

**News snaps**

**Man gunned down**

RANGAMATI, Apr 3: A man gunned down his colleague mistakenly while hunting at Bainnakhora in Kaptai thana on Sunday, reports UNB.  
Police said Pathar Moni Chakma, 35, and Athai Pru Marma, 40, employees of Ghagra Textile Mills, went to Bainnakhora area at night for hunting. But Moni, thinking as a pig, shot Athai who was entering into the area from the opposite side. He died on the spot. Later police recovered the body and arrested Moni with his rifle. Another source suspected that Moni killed Marma due to previous enmity.

**Reception to meritorious students**

RAJBARI, Apr 3: Meritorious students of Pangsha thana were given stipends and prizes at a reception accorded to them at a local school on March 31, reports APB.  
Thirty students were given Tk 300 stipend each for good academic results and seven others were given crests for extra-academic activities including agriculture and social welfare. Chief Election Commissioner Mohammed Abu Hena was the chief guest at the function, organised by Pangsha Student Welfare Organisations. Prof K M Mohsin of History Department of Dhaka University and some local elite also addressed the function, held in the premises of Machapara School and presided over by UP Chairman Jullur Rahman.

**Community centre in memory of Salam**

FENI, Apr 3: A community center has been built in the town after the name of Salam, a martyr of the Language Movement, reports APB.  
It was inaugurated by local parliament member Jainal Abedin Hajari recently. The two-storied community centre was built by the Feni District Council at a cost Tk 18 lakh.

**Credit disbursed**

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 3: Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) disbursed credit amounting to Taka One crore and 22 lakh among 83 entrepreneurs in 13 thanas till May '98 to alleviate poverty, reports BSS.  
According to BSCIC officials, these loans have been disbursed in projects like sewing, pisciculture, poultry, basket making, making of jute goods and other small items. About 120 unemployed persons have started their own business with the loan money. The board has recovered Tk 9 crore and 44 lakh arrear loan. The percentage of recovery is about 27.

**Barracks for destitutes**

CHUADANGA, Apr 3: Under the Prime Minister's "Ashrayan Prokolo" the construction of two barracks at Dhatur Hat village in Chuadanga sadar thana has just been completed, reports BSS.  
According to an official source, a total of 20 shelterless destitute families will be rehabilitated in these two barracks. The barracks have been constructed by the Engineering Corps of Bangladesh Army. The barracks have been handed over to the Deputy Commissioner of Chuadanga by the Army.

**Internal strife in ruling party**

SHARIATPUR, Apr 3: Internal strife in the ruling party has been growing following the municipal elections in the district, reports UNB.  
One faction of Awami League alleged that Bacchu Saial, backed by Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, was declared elected chairman of Damudia municipality depriving Ali Azam Saial. Police admitted tension was growing in the area threatening the law and order situation. Crimes, terrorism, clashes have increased to an alarming rate. Rival groups have been filing cases against each other causing social tension. Local people alleged police are silent spectators in the face of factional strife resulting in the rise of crimes.

**Boro farming on 1,24,469 hectares**

NETRAKONA, Apr 3: A bumper production of Boro crops would be achieved in Netrakona district this year if the climate remains suitable for the green Boro crop fields, Netrakona District Agriculture Extension Department (AED) office sources said, reports BSS.  
According to the sources, a massive programme for the cultivation of Boro crops has been taken up in all the 10 thanas of Netrakona district in the current season. Under the programme, a total of 1,24,469 hectares has been brought under Boro crops cultivation programme. Of the total land 92,718 hectares have been brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) of the crops and 31,751 hectares under the local variety.

**Ration goods distributed**

BANDARBAN, Apr 3: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society distributed a huge quantity of ration goods among the 1947 members of PCJSS who returned to their normal life following the signing of CHT peace accord, reports UNB.  
These included pulse, salt and soybean oil. The organisation at a time handed over 104 kg of pulse, 52 kg salt and 52 liter soybean oil to each member as a six-month ration in February and March. Deputy Director of the society Afsar Uddin told that same quantity of pulse, salt and edible oil are ready for distribution among the members for next six months and the distribution will be started from July-August this year. Of the 1947 former insurgents, who came to the normal life, 931 were rehabilitated in Rangamati, 985 in Khagrachhari and 31 here in the district, Afsar Uddin added.

