

News snaps

Nazrul's birth centenary

MADARIPUR, July 19: Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, Madaripur District Unit has taken up a number of programmes to mark the birth centenary of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, reports BSS.

A function was held by Udichi on July 9 on the poet at the office of the organisation here. The artistes of Udichi presented songs of Nazrul. Dance drama was also held on the occasions. Similar functions will be organised by the organisation on the life of Nazrul over the next 10 months.

Aman cultivation programme

NILPHAMARI, July 19: Cultivation of Aman paddy is going on here in full swing and due to favourable weather the prospect of the major paddy will be better this year, growers and Agriculture Department officers expect, reports BSS.

Aman paddy will be cultivated on 1.10 lakh hectares in the ensuing season. More than 49 lakh hectares have been brought under Aman cultivation in different districts of Rangpur Agricultural Region this year.

Waterlogging turns worse

MAGURA, July 19: Waterlogging is not a new problem for the town dwellers. But this time it has taken a turn for the worse due to inadequate drainage system, reports UNB.

Most of the low-lying areas go under water during the rainy season, inflicting immense sufferings on the town dwellers. Witnesses said some areas, including Collegepara, Hospitalpara, Councilpara, Islampur, Natun Courtpara, Khanpara, Rishipara, Mollapara, Tatipara remained under knee-deep water after downpour on July 10, 11 and 12. They accused the pourashava authorities of not taking effective steps to remove the problem.

Pabna Rifles Club meeting

PABNA, July 19: The triennial general meeting and election of Pabna Rifles Club was held at local Banamali Institute last week, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner M Mahubur Rahman who is also the ex-officio president of the Club presided over the meeting. The meeting was participated by 207 out of 361 members of club. Two other vice-presidents are Dr AR Khan and Police Super Shah Alam Sikder (ex-officio). Shamsul Huq Khondker has been elected treasurer unopposed.

Massive aus farming programme

PIROJPUR, July 19: A total of 29,920 hectares were brought for aus cultivation in the district under Extensive Summer Crop Production programme, reports UNB.

Of the total land, 7,300 hectares were in sadar, 2,170 hectares in Kalkhali, 4,950 hectares in Nesarabad, 4,000 hectares in Nazirpur, 5,100 hectares in Bhandaria and 4,700 hectares in Mothbaria thana. This exceeded the original target under Aus cultivation which was set at 23,500 hectares. Official sources said about 35,000 metric tons of rice were expected to be harvested in the district as the area under aus was higher than the target.

Fishermen Association formed

GAIBANDHA, July 19: A meeting of the Jatya Matshajibi Samity, Gaibandha unit was held at Gaibandha Zila Parishad auditorium last week, reports BSS.

Upendranath Das presided over the meeting. Led by a large number of fishermen. A 27-member committee of the Gaibandha unit of Jatya Matshajibi Samity was formed in the meeting with Upendranath Das as president and Dinabandhu Das as general secretary.

Phensidyl recovered

BHERAMARA, July 19: A huge quantity of contraband phensidyl syrup was recovered by police from Station Bazar area on Sunday, reports BSS.

Acting on a secret information Bheramara police raided the place and recovered 175 bottles of phensidyl syrup. Police arrested three persons suspected as drug addicts from the area. They were sent to Kushtia Court *hajjat*.

Attack on landless people

NOAKHALI, July 19: Terrorists hired by the influential quarters attacked the landless people and set on fire their houses in Char Dhaner Shish of sadar thana on Saturday, reports UNB.

The attack, which left seven people injured, was mainly aimed at grabbing the government *khas* land. Three of the injured were admitted to the hospital with serious wounds. They were identified as Kalam, 30, Sekandar, 32, and Taher, 25. Local sources said a number of erosion-hit landless families build up their houses in Dhaner shish village about 15 years ago. The influential quarters needed their land for irrigation in the jalmahals beside the village. The landless people prevented the men when the influential people along with some terrorists went to cut canals through their houses. The attack on Saturday was a sequel to this incident.

Fate of pry students uncertain

CHANDPUR, July 19: The fate of some 400 primary students became uncertain following a decision of selling of the school bhaban in auction, reports UNB.

