

## News snaps

### Installation work progressing

MADARIPUR, Aug 9: Work on the installation of 1200-line digital telephone exchange here is progressing fast, reports BSS. Local Telegraph and Telephone (T and T) office sources said, 80 per cent work of the switch room including installation of the main distribution fan and battery has already been completed.

### Drive to realise outstanding taxes

MADARIPUR, Aug 9: Madaripur Pourasabha has launched a drive to realise outstanding taxes from its 3,203 private, commercial and government holdings in the nine wards of the town, reports BSS. The drive, which began from June 15, will continue, pourasabha sources said. Taxes amounting to Taka 30 lakh have been lying outstanding with the private, commercial and government holdings for a long period.

### Body recovered

MUNSHIGANJ, Aug 9: The sadar thana police recovered the body of an unidentified man of around 30 years old from the River Dhaleswari on August 6, reports BSS. Police sources said the badly decomposed body was found floating close to the river-bank near Tara Mosque, about the kilometre off the district town. The victim was clad in a full sleeve blue shirt and check lungi with hands tied behind with rope to a piece of iron rod. Police suspected that the victim might have been thrown into the river fastening his hands and feet. The body was sent to Narayanganj morgue for autopsy.

### Stolen timber recovered

TANGAIL, Aug 9: A huge quantity of stolen timber worth about Taka 10 lakh was recovered from Mahijhora and Garo Bazaar in Tangail district last week, police and Forest department officials said, reports BSS. Acting on a secret information, the forest department officials and the police jointly raided the spot and recovered the timber stolen from the reserve forest areas of Madhupur. An organised gang is active to destroy the forest resources in the area, officials said.

### Construction work progressing

BANDARBAN, Aug 9: The 73-km long road work in three thanas is progressing fast, reports BSS. As part of the special project of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, the three roads connecting Lama, Rowangchari and Naikkhangchari thanas with the district headquarters are being built at a cost of Taka 39 crore, executive engineer of the board told the news agency. Eighty per cent work of the three roads were completed. The new roads will facilitate direct road communication of the three remote thanas with the district headquarters, enabling the people to carry their goods for sale.

### 74 FWP projects implemented

CHUADANGA, Aug 9: A total of 74 projects were implemented under the Food-for-Work Programme (FWP) in four thanas here in the last fiscal year, reports BSS. According to an official source, the government sanctioned 629 tons of wheat for the execution of the small projects. Sixteen projects were implemented in Chuadanga Sadar, 27 projects in Alamdanga thana, 19 projects in Damurhuda thana and 12 projects in Jibannagar thana. The work of the projects included construction and repair of roads, culverts and bridges in the flood affected areas.

### Rivals' clash leaves old woman dead

BARGUNA, Aug 9: An old woman was killed and four other people were injured in a clash between two rival villagers in Patharghata thana on Friday, reports UNB. Witnesses said the clash ensued in the morning when Asmat Ali and his family members tried to resist a group of people led by Monu Chowkidar from cultivating a disputed land in Lemua village. The dead was identified as Zamina Khatun, 65, wife of Asmat Ali. Her body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy. The injured were identified as Jahangir, 45, Zahir, 35, Joykul Begum, 40, and Mintu, 35.

### Discussion on pisciculture

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 9: Different functions were organised by the Fisheries Department from July 25 to 31 marking the Fisheries Week '99 here and different thana headquarters, reports BSS. A discussion on pisciculture was held in the Sadar thana parishad auditorium, Begum Dilara Haroon, MP was present at the discussion as the chief guest. Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Md Lutfar Rahman, the discussion was addressed, among others, by District Fisheries Officer Md Mohiuddin. Prizes were distributed among the best pisciculturists of the district.

### Young boy commits suicide

PATUAKHALI, Aug 9: Having failed to marry a schoolgirl, a young boy in Mirjaganj thana allegedly committed suicide on Thursday, reports UNB. Villagers said Elias Rabbi alias Rusel, a 2nd year student of Subidkhal Degree College, took his life by hanging himself at his residence at about 6am.

