

News snaps

Woman UP member chopped

From Our Correspondent
FARIDPUR, June 5: A woman member of Ambikapur Union Parishad (UP) in the sadar thana was chopped recently.

Attack on Rajshahi Edn Board team

From Our Correspondent
GAIBANDHA, June 5: A vigilance team of Rajshahi Education Board was attacked by the agitated HSC candidates at Gaibandha Government College centre recently.

Rivals kill farmer

LALMONIRHAT, June 5: A poor farmer was killed by his rivals at Char Gobardhan area in Adhitmari thana, reports UNB.

Literacy programme progressing

HABIGANJ, June 5: The activities of 'Bikashito Habiganj' under the Total Literacy Movement (TLM) has begun in three thanas to eradicate the curse of illiteracy by 2001, reports UNB.

Valuables worth Tk 3.75 stolen

COMILLA, June 5: A burglary was committed in the show room of Eastern Electric Centre at Jhautala in the town on Friday night, reports UNB.

Epilepsy patient drowns

RANGAMATI, June 5: A teen-age girl who was suffering from epilepsy, drowned on Thursday in the Kaptal Lake at Kolabunia in Borkal thana while she was taking bath, police sources quoted the parents for the incidents, reports BSS.



NARAYANGANJ: A scene from a dance drama which was staged here on the occasion of the Bangali new year and organised by the students of Morgun Girls' High School at its premises recently.

Law & order reviewed

KISHOREGANJ, June 5: The monthly review meeting of the District Administration for the month of May was held at the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) on May 31, reports BSS.

Power bills remain unpaid

NETRAKONA, June 5: A total of Taka 60 lakh electricity bill has been lying outstanding with different government and semi-government offices for long, reports UNB.

12,4,109 couples use contraceptives

MADARIPUR, June 5: Out of a total of 15,5,471 couples 12,4,109 have accepted various contraceptive methods here in the first five months of the current fiscal years, according to an official source, reports BSS.

Traning on pisciculture

RANGAMATI, June 5: Chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council, Ching keo Roaza inaugurated here on Thursday a three-day training course on pisciculture in a function held at sadar thana auditorium as the chief guest, reports BSS.

LGED constructing bridge

TANGAIL, June 5: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Tangail is constructing a seventy point three metre long bridge over the river Bangshai near Kurulia Bazaar on Kurulia-Disalabid road in Madhupur thana, reports BSS.

2 BSCIC estates fail to attract industrialists

By Staff Correspondent

No remarkable industrial units have been set up in the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) estates in the districts of Patuakhali and Jhenidah for the last few years.

Our Barisal correspondent reports: Patuakhali Industrial estate was set up at West Majhgram, three kilometres away from Patuakhali town in 1981 on 15.27 acres of land with a proposed expenditure of nearly one crore taka.

At the initial stage, the allocation was spent to acquire land, for payment of landowners, construction of administrative building, roads and pump-house including the electrical works.

Only six industrial units were set up on the estate during last 18 years.

Of these six industrial units Patuakhali/Textile Mills Ltd, Biswas Hardboard Factory and Jhlik Printing Press and Processing Industries remained shut since 1991 due to absence of necessary bank loan and lack of buyers for their products.

Last year the concerned higher authorities issued order to allot at least 25 plots in the BSCIC estate. Meanwhile, Kabir Multipurpose Cold Storage, Farazi Shrimp Culture and Processing (Pvt) Limited and Zakir Enterprise have proposed to set up their industrial units at the estate.

As the industrial estate is three kilometres away from the town area, the transportation system is very bad. There is absence of easy banking system. These are some of the main reasons hindering in setting up new industrial units at the estate.

BSCIC source disclosed that Taka six lakh had been allocated for the establishment



Jhenidah BSCIC estate has become a grazing ground of domestic animals now. — Star photo

of small scale cottage industries in 1997 and Taka Eight lakh had been allocated to build up industrial units in 1998 at the estate. Now, despite frantic efforts to run the industrial units at the estate, Shaheen Pipe Industries, Rupali Steel Furniture and Bengal Auto Engineering workshop are on way of shutting down.

Our Jhenidah Correspondent says: Jhenidah BSCIC estate has become a grazing ground of domestic animals at day time and a den of terrorists at night.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) acquired 15.7 acres of land at Dhanhari mouza in the sadar thana, about three kilometres east of the district headquarters in 1988.

Construction work of the estate was completed a couple of

years back. But till filing of this report only 27 plots have been allocated. Of them only two units started functioning, one for tyre retreading and another for nursery development. Rest 25 entrepreneurs are not showing eagerness to set up their industrial units as the hoodlums have been demanding a good amount of money as toll from them.

An entrepreneur who was provided with a plot said that the local hoodlums had warned him not to start construction work of his establishment without paying toll. This has discouraged many entrepreneurs like him.

Another entrepreneur said that he had been discouraged to set up industry at the estate as the law and order situation has

been deteriorating in the district day by day.

When contacted some local people at village Dhopagata, Gobindapur, Bhutiarguti, Pobahati and Kastasagra said that hoodlums had been reigning in the estate area for a long time.