Having no other alternative to save Hindoli Government Primary School Bhaban of Ibrahimpur union from the devastating erosion of the turbulent Meghna, the authorities decided to sell it through auction. The decision was unanimously taken by the Sadar Thana District Management Committee in a hurriedly called meeting on Wednesday. Thana Nirbahi Officer Shikha Sarkar told that the decision has been taken as the semi-pucca school bhaban is barely 20 yards away from the river. It can be devoured in the strong current anytime. The school was built at a cost of several lakhs of taka in 1986.

Habiganj Pura budget announced

HABIGANJ, July 19: Habiganj Poursava has adopted a Tk 15.35 crore budget for 1999-2000 fiscal year, reports UNB.

Chairman Shahid Chowdhury announced the budget at a press conference on Tuesday without proposing new tax. He showed revenue earning at Tk 2.41 crore and government grant at Tk 12.93 crore while the annual revenue expenditure projected at Tk 2.21 and the development expenditure at Tk 12.98 crore.

HYV Boro seed produced

RANGPUR, July 19: Enlisted seed growers of BADC produced some 620 mt of High Yielding Varieties HYV of boro seed in the current season, reports UNB.

Officials said the growers produced BR-14, BR-16, BR-26, BR-29 and BR-28 varieties in Kaunia, Lalmonirhat, Pirganj, Mithapukur and Taraganj areas. They said the enlisted growers of the zone have brought some 620 acres of land under farming to grow high quality seeds.

Tribesmen arrested

KHAGRACHHARI, July 19: Four tribesmen were arrested from Mezopara in Laxmichhara thana here Wednesday on charge of their involvement in terrorist acts, reports UNB.

Police said armymen arrested them along with an LG and eight rounds of bullet. They were handed over to police.

Indian phensidyl recovered

JOYPURHAT, July 19: Police in separate raids recovered 8,00 bottles of Indian phensidyl from two districts during the last week, reports UNB.

A special squad of police, led by Joypurhat sadar thana OC, challenged a Dhaka-bound coach near Central Mosque in the town and seized 5,000 bottles of phensidyl on Monday.



Budding artistes on stage: Child artistes of Saikupa performing at a function arranged recently by a local non-governmental organisation at the thana parishad auditorium.

— Star photo

Roads in bad shape in two dists

By Staff Correspondent

Many cracks and potholes have developed in all the important roads of Mymensingh and Faridpur districts creating serious problems to the vehicular traffic and pedestrians alike.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent reports: Now it is a very common scene to observe in the town that rickshaws and other vehicles are plying through dilapidated roads.

Though the roads are in bad shape for a long time yet those are not repaired for reasons unknown to all, said a resident of Akua area in the town.

The roads which are in pitiable condition are Kazi Ismail Hossain Road, Abul Monsur Ahmed Road, Kazi Nazrul Islam Road, Akua-Phulbaria Road, Jubilee Ghat Road, Boro Masjid Road, Station Road, Swadeshi Bazar Road, Kristapur Road, Bhatikesor Road, Mission Road, Cantonment Road and other lanes and by-lanes of the town.

A passerby can not walk easily through the roads due to poor shape. Rickshaws overturn now and then on the busy roads injuring the passengers due to so many cracks. But the authorities concerned are not taking steps to repair the roads for smooth plying of vehicles, alleged some passengers at Phulbaria bus stand.

According to official sources, Mymensingh Municipality requires 183 km pucca roads and 32 km kutcha roads.

Sources said that in the last fiscal, an amount of Taka 2,06,20,000 was allocated for road development. "Most of the works have already been done and the rest would

be done in the stipulated time," said an official of the municipality.

When contacted, the Sub-Assistant Engineer of Mymensingh Municipality, Md Abdul Aziz told The Daily Star that the allocation for the construction and repairing of roads are not satisfactory. "We can not do our repair works in all the roads, said Abdul

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Faridpur-Sadarpur road via Hat Krishnapur is in deplorable condition.

Cracks and potholes have developed at many points of the narrow road. Two vehicles cannot ply side by side at a time through this road.

Passengers have alleged that overloading and reckless driving cause frequent road accidents on this route. Passengers are allegedly huddled into the buses like cattle or sheep.

Most of the buses plying along this road are condemned ones. Passengers are carried most of the time on roof-tops when there is no space for them to stand inside the buses. The buses usually arrive and depart late and ply at the maximum speed to cover the lost time. Consequently road accidents occur along the route every now and then. Sometimes, the buses go out of order on the way causing untold sufferings to the passengers specially women and children.