**Clashes leave 20 hurt**

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 3: At least 20 people were injured in a series of clashes between two groups at Mahmudpur area in the town on Tuesday and Wednesday over sharing of toll money, reports UNB.  
Police said two groups of youths of the area chased each other and attacked with lethal weapons in two phases in the afternoon and night on Tuesday following the conflict aroused with the sharing of tolls collected from the gamblers. The feuding groups created a reign of terror the following day by resorting to loot and arson. Police lathi-charged the groups to bring the situation under control and arrested six of them from the spot. Of the injured, seven were admitted to Sadar Hospital and different clinics and one to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

**2 killed in bus accident**

NARSINGDI, Apr 3: Two people were killed and 50 others injured in a bus accident on Narsingdi-Kaliganj road near Batpara here on Sunday, reports UNB.  
Witnesses said Mahmudur Rahman, 35, of Ulukandi village in Banchharanpur thana and his nine-year-old daughter died on the spot when the overloaded minibus, carrying them, plunged into a ditch after losing its control. The injured were admitted to the Sadar Hospital and different private clinics in Ghorasal. Police seized the bus, but the driver fled the scene. The bodies were sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

**Jute farming on 1,82,000 hectares**

RANGPUR, Apr 3: A total of 1,82,000 hectares of land will be brought under jute cultivation in 16 districts of the country's northern region during the current season, reports UNB.  
The districts are Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Bogra, Joypurhat, Pabna, Sirajganj, Natore, Naogaon, Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj. Agriculture officials said of the total land, some 71,000 hectares will be brought under local variety cultivation while 1,11,000 hectares under Tossa variety. The production target has been fixed at 17,53,000 bales of raw jute in all these districts.

**Acid thrown on beggars**

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 3: They are not beautiful teenage girls but beggars, victims of acid throwing, reports APB.  
Police said a middle-aged woman Begum, Begum, and her daughter Humaira Begum, were injured when acid was thrown on them by some unidentified persons in front of a jewelry shop in the town on Sunday. They were admitted to the sadar hospital with burn injuries in different parts of their bodies.

**Aromatic fine rice farming scheme**

PABNA, Apr 3: The Barendra Bohumukhi Unnayan Authorities (BBUA) has undertaken a programme to encourage farmers to grow aromatic fine rice in the Barendra region, reports APB.  
Special arrangements including supervision by Block Supervisors of the Agricultural Extension Department have been made for the purpose, sources in the BBUD said. Aromatic fine rice has good export prospects. One kilogram of this variety of rice is being sold now at Tk 300 in London, they said. Production of aromatic varieties like Kataribhog, Chini Atob, Chini Gura, Kajira, Birol, Khankani (BR-38), Basmati can be increased substantially in the Barendra region, covering Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Pabna districts, which will be a good source of income for the farmers, they said.

**Scarcity of water hampers IRRI-Boro farming in dists**

By Staff Correspondent

IRRI-Boro cultivation is being hampered greatly in the northern and south-western districts due to scarcity of irrigation water.

**Our Pabna Correspondent reports:** From December last year there had been no rainfall throughout the district. The normal life has been paralysed both in rural and urban areas of all the nine thanas.

Almost 80 per cent of the rural areas had been affected badly due to the unprecedented flood. Lakhs of people lost their homes with all their belongings. Thousands of cattle died either by drowning for want of food and shelter. Lakhs of acres of land faced complete or partial damage of standing crops including Aman paddy, jute and winter vegetables. Over five lakhs of agricultural labourers remained idle.

Severe drought has been prevailing throughout the district now.

According to official sources, 48,520 hectares of land have been brought under cultivation of high-yielding and local varieties of IRRI-Boro paddy this year under Intensive Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme. But, the farmers are now apprehending a severe short fall in the production target due to the persisting drought. Meanwhile, over 100 deep and about 350 shallow tubewells have become inoperative due to abnormal and rapid fall in the ground water level and also due to severe loadshedding. Rural unemployment has reached its peak.