While talking to the Deputy Manager (DM) of Jhenidah BSCIC estate he said that they had become hopeless as the entrepreneurs were not showing their interest to set up industry at Dhambaria. But the overall socio-economic condition of the district could be changed if all the units could be installed here, he added.

He also informed that jobs would be created for at least 8,000 people if all the industrial units start operation here.

Extremists kill villager in Chuadanga

CHUADANGA, June 1: Suspected cadres of an armed extremist group kidnapped and slaughtered a villager in sadar thana on Saturday night, police and family members said on Wednesday, reports APB.

The said Duknu Malita, 30, son of Khoka Malita of Ukto village, was abducted by a group of activists of an outlawed party as he was going to a neighbouring village on Saturday evening.

50 answer scripts of HSC exam recovered

GAIBANDHA, June 1: Police recovered 50 answer scripts of English 1st paper of the ongoing HSC examination from the district town on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

2 abducted children rescued

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, June 5: Police rescued two children after three days of abduction from the house of an alleged dacoit at village Panch Kahania in Bakta union of Phulbaria thana recently.

According to police, a group of dacoits swooped on the houses of Hazi Abul Kasem and entered into the four houses by breaking open the doors. The dacoits looted money amounting to Taka Two lakh and valuables worth about Taka one lakh.

The dacoits also abducted two grand children of Hazi Abul Kasem and fled away demanding a huge ransom.

Following the directives of Superintendent of Police (SP), a search operation was conducted by Phulbaria Police. Police rescued Moni, 4, and Kalpana, 7, from the underground hide-out of Sahu.

During the raid, police arrested the wife of Sahu, but Sahu managed escaped arrest.

Mymensingh farmers selling IRRI-Boro paddy at a price below production cost

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, June 4: Harvesting of IRRI-Boro paddy is going on in full swing in all the thanas here.

Now, harvesting, crushing and husking of paddy are common scenes in the homesteads of farmers.

Ali Ashgar, a farmer of village Char Gobindapur in sadar thana informed this correspondent that on average five maunds of paddy had been harvested in each 'katha'.

Anwar Hossain, another farmer of village Char Anandipur told this correspondent that though there was no rain since November last year yet the recent downpour accom-

panied by 'Kalbaisakhki' had caused loss to them. Paddy plants on the low-lying areas have fallen to the ground.

Due to high price of day labourers, the harvesting cost has gone up causing another blow to us, said some farmers of village Pirisuta in Phulpur thana. Now the newly harvested paddy is being sold between Taka 225 to 250 which is not reasonable against their production cost, they lamented.

When contacted by this correspondent, an official of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) told, they are expecting exceeded production as more arable lands were brought un-

der IRRI-Boro cultivation this season than the fixed target. He also told that a total of 12,8,776 hectares of land were brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation with a production target of 3,15,924 metric tons of paddy. The official claimed, 40,386 hectares more lands were brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation. This will add more production to the total yield. This is because the farmers got adequate supply of seeds and other materials required for the farming.

Though drought incurred losses to the farmers, but cultivation on extra lands will bring bumper production, the official added.



GAIBANDHA: Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme has attained success in this district. Photo shows a class in progress under the programme at Fulchhari thana here.

Paddy, rice procurement drive facing serious setback in N-dists

NATORE, June 5: Paddy and rice procurement drive in the northern region during the current IRRI-Boro season has been facing a serious setback due to various reasons, reports UNB.

Less than five per cent of the target has so far been achieved though more than 20 days has already been passed.

The IRRI-boro paddy and rice procurement drive has been started on May 11 with a target to purchase 1.20 lakh mts of paddy and 80,000 mts of rice at the rate of Tk 7.55 and Tk 12 per kg respectively from the growers. The drive will continue till August 31.

It is learnt that in most of the 170 centres in the region, procurement drive has not been started in time due to various reasons including demand of quotas of UP chairman, members and influential persons.

While the middlemen and purchasing those at throwaway prices.

So, the bumper production could not bring any good to the growers. The downward trend of the price of paddy put the farmers in an awkward situation.

In all the northern districts, production of paddy has surpassed the target, despite prolonged drought during the cultivation period from January to March.

About 10,000 hectares of land higher than the target had been brought under IRRI-boro cultivation in Natore alone. A bumper production has been recorded in all the northern districts.

But the small and marginal farmers are not getting any benefit this year as they are not getting fair price of their produce.

They have been forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices.

Road accident kills three in Feni

From Our Correspondent
FENI, June 5: Three people were killed and 30 injured when two trucks collided at Lalpur on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway here.

Two of the victims were identified as Kadam Ali, 50, and Gopinath, 25. Police and hospital sources said the mishap took place as the Feni-bound truck coming from Mirsarai of Chittagong hit another truck coming from opposite direction at 4 pm.

6 killers get life-term in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, June 5: Six accused persons were awarded life term on charge of killing one person while six others were acquitted from the charge of murder in a judgement recently.

Gaibandha District and Sessions Judge Sirajuddin Ahmed declared the judgement in his court. The prosecution case, in brief, was that the victim, Abu Zafar Ali together with his son Golam Rabbani of village Puragari under Gobindaganj thana on September 19, 1986 was throwing urea fertiliser in his crop field. Meanwhile, the accused persons of village Shaliti and Piyara of the adjacent district Jaipurhat attacked the victim with deadly weapons following past enmity.