### Wheat distributed among destitutes

CHUADANGA, Aug 9: The government has sanctioned 1,116 tons of wheat for distribution among the 3,035 destitute families of the four thanas here under Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme in the current fiscal year, reports BSS. According to an official source, of the total wheat, 324 tons will be distributed free of cost among 889 families in Chuadanga sadar, 594 tons among 1,651 families in Alamdanga thana, 113 tons among 315 families in Damurhuda thana and 85 tons among 180 families in Jibannagar thana. Each family will be getting monthly 30 kg of wheat.

### Agri-loan distributed

MAGURA, Aug 9: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has distributed Tk 14.62 crore as agricultural loans among farmers in four thanas here during the last fiscal year that ended last month, reports UNB. During the period, the bank has realised outstanding loans of Tk 10 crore from the farmers, official sources said. The loans distributed through 16 branches of BKB, were used for cultivation of various crops, farming products, poverty alleviation activities and bamboo and cane handicrafts production.

### Unnatural deaths up in Gopalganj

GOPALGANJ, Aug 9: The incidents of unnatural deaths increased in the district during the last six months when 250 cases were recorded, reports UNB. The police report said 125 people committed suicide, 35 were killed in accidents and the rest fell victim of secret killing or drowned.

### Three cops closed

MANIKGANJ, Aug 9: Three traffic constables here were closed in connection with Thursday night's collection of toll stopping trucks on Dhaka-Aricha highway, police said, reports UNB. They were identified as constables Abdul Kader, Babul Hossain and Siddique Rahman Siddique. Transport workers put up a barricade on the highway at 9 pm on Thursday night after a transport leader escaped narrowly from an accident when a truck ran away with high speed to avoid toll collection by police. The barricade was withdrawn at about zero hours after the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Manikganj sadar thana apologised to the transport workers and closed the traffic constables instantly.

### Chhengar Char Pourasabha budget

CHANDPUR, Aug 9: A Taka 4,57,95,683 annual budget of Chhengar Char Pourasabha for the year 1999-2000 was announced last week, reports BSS. Chhengar Char Pourasabha chairperson Amena Begum, the first woman chairperson of any municipality in Bangladesh, announced the budget at a meeting held at the pourasabha. Local businessmen, elite and government officials were present on the occasion. Sufficient allocations have been made for overall development of roads and markets of the new pourasabha.

### Bheramara Pourasabha budget

BHERAMARA, Aug 9: The Taka 5,36,78,842 annual budget of Bheramara Pourasabha under Kushtia district for the fiscal 1999-2000 has been announced here recently, reports BSS. Pourasabha chairman Mohammad Sirajul Islam announced the budget at a meeting held at his office. Poura commissioners, government officers and local leaders were present on the occasion. An amount of Taka 3, 30,50,000 has been allocated in the development sector for repair and reconstruction of roads, markets and educational institutions of the municipality. No new tax has been imposed.

## Land requisitioned by govt

# 20 families in Rajshahi yet to get compensation

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Aug 9: A total of 20 families have not yet been paid the compensation money for their lands requisitioned by the government.

More than four years ago, the district administration acquired lands from several hundred families for Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) to construct a bypass road extending from Kalpana (UTSAV) Cinema Hall to Rajshahi Silk Factory.

The Land Requisition Department (LRD) of the office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Rajshahi had fixed up the price of the lands and houses and signed contracts with the owners of the lands according to the government rule. The owners of the lands had also been asked to submit documents in favour of their respective

ownerships. When works on construction of the bypass road began by demolishing the buildings, the LRD started to pay the compensation money.

All were paid their money except 20 owners who had been asked to submit deeds of hand-over of the lands. As they owned the lands from paternal sources they could not show any kind of deed of purchase or transfer ownership of the lands. They, however, submitted other relevant documents. The officials of LRD did not accept those documents as legal and refused to pay them the compensation money until they produce the deeds of ownership of the lands.