Cracks have appeared in the cultivable land. The lands have become hard like stone. Movement of people in 'hats' and bazaars has also fallen down. Farmers have been selling their cattle and land at low prices merely for their subsistence.

In the urban areas, demand for cold drinks, green coconuts has increased. Towns wear a deserted look from 11 am to 4 pm due to the scorching sun. Rickshawpullers are not plying their vehicles regularly.

**An earlier report of Pabna correspondent says:** Continuous drought has caused untold sufferings to the people. Normal life of people has been completely disrupted. Economic life has also come to a standstill.

River communication has been disrupted due to sharp fall in water level of rivers. Ferry services between Kazirhat and Aricha and also between Paksey and Bheramara have been facing problems due to unprecedented fall in water level of the Jamuna and the Padma.

While visiting the abandoned Nagorebari ferry ghat recently this correspondent found a vast tract of sand in the

Jamuna river bed with no trace of any water vessel plying or standing nearby.

This correspondent saw only big and small shoals in the river bed. Attempts of dredging along the river Jamuna seemed to be futile. When this correspondent moved further, he noticed that Natakholra ferry ghat which was inaugurated in November in 1997 has also been facing the same fate of Nagorebari ghat. Natakholra ferry ghat became unserviceable only after 12 months of its commissioning. The ghat was again shifted to Kazirhat, two kilometers down stream from the Natakholra ferry ghat. This ferry ghat already wears a deserted look.

Ultimately the government decided to shift the ferry ghat to Natilpur further down stream from the next year.

Similar is the condition of Paksey-Bheramara ferry ghat over the Padma.

Meanwhile, the drought situation has also caused price-hike of essential commodities here.

**Our Jessore Correspondent says:** Prospect of IRRI-Boro cultivation is bleak in 10 districts of the south-western zone during the current season due to continued drought since November last year.

As such the growers have become very much disappointed. Most of the irrigation machines, particularly the shallow machines have become inoperative.

Sharp fall in ground water level has triggered this situation. Unofficially, a total of 1,000 shallow tubewells in this zone have become inoperative. A total of 483 shallow tubewells in Jessore, 100 in Satkhira, 18 in Jhenidah and eight in Magura have gone out of order.

When contacted, the Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Jessore zone, told that 1,346 shallow tubewells, in different districts under this zone, have been re-sunk recently.

Moreover, 647 new shallow tubewells, including 465 in Satkhira, 173 in Jhenidah and eight in Magura districts have been sunk. Despite all the odds, Jessore AED office sources hope a bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy in this season if no other natural disaster including pest-attack occurs.

Incidentally, during the current season, IRRI-Boro have been cultivated on 3,56,290 hectares of that. It is 91,410 hectares more than the original target.

The target was 2,64,582 hectares.

When contacted, a number of farmers complained to this correspondent, besides the prevalent drought, the persisting loadshedding has become a great threat to IRRI-Boro culti-

vation. Giving details, they informed, in recent time, loadshedding has become a regular phenomenon and supply of power remains suspended for hours together every day.

They further told, if this situation continues, the production of IRRI-Boro crops will be hampered causing heavy financial loss to farmers.

**Our Kushtia correspondent reports:** IRRI-Boro cultivation in six thanas of the district is being hampered due to scarcity of irrigation water.

Most of the deep tubewells sunk with the help of BADC a few years back are not working well. More than 15 lakh people of six thanas in the district are dependent on IRRI-Boro cultivation. They are facing difficulties in this dry season as Ganges-Kobadak project authorities have failed to provide irrigation water. This is because of the authorities' failure in operating the main pump house as the dredging work of the intake channel could not be completed.

At present, there are 250 deep tubewells in Daulatpur, 70 in Khokha, 100 in Kumarkhali, 20 in Mirpur and 40 in sadar thanas. Most of the tubewells need to be repaired as those are not working in full capacity.

