Masud Reza, MP.

Dredging work going on

RAJBARI, Mar 15: The dredging work is on at the Daulatdia Ferry Ghat in the river Padma to remove the increasing accumulation of silts, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority sources said two dredgers have been working at the basin point and channel mouth day and night to remove the silts for smooth navigation. At present Aricha-Daulatdia river route is out of danger. Meanwhile, BIWTA has started work to set up an alternative new ghat at the downstream at Paturia to shorten the distance and facilitate the easy transportation movement.

One dies as truck turns turtle

CHUADANGA, Mar 15: One person died and nine others were injured when the timber loaded truck they were travelling in overturned at Akandabaria crossing on the Chuadanga-Bhannagar road on Friday, reports APB.

Police said Majibar, 40, died on the spot. The injured have been admitted to the Sadar hospital where condition of one of them, Anwar, 35, is critical. They all hailed from Chuadanga.

Discussion on independence

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 15: A discussion meeting to observe Independence Day on March 26 was held at the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner on Friday, reports BSS.

Presided over by the Deputy Commissioner, AMM Farhad, the meeting discussed about the programmes of the day.

Suggestions were made to include holding of colourful rally, seminar, discussion on independence and cultural function in the day's programme.

Steps to rehabilitate landless

PATUKHALI, Mar 15: Steps have been taken to rehabilitate 201 landless and distressed families with khas lands at Barguna Sadar thana in the current financial year, reports APB.

Of them, 36 are freedom fighter families. The Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Barguna told that 238 tonnes of wheat have been sanctioned to develop the lands. The beneficiaries under the programme have already been provided with documents of the khas lands, the TNO said.

Man killed by rivals

SHERPUR, Mar 15: A man was killed by his rivals over land dispute at Mojarkanda village in Nakhalia thana on Monday, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Nasimuddin, 60. Police said a longstanding rivalry between Nasimuddin and Majibur Rahman of the same village was on over the possession of a disputed land. On the fateful day while Nasim was passing through a road his rival along with his accomplices swooped on him with sharp weapons. Seriously injured Nasim was admitted to the Nokhola hospital where he succumbed to injuries.

Drought poses a threat to standing IRRI-Boro, Rabi crops in S-W dists

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 15: Drought has been prevailing in south-western zone of the country, posing threat to standing IRRI-Boro, Rabi crops, mango and jack fruits.

The region has not experienced any rainfall till now since November 23, 1998. As a result, Rabi crops such as IRRI-Boro, wheat, onion, garlic, water melon, melon and vegetables have suffered a great loss.

The production has fallen much short of expectation. On the other hand farmers cannot prepare their lands for sowing seeds of Aus, Aman and jute. This is the hightime for sowing seeds especially in low-lying land of this region.

Besides, recently blossomed mango, litchi and blackberry fruits need a shower of rain for their nourishment cannot grow well. In some cases budding mangoes have withered and are seen dropping down. If there be no rain in a week or two, the prospect of the above mentioned crops and fruits will

utterly bleak.

Besides, chicken pox which has broken out in an epidemic form across the district will lose its intensity if it rains immediately.

On account of this long spell of drought, tanks, ponds, canals and other water bodies have dried up to the great sufferings of the rural people who hardly find any water body to bathe their cattle.

Pisciculture in the region is also being hampered greatly. The tanks or ponds in which fish are reared for making profit have so little water in them that the fishes there are not in a position to survive.

The concerned authority should help the marginal farmers living on the rivers or water bodies to irrigate their crop field, to save the standing crops.

UNB from Barisal reports:

The prevailing drought and lack of adequate irrigation facilities have been hampering Boro cultivation on 2.35 lakh

hectares of land in 11 southern

districts.

This year some 235,470

hectares of land in 11 southern

districts have been brought under boro cultivation fixing a production target of 588,675

tonnes.

Of them, 42,000 hectares in

Barisal Sadar, 11,470 hectares in

Pirojpur, 15,300 hectares in

Patuakhali, 20,100 hectares in

Bhola, 30,300 hectares in

Faridpur, 29,200 hectares in

Madaripur, 40,300 hectares in

Gopalganj, 21,500 hectares in

Rajbari, 20,000 hectares in

Shariatpur, 5,000 hectares in

Jhalakati and 300 hectares in

Barguna have been brought

under the Boro cultivation.

With the latest AED infor-

mation, the plants are now in

the maturity stage in the next

seven to 10 days.

During the time of maturity

the plants need adequate water

without which the paddy be-

comes grain less, AED officials

said.

Local Met office sources said

although there was no rainfall

in the region since November

24, it did not effect the cultiva-

tion as temperature was low for

52 days. But after that the tem-

perature in the region district

went high.

The cultivators urged the

AED officials to supply irriga-

tion equipment among them to

achieve the targeted production.



Mango trees in full bloom at Gurudaspur (Right) and Sadar (Left) thana of Natore district.

— Star photo

Bumper output of mango likely if weather favours this year

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, Mar 15: A bumper production of mango is expected in this summer if the weather remains favourable here.

The flowering and budding of mango trees this year tell much of the potentiality, says experts and growers. Almost all the trees here are now in full bloom. Buds are found in many trees. New leaves are also growing indicating a good production in future.

Favourable weather and alternate bearing habit of mango trees are the reasons of good flowering this year, identified Horticulturist Ayub Hossain Khan, while talking to The Daily Star.

Khan defined that the less intense cold and fog of the last winter could not hamper the timely flourishing of abundant buds.

Moreover, this year, has been termed as the 'on year' by mango experts, according to the alternate yielding habit of mango trees. Bumper production occurs on every alternate year and last year was the 'off year' with a poor yield.

The prospect of mango production is better this year than that of the previous year, said Horticulturist Ayub Hossain, while 50 years old Toha, an aide of a big mango-orchard at Shingardaha in Natore sadar thana added that markets would be flooded with mangoes if the buds were not destroyed by seasonal hailstorms, fog and

pest-attack.

According to field officer Tareq of local Horticulture centre, the owners of mango gardens are taking precautions for protecting the fruit, though a negligible number of mango trees have already been attacked by pests and insects.

The sources said that there were more than 100 varieties of mango in this region. Of them, Amrapali, Khirsapat, Langra, Fazli, Himsagar, Kalua, Bou

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Experts opine that both short and long-term measures should be taken to enhance mango production. The trees should be looked after properly and scientifically and felling of healthy mango trees should be checked.

Bhulano, Ranipasand, Kisanbhog and Laxmanbhog are popular..

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