The deprived land-owners appointed advocates who

pleaded for them to the LRD that the 20 families had divided their paternal lands on mutual consensus and made no deed of transfer of ownership. So they had not have any such documents. But they have many other documents that confirm their ownership. Besides, no dispute arose on possession or ownership of the lands. All arguments went in vain.

At last the deprived land-owners went to the then minister for public works who ultimately ordered LRD of Rajshahi DC office on November 27, 1997 to immediately make payment of the compensation money to 20 families. About two years have already passed after the minister's order but LRD is yet to follow the order.

When contacted, a LRD official said on condition of anonymity, "The minister's order was proved to be political, but the problem is completely a legal concern. Without confirmation of ownership of a land with the necessary documents that government rules need, how can we pay the money?"

Meanwhile, losing their lands and houses, the 20 families have taken shelter in rented houses. They cannot buy new lands and build new houses for not getting the compensation money. "We are passing very hard days," said one of them.

They have recently applied to Prime Minister Shaikh Hasina for her intervention into the problem.



Extending contract? : The contractors of Rajshahi town protection embankment damaging further the already flood weakened dam by plying heavy trucks on it.

—Star photo by Abdul Wadood

## Tea production may fall short of target in two dists

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Aug 9: The production target of tea may not be achieved in Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts in the current season.

The spell of drought which blew over the two districts in the early part of this year poses a threat to tea production. As a result the production target may not be achieved.

According to managers and officials of different tea gardens of Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts where country's three-fourth tea gardens are located, about 80 per cent of targeted production may be achieved this year.

According to received information in the first four months of the year, production target of tea was fixed at 48 lakh 80 thousand kilogram, while only 19 lakh 80 thousand kilogram were produced against this target. In the first three months tea leaves were not plucked and necessary fertilisers and pesticides were not used in the plantation areas of the gardens due to insufficient rainfall.

It is also reported that tea plantation areas was being attacked by white ants, red spiders and Hellellis in considerable number of tea gardens following rainfalls in the months of May and June causing much problem in picking tea leaves in normal way.

However, due to prolonged drought and insufficient rainfalls, additional funds have been involved in many gardens to overcome the situation. On the other hand many tea garden owners are facing capital crisis to face the situation created by drought.

It is being apprehended that Bangladesh tea may face tough competition in international market as production costs have increased due to the above mentioned causes.

However, the present production situation was discussed in the 39th annual general meeting of the Bangladesh Tea Cha

Sangsad, the owners' organisation of tea gardens which was held on July-29 last. AQI Chowdhury, chairman of the sangsad has also sought assistance from the government with financial support on easy terms and conditions with a view to overcoming the situation created by drought.

## Fulchhari THC yet to start functioning

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Aug 9: Fulchhari Thana Health Complex in the district is yet to start its operation in full swing, although the health complex was inaugurated formally one and a half years ago, depriving the people of proper medical facility.

On completion of the construction of the complex it was inaugurated on February 27, 1998. Since then the complex has only been providing out door treatment to patients. The authority is yet to start providing its indoor medical service to patients.

Everyday huge numbers of patients of Fulchhari thana, which has the population of nearly one lakh and 30 thousand, have to visit Gaibandha Hospital and Rangpur Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

Out of nine posts of physicians only five were found

working in the complex few months back but now only two doctors are engaged to attend patients. But no step has yet been taken to recruit doctors in the vacant posts.

Patients alleged it was really hard to meet the physicians in the complex. They are to depend on nurses and laboratory technicians.

Besides, over 70,000 people who are living in remote char areas in the thana cannot reach the complex for treatment due to non-availability of transports. The complex is being shifted from Gajaria to Udakhali, seven kilometers off Fulchhari thana headquarters because of river erosion.

Local people have demanded the complex be operated in full swing with adequate doctors and medical equipment.

Most of the people in the thana are poor and they have no or little access to modern medical treatment facility.

## Maize cultivation gaining popularity in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Aug 9: Maize cultivation has been gaining popularity in the district over the last five years.