It is reported that the passengers are off and on subjected to extreme humiliation and harassment by the conductors and helpers. Two bridges on the road are in dilapidated condition. The bridges may collapse at any moment under the pressure of the running vehicles resulting in heavy casualties. So the two bridges should be repaired immediately.

It is also alleged that just before and after any festival, the bus conductors collect excessive fare from the passengers. As a result untold incidents occur.

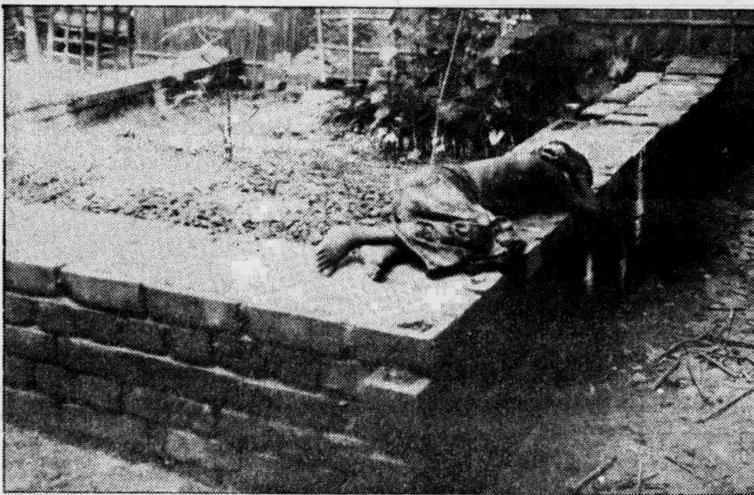
The concerned authorities should look into the matter and take proper measures for the interest of the people.

Md Abdul Aziz, Sub-Assistant Engineer of Mymensingh Municipality told The Daily Star that the allocation for construction and repairing work of roads had not been satisfactory. "We can not do the repair works in all the bad roads with the sanctioned money," the municipality official said. He also said that no new roads had been constructed during the last fiscal, only the repairing work of roads had been done.

Aziz adding "We require more allocation".

He also told this correspondent that in the last fiscal, no new roads were constructed. Only repairing works have been done, said the official.

The suffering town dwellers said the condition of many roads are going from bad to worse everyday due to lack of proper care of the municipal authority.



Unbearable hot weather despite rains:

Heavy rainfalls have been recorded at Kabirpur village in Jhenidah district for the last couple of weeks. But rains have failed to cool down the earth considerably. The picture testifies the truth where a boy is seen sleeping on an abandoned structure after getting tired of hot weather.

— Star photo by Delwar Kabir

Five lakh suffering from iodine deficiency in N-dists

NATORE, July 19: Over five lakh people in the northern region have been suffering from iodine deficiency disorders, the rate of iodised salt consumption among the people of this region falls below 50 per cent, reports UNB.

Taking advantage of the ignorance of common people, a section of businessmen are marketing non-iodised salt, defying the government ban.

According to a UNICEF report, people of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Chapainawabganj and Natore districts have been badly affected by iodine deficiency.

The report said soil and

ground water of the region have little iodine as rainfall and floodwaters wash away the natural ingredients from the land.

So, the report said, people of this region have little chance to intake iodine from agricultural products. The drinking water here also contains very little percentage of iodine.

Health experts said absence of iodine in food and water hampers formation of thyroid gland hormone in the body.

They said in most cases, the pregnant women, who suffer from iodine deficiency disorders, give birth to dead infants. Even if any infant survives it becomes crippled, deaf or dumb or mentally retarded, they said.

"So, consumption of iodine

salt is the only way to get rid of these diseases," said an expert. BSCIC officials said only 40 to 45 per cent people in rural and urban areas can take iodised salt for many reasons, including non-availability of iodised salt and availability of non-iodised salt at cheaper price.

The officials said they had repeatedly called on the salt growers to avail themselves of BSCIC's financial help in iodising salt, "but our appeals went unheeded."

A visit to local markets showed that iodised salt is selling at Tk 12 per kg while non-iodised Indian salt at Tk 7-8.

Farmers of haor areas in Kishoreganj in misery

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 19: Most of the farmers in the district especially in haor areas of Mitamin, Austagram, Itna and Nikli thanas are facing serious economic hardship as cultivation is being hampered seriously due to price-hike of chemical fertilisers, seeds, insecticides and other necessary inputs in the district.