In the attack Abu Zafar Ali sustained severe stab injuries. He was instantly removed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in a critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries. A case was filed with Gobindaganj thana.

Police charge-sheeted against 13 persons accusing their involvement in the killing incident.

In the trial six persons

namely Abdul Jobber, Nurul Islam, Solaiman, Tota Mia, Akhter Ali and Abdul Rahim were found guilty of murder and awarded punishment of life term. Besides, six other accused persons were acquitted from the charge of murder as the plaintiff could not produce enough witnesses against them.

The prosecution case was conducted by public prosecutor Abu Ala Siddiqi Islam and Advocate Amjad Hossain Akanda appeared in favour of accused persons.

Open sale of bidi sans band rolls

From Our Correspondent
JAMALPUR, June 5: Government is being deprived of a huge amount of revenue due to mal-practice by the owners of bidi factories.

Bidis are being sold in shops, hats and bazaars in seven police stations with impunity without band rolls. Some factory owners use old band rolls while marketing the commodity to the wholesale markets.

In Natore Farming of new hybrid sweet pumpkin gains popularity

From Our Correspondent



NATORE: A newly evolved hybrid sweet pumpkin is seen in a field in this district. — Star photo

NATORE, June 5: Cultivation of a new hybrid variety of sweet pumpkin is gaining popularity among the growers and consumers here.

This family size sweet pumpkin weighing 1 to 1.5 kg grows within 40 to 45 days after plantation. About 8,000 pieces of sweet pumpkin worth about Taka 40,000 can be produced on a bigha of land a year with an estimated production cost of Taka 10,000.

This variety is not perishable like the local varieties for its hard skin. It grows well on comparatively highland where rainwater does not stay long. This fruit has a potential market in the northern region of the country.

Evolved in Japan in 1995, this variety is now being widely

cultivated in Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea. Bangladesh government started importing seeds of this variety in 1997 and it came to Natore in the very next year.

Natore Horticulture Centre (NHC) started its cultivation on experimental basis. NHC also started distributing saplings of this variety to the farmers.

Lately on, finding growing demand in local markets, farmers of 18 villages under NHC's service areas have started cultivation of this variety of sweet pumpkin widely.

Horticulturist Ayub Hossain Khan said, "We are trying to convince the farmers to grow this variety to improve the nutritional status of poor people of the district considering its food value."

In Pirojpur dist Salinity in water exceeds all past records

PIROJPUR, June 5: Intrusion of saline water of the river has been affecting the crop cultivation on hundreds of hectares of land in the district, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department said river waters in seven points in Mathbaria and Nazirpur thanas have been found unsuitable for irrigation as salinity in the water has increased alarmingly.

Meanwhile, irrigation on a vast tract of cropland in the thanas has already been stopped on the advice of the agriculture officials.

A research, conducted by the Scientific Officer of AED, showed that the existing level of salinity in water exceeded all past records.

The level of salinity is 3.41 ECDS metre at Baramachhua point of Haringhata river, 3.78 metre in Shapleza canal and 3.15 in Tushkhali canal in

Mathbaria thana while 6.80 metre at Baburhat point in Baleswar river, 3.21 metre in Tarabunia canal and 3.10 metre in Dhigirjan canal in Nazirpur thana.

This correspondent while visiting different areas of these points mentioned above found the crops growing reddish due to the intrusion of river water during the tide or use of river water in irrigating the cropland.

In this situation, farmers as well as officials are apprehending that paddy could not be cultivated on these saline affected lands in near future.

Moreover, the district lacks irrigation pump, as river water is the main source of irrigation in the river-based district creating concern among the growers.

The farmers urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures in this regard.

People at risk of arsenic contamination in 7 N-dists

PANCHAGARH, June 5: The presence of arsenic beyond permissible limit has been detected in ground water at the frontier areas of different districts in northern region, reports UNB.

This has been revealed in separate survey conducted by Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) and Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in 37 thanas of frontier districts in Rajshahi and Khulna divisions.

The survey found 10-11 microgram arsenic, which is harmful to health, in the ground water at frontier areas of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi.

As per the recommendation of World Health Organisation, the highest acceptable limit of arsenic in water is 0.05 microgram which can be used by the people of Bangladesh. An expert said about half of

the population of the country is now at risk of arsenic contamination adding that arsenic beyond permissible limit has been detected in waters of 10,405 tubewells of 200 thanas in 64 districts.

DPHE officials said there are only three laboratories in the country to test the arsenic contamination. These are at the Science Laboratory and Atomic Energy Commission and another one at Plasma Plus Laboratory.

The poor people of the country cannot afford to test water of their tubewells individually. Besides, one has to pay Tk 2,000 for the test whether he is affected by the arsenic contamination.

At the initial stage arsenic attacks the palm and foot of a man and after attacking his lungs, liver and kidney causes cancer, a physician said.

The leaders urged the government to take necessary steps to save the people from arsenic contamination.