More lands are being brought under maize farming in the area, local agriculture officials said.

The government is giving priority to crop diversification. The Agriculture Extension Directorate is trying to introduce the crop to farmers in the district and motivate them through demonstration plots.

Maize ranks second after wheat in world cereal production followed by paddy.

More than 70 countries, including 53 developing countries, are cultivating the crop at least on one lakh hectares of land. Maize is used in the preparation of nutritious food, animal feed and fodder and in several industrial products.

Maize can be grown all over Bangladesh on 15 lakh acres of land, agriculture experts said. The potential demand for maize in the country is 2.70 lakh tons, added. "The country's demand

for maize will be 4.60 lakh tons in near future."

A source with the Netrakona Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said in the current maize season the crop is being cultivated on 300 acres of land in the district. 15 to 20 tons of maize can be produced on an acre of land, the source added.

As maize plants collect food and water from deep layer of soil by long roots, they do not cause any harm to other crops and soil fertility, experts said.

Besides, pest attack on the crop is not as severe as other cereal crops. Local varieties *Barnaly*, *Shuura* and *Mohar* and high yielding varieties *seura* and *Pacific-I* are now being cultivated in the country.

Maize cultivation method is very easy and production cost is comparatively low in the country. Generally the crop yields bumper harvest in the *rabi* season, (October to April), *kharif-I* (February to June) and *kharif-II* (July to November).

Corn oil produced from maize is one of the popular

most edible oils in the present world. And corn oil is also used for preparing acid, alcohol, paint, artificial rubber, gun powder, medicines etc. Besides, maize is the only crop, which contains magnesium, potassium, sodium and chlorine.

Smooth marketing of the crop is one of the major problems for the farmers in the district. But at present several organisations like BRAC, Gramin Krishi Foundation and poultry feed producers and some poultry farmers are showing interest for maize. In markets, per maad of the crop is selling at Tk 250.

Interested farmers also face quality seed crisis. Maize seeds are not being imported due to lack of government patronisation, forcing the farmers depend on local seeds.

As the crop is suitable for the country's climate and it has bright prospect both home and abroad, government should come forward to encourage farmers to bring more lands under maize cultivation, experts observed.

## Events of districts in picture



**Human Rights:** A seminar on Repression on Women and Children was arranged recently by Rights, Jessore at Bagherpara thana parishad auditorium. Presided over by Taslim Ahmed the seminar was attended by woman MP Aleya Afroz as the chief guest. Acting Secretary of Rights Jessore Binoy K Mollick is also seen in the picture. —Star photo



### Protest rally of traders

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Aug 9: A protest rally of traders was held at Gopalganj town Sunday to protest the decision to destroy the Poura Market building.

Organised by Poura Market Business Association, the protest rally was presided over by M.Mansur Ali, Convenor of the association and President district Jatiya Party. The rally was addressed, among others, by Asraf Ali, general secretary of Sadar thana Awami League, Moniruzzaman Pinnu, joint convenor district BNP, Abdur Rab, former municipal commissioner and Moazzafar Husain.

M. Mansur Ali, who renamed the market as Bangabandhu Poura Market, urged the authorities concerned to withdraw the decision to destroy the market.

After rally agitated traders brought a big procession which paraded main roads in the town.

### Netrakona-Madan road in bad shape

From Our correspondent

NETRAKONA, Aug 9: The 35-kilometre, Netrakona-Madan road has been in a deplorable condition, much to the suffering of local people.

Absence of repair and renovation work was held responsible for the poor condition of the road.

Because of the pitiable condition of the road carrying of goods and passengers from the district headquarters to other areas has become hazardous, local transport workers said.

The road was severely damaged in the last year's unprecedented flood. A large number of potholes have developed on the road.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to repair the road immediately.

District bus owners said if the road is not repaired immediately, their buses will stop plying on the road.

### Satkhira Bar slates terrorism in court premises

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 9: District Bar Association in a resolution has protested and condemned the terrorist activities on the Satkhira judge court premises