According to sources, of the total population, more than 80 per cent depend on agriculture. Out of which 60 per cent are marginal and remaining have land to earn their livelihood.

But with the rise in population, per head cultivable land is decreasing day by day and the shortfall in agri-output has become very alarming.

The cultivators having small quantity of land cannot cope with the increasing price of agri-inputs. They cannot afford to buy fertiliser, seeds, pesticides and even bullocks to till their lands. Marginal and low class cultivators are deprived of irrigation facilities as they are unable to pay irrigation costs timely.

On the other hand, farmers are not getting fair prices of their produce like paddy, jute, sugarcane and potato in the local markets. Taking advantage of their economic condition, some dishonest and unscrupu-

lous money lenders are doing brisk business by giving loan at higher rates of interests. Moreover, the farmers are compelled to sell their products to the money lenders before harvest at a minimum rate for buying agricultural inputs.

Flood and low price of agricultural products have made the farmers unable to pay the loans they had earlier taken from different banks, according to them.

Meanwhile, the banks including Bangladesh Krishi Bank issued notices to the farmers to repay their loans within the specified period. Many farmers are selling their lands and household belongings to repay the loans finding no other alternative. Under the circumstance prices of land has also declined.

Indiscriminate use of chemical fertiliser and continued cultivation of the same crop on the same land are steadily destroying the fertility of the soil in the district. Cultivators use chemical fertiliser to get maximum production. They also cultivate same crop on the same land without interval. Most of the cultivable lands are being used twice or thrice every year. The farmers hardly use organic fertilisers including cow-dung

which can increase soil fertility. It is suggested that chemical fertiliser should be used after proper test of soil in consultation with the agricultural experts. Otherwise, the yielding rate will further come down.

Terrorists sever wrist of rickshaw van puller

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 19: Terrorists severed a wrist of a rickshaw van puller when he refused to give them Tk 20 as toll recently.

A group of terrorists led by Aftab Hossain stopped the van of Abdur Razzak on Rangpur-Bogra highway near Balia Bandh and demanded the toll. But when the poor man refused to pay the terrorists beat him mercilessly and one stage severed his left wrist.

He was rushed to Gobindaganj health complex and later sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Police, however, arrested Aftab Hossain.

Outlaw surrenders in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 19: An activist of outlawed Purba Bangla Communist Party surrendered to the Police Superintendent of the district recently.

The outlaw, Pulin Behari Sarkar, 35, son of one Haripada Sarkar of village Goadanga under Sadar thana, also handed over his arms and ammunition.

Pulin Behari Sarkar was an accused of former UP chairman of Khalishkhali under Tala thana Mokhtar Ali Khan murder case.

Additional police super and ASP (circle) were present on the occasion.

Robbery in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 19: A robbery was committed in the house of one Khairul Alam of village Dumrakandi under Kotwali thana recently.

According to family sources, the armed dacoits entered the house at night and tied the inmates with ropes.

The robbers decamped with cash money, gold ornaments and other valuables.

A case was lodged with Kotwali thana in this connection accusing five persons. Police arrested one Ibrahim.

One killed in Chandpur fire

From Our Correspondent

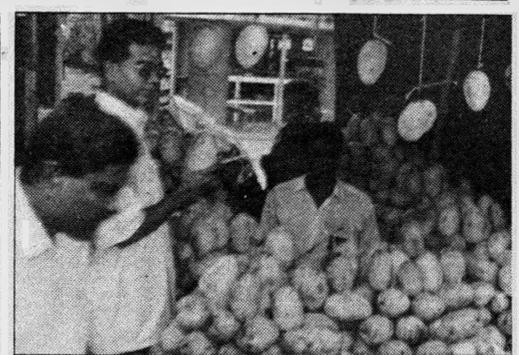
CHANDPUR, July 19: One person was burnt alive and other seriously injured in a devastating fire that originated from electric short circuit at night in Masjeed Bazar under Hajiganj thana of the district recently.

Ten shops of Masjeed Bazar market were gutted and properties worth about Tk 25 lakh were destroyed.

The dead was identified as Nayan, 18. The victim was sleeping in his shop.

Injured Dulal Chandra, 20, was rushed to Comilla Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

Fire fighters from Hajiganj and Chandpur extinguished the fire.



Fazli mangoes are sour:

There is an abundant supply of Fazli, the king of mangoes in Natore markets this season. Size of it is also amazing. Each Fazli weighs one or two kilogram. But its price has been soaring up daily. Now the price of each kg of Fazli is Taka 35 here.