**A Jamalpur Correspondent says:** Farmers have been facing a severe drought during this IRRI-Boro farming season.

At the beginning of March the fields had dried up and cracks had developed due to severe heat. The level of ground water has been receding fast. Shallow tubewells have been reinstalled under seven to 10 feet depth from ground to get water layer in some unions in Rashidpur, Sreepur, Goradap, Itail and Shahbajpur. Water bodies have been drying up rapidly.

No rain was recorded in the district since the last few months.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) over 90,000 hectares of land have been brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation this year. Farmers are totally dependent on irrigation and fertilisers.

While visiting some fields, the farmers told this correspondent if this situation persists further, soil will become more harder and it will hit the crops adversely.

Meanwhile, price-hike of fertiliser has created discontent among the farmers. Fertilisers are being sold in various prices in different parts of the district. In some places a bag of 50 kgs urea fertiliser is being sold between Taka 330 to 340 and in other places between Taka 350 to 360.

Farmers have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to ensure smooth supply of power and fertilisers

considering the IRRI-Boro cultivation.

UNB from Khulna reports: IRRI-Boro cultivation in five thanas of the district is being hampered due to the prevailing drought at the peak of the season.

The affected thanas included Dakop, Dumuria, Paikgachha, Koira and Rupsha.

Local farmers said the growth of their plants is under threat, as there is no rainfall here over the last couple of months.

Generally they depend on canals and water bodies for irrigation, but almost all of these have already been dried up.

There is no deep tube-well in the area and the growers have no opportunity to lift ground water to continue irrigation work.

The worst affected are the sesame growers as the plants are yet to germinate due to lack of water though it was sown about a month ago.

The situation will aggravate further if there is no rain within the next few days, the farmers apprehended.

They urged the officials concerned to install deep tube-wells in the areas to enable them to irrigate their lands.

UNB from Panchagarh reports: With the advent of dry season irrigation has become difficult for the farmers across the district posing serious threat to agriculture.

Of the total arable land, so far over four per cent could be brought under irrigation facility. Owners of the rest land are completely dependent on the mercy of rain for irrigation and cultivation.

Extension Department statistics, the total area of arable land here in 1,04,222.67 hectares. Only 4,758 hectares of land (4.18 per cent of the total area) could be brought under irrigation with the help of tubewells and power pumps.

Agriculture officials said the rest 99,465 hectares of land are out of the facility.

Local indigenous irrigation system in the district is also absent as natural source of water like canal and river water dry at the very beginning of the dry season. The situation worsened further with unilateral withdrawal of water by India through constructing dams and barrages in the upstream.

Besides, irrigation in the cropland is being hampered as many tube-wells and power pumps have been rendered inoperative due to abnormal fall in ground water level.

Official sources said of the total 165 deep, 1,664 shallow tube wells and 14 power pumps, 70 deep, 201 shallow tube-wells and three power pumps remained out of operation for long.

**Problems grip 380 pry schools in Barguna**

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 3: Manifold problems have gripped 380 primary schools in Barguna district.

About 10 thousand primary students in 38 unions of the district are being deprived of proper education from these schools. Among the problems, shortage of logistics, qualified teachers and negligence of working teachers are worth mentioning.

The local District Education Office says, there are 380 primary schools, of which 318 are registered and 35 unregistered.

The teacher-student ratio is not proportionate to the requirement.

Most of the teachers are not paid. There is none of complaint to the higher authorities about their negligence of duties. They prefer private tuition to teach in schools, it is widely alleged.

**Lalmai hills facing extinction**

COMILLA, Apr 3: The historic Lalmai hills in the district is facing extinction due to unauthorised removal of earth, reports APB.

Despite a ban, removal of earth from the hills is continuing by some unscrupulous persons which is threatening the forestry and historic relics. The historic Chandimura Temple is now threatened, local people said.

The 22-kilometre Lalmai hills extend from the West of Mainamati hills to Chandimura in the South. Its width varies from one kilometre to four kilometres at different points.

Local people said, removal of earth begins as dark falls and continues till the small hours of the night. Each truckload of earth is being sold at Tk 100.

They alleged that unscrupulous persons collect 'token' from the members of the law-enforcing agencies to remove earth. This is continuing despite resistance by local people, they said.

Some of the hilltops have already become flat lands, now under cultivation, they said.

It is gathered that three-fourths of the Lalmai hills belong to private owners and one-fourth is owned by the govern-

ment. BSS from Rangamati says: The construction of a modern tourist village at Lengurbilin Teknaf thana of Cox's Bazar district at a cost of Taka 120 crore is progressing fast under the supervision of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and is expected to be completed before the next tourist season.

While detailing the progress of the project, an official of BPC told here that the deed of the land of an area of 12 acres, purchased earlier at a cost of Taka 12 lak at Lengurbilin, heart of Teknaf thana headquarters, has been handed over to BPC on March 7 and 8 last. A modern restaurant is being constructed at a cost of Taka 1.20 crore at Kerantali, two kilometre off from Teknaf thana headquarters, officials said. Earlier, a tourist bungalow was constructed at Shahpari, an island nearer to Teknaf, he detailed.

To make tourism more attractive, the latter on, both from home and abroad and their access easy, Parjatan letties are being constructed at Saint Martin and Shahpari, islands neighbouring the under-construction modern tourist hamlet as well as beside the Teknaf forest rest house at a cost of about Taka one crore, he added.

**Crimes up in C'nawabganj**

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Apr 3: The number of crimes in the district is on rise alarmingly creating panic among the peace-loving people, reports UNB.

Law and order situation deteriorated in five thanas here following the increasing crimes like killing, rape, extortion and theft.

According to police sources, a total of 760 crimes were committed here in last year, but it increased this year alarmingly.

A total of 63 crimes on average were committed in every month of the last year while at least 82 crimes were committed in January and 78 in February this year marking the alarming deterioration of the law and order.

On the other hand, seven killings, several incidents of torture on women and 11 thefts were committed in the month of March this year.

According to the police, Enamul Haque alias Sentu, 40, of Radhakantapur village in Shibganj thana was killed by his rival on March 4.

Some miscreants abducted an SSC candidate named Hasina Khatun, 17, from her house at Bhanipur village and burnt her to death pouring kerosene on her body after rape on March 5.

On the same day, Alewara Khatun of Dhoira village in the same thana was beaten to death allegedly by her husband.

Atuar Rahman, 0, of Nareschandrapur village in

sadar thana was abducted on March 5. Later her body was recovered on March 9.

Go-mastapur thana was injured by his rivals and later on succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on March 11.

Besides, a businessman of Kalitala village was stabbed to death by some dacoits while he was returning home from a local hat on the same day.

One Bizli Khatun, 17, of Pithaltala village in Shibganj was violated and slaughtered by Mostaq and his accomplices on March 19.

Apart from this, two shops were ransacked and looted at the Trunk Road crossing in the town on March 5 following a clash between two rival groups of people.

On March 14, Kalu, Secretary of Rikshaw Association was injured seriously in a bomb explosion at sweeper colony crossing.

The farmers of Barind area alleged that cattle lifting, theft of irrigation inputs and robberies are also on rise alarmingly.

Locals alleged that various crimes like smuggling and snatching are on rise here with the connivance of dishonest law enforcers.

Besides, drug addicts are increasing day by day as the local drug syndicates are active in border areas. Huge quantities of phenisidyl syrup, wine and alcohol are smuggling into the country everyday from India before the nose of the members of law enforcing agencies.

Another source of police admitted that criminal activities are on rise in the district as no drive to curb the crimes is being conducted since long.

Add to potato APB from Chuadanga reports: Potato production in 11 districts of the south-western region has exceeded the targets as the farmers harvested a bumper crop.

The government had set a target of cultivating potatoes on 9,700 hectares and producing 1,58,400 tonnes. The farmers, however, planted potato seeds on 15,000 hectares and harvested about two lakh tonnes.

They made reasonably good profits since they were able to sell their produce at the prevailing market prices of Tk 200 to Tk 220 per maund.

More enterprising farmers have held on to their stock of potatoes with the expectation that prices will rise to Tk 350 to Tk 400 per maund in the coming rainy season.

The farmers said that they would be able to make bigger profits if there were cold storage facilities in all the districts. At present only Jessore district has cold storage facilities.

In the absence of such storage facilities thousands of tonnes of agricultural produce in other districts, especially potatoes and mangoes, either rot or have to be disposed of at throw-away prices.

**Life term for 3 murderers in Barisal**

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 3: Three persons were sentenced to life term imprisonment in the court of Abdul Kuddus Mia, Second Additional Judge of Barisal recently.

Convicted Jahangir Hossain alias Bachu Jamadder, Jalal Gazi and Mokhlesur Rahman were also fined Taka 5,000 each and in default to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The story of the case in brief is, the convicted persons along with some others hacked to death one Delwar Hossain following previous enmity over land dispute at Uzirpur on July 29, 1995 morning when Delwar was working in his cropland beside his home.

Tajma Shameem, wife of the deceased filed a murder case with Uzirpur thana on the same day. Police after proper investigation submitted chargesheet.

The judge after examining 11 witnesses pronounced the verdict. One Siddique Pike was acquitted of the charge.



PABNA: Innumerable shoals have emerged in the Jamuna river bed near Natakholra ferry ghat. The river is being dredged now to keep it navigable. — Star photo

**Output may fall by 15 pc in C'nawabganj**

**Drought poses a threat to mango production in Pabna**

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Apr 3: The ongoing spell of drought and foggy weather poses a threat to mango production in all the nine thanas of the district.

Pabna sadar, Ishurdi, Sujanagar, Chatmohar and Bhan- goora thana are mango producing areas in the district. Farmers hope, if it rains soon, the output of mango will be satisfactory.

Huge mango sprouts have appeared in the trees this year, but those are being dried up due to continuous drought which has been sweeping all over the district. If such drought continues further for a few days, there will be severe damages to the mango sprouts. Consequently, the production of mango would suffer enormously, farmers apprehend.

Mango production in the entire northern region suffered a lot due to severe and prolonged cold wave and heavy fog during the last two consecutive years.

**BSS from Chapainawabganj reports:** Production of mango here and its adjoining areas is likely to fall by 10 to 15 per cent due to loss of 25 per cent mango

trees in the last year's devastating floods and late budding caused by foggy weather.

Sources of the Mango Research Centre in Chapainawabganj said, last year the production of mango was not satisfactory, but this year it is an on-season for mango. Moreover, there were several cold waves at the time of the budding of the mango trees. The foggy weather triggered pest attacks on the buds and due to untimely rainfall most of the buds withered. The untimely budding may affect the harvesting, the sources said.

Mango trees need a constant temperature of 20 to 25 degree Celsius for budding, but the temperature remained far below during the end of winter in this region. Sources said, due to untimely rains there was vegetative growth of the trees resulting in the sprouting of new leaves hampering the reproductive growth.

In Chapainawabganj there are mango groves covering 28 thousand acres with about one million of mango trees. About 35,000 people of the area are directly related with mango

trading.

BSS from Thakurgaon says: Almost all the mango trees in the mango orchards here were full of sprouts in the sprouting season of the year which has just ended.

Although dry weather, scorching heat of the sun and westerly wind hampered the process of fruit formation, yet the mango growers are hopeful of getting a good quantity of mango from their orchards and trees.

According to District Agriculture Extension Directorate, there are 204 mango orchards in the district with thousands of trees. Out of the total orchards, 62 are located in Ranisankal, 38 in Haripur, 45 in Baliadangi, 33 in Pirganj and 26 in Thakurgaon sadar thana.

Besides the orchards, there are thousands of mango trees on road sides, in the yards of houses and on vacant lands.

The district is famous for mango production. There are many orchards in the district which were established by rajas, maharajas and zamindars of the district in the past.

In these orchards good quality mangoes are produced. Of which, Surjapuri, Fazli, Gopabhog, Misribhog, Brindaboni, Lengra, Himsagar