— Star photo by Anwar Ali

Rly tracks need renovaton

From K M Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, July 19: Train communication with the capital city from the northern districts was disrupted temporarily following derailment of a goods train on July 11 at Padumshaher in Bonarpara — Teestamukh ghat section.

According to Railway sources, a goods train with its 11 wagons was proceeding towards Bharatkhal on the fateful day. When the train reached at Padumshaher situated between Bonarpara and Bharatkhal stations all on a sudden seven wagons of the train derailed from the track. This is due to worn-out slippers. As a result train communication in this section remained disrupted till July 12.

However, the Railway authorities restored partial com-

munication through transhipment since occurrence of the incident.

The Railway authorities have been operating the train service between the northern zone and Dhaka through two ghats namely Balashi and Fulchhari since last two years. During the rainy season, Teestamukh ghat was shifted to Fulchhari and in dry season the said ghat again shifts to Balashi. So the railway track of both the ghats remain abandoned five to seven months in a year. During the period no renovation work is undertaken in the abandoned sections.

On the other hand during peak period the ghat is usually shifted almost hurriedly and without prior notice. So when the trains move first on the abandoned track, the trains derail frequently from the track. On July 7 another goods train derailed on the bridge near Bharatkhal station.

Scholarship awarding ceremony held

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, July 19: Scholarship awarding ceremony of Bhaterra High School under Kulara thana in the district was held recently.

Presided over by former secretary Abul Hasnat Mufazzal Karim, the function was attended by Sultan Md Monsur Ahmed MP and GKM Nurul Ameen, Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar, as chief guest and special guest respectively.

The function was also addressed among others, by Muktabis-un-Noor, President of Sylhet Press Club, Mizul Haque, Thana Nirbahi Officer of Kulara, and Nazrul Islam, Principal of Bhaterra College.

Sultan Md Monsur Ahmed donated Tk five thousand to the fund of 'Bhaterra Talent Award Scheme'.

A total of 29 students received scholarships from Bhaterra Talent Award Scheme. Chief guest distributed scholarship money among the recipients.

Woman killed in Gopalganj road accident

From our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, July 19: A woman was killed and 35 others were injured in a road accident at Boltail village under Sadar thana in the district recently.

A Gopalganj town-bound passenger bus (Faridpur Ba-105) from Takerhat on Gopalganj-Takerhat road near the village fell in a roadside ditch as the driver lost his control, killing Bilu Rani Sarkar, 80, on the spot.

Five critically injured were rushed to hospital. They included Residential Medical Officer (RMO) of Gopalganj Sadar Hospital Dr Ranendu Shekhor, 45, Rabiul Alam, 30, Farhad Hossain, 25, and Zaker Molla, 25.

Police sized the bus. However, the driver and helper of the bus escaped.

A case was lodged with police in this connection.

10 hurt in scuffle on edn board office premises

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, July 19: At least ten people were injured on the Rajshahi Education Board premises in a scuffle between a group of employees and visitors, who went there to collect provisional certificates of SSC examinations, Wednesday.

A large number of students and guardians on the day thronged the education board office premises to collect the provisional certificates. At one stage, a group of visitors alleged that the board employees were taking bribes for quick issuance of certificates, ensuing the scuffle.

All the injured persons were visitors, witnesses said. Later the employees drove out the visitors and put the main gate of the office under lock and key, causing much suffering to the visitors.

All sorts of official activities of the board was suspended on the day following the incident.

10,000 children suffering from malnutrition

From Our correspondent

JAMALPUR, July 19: About 10,000 children in the district have been suffering from malnutrition due to various reasons.

Inadequate food in households, poor health of mothers, lack of basic health care facilities and proper dieting practices have been attributed to the malnutrition. A large number of children die of various diseases relating to malnutrition every year in the district, hospital sources said.

A recent survey conducted in seven thanas of the district by a non-governmental organisation revealed that diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, pneumonia, acute respiratory tract infection, malaria and whooping cough are every day picture here.



Bid to save fish fries:

Many current nets with fish fries have been seized in a drive conducted in Chandpur recently. Mobile courts led by magistrate Jahangir Alam swooped on the law breakers in the Meghna river and foiled the lust of unscrupulous fishermen.

— Star photo by Shirin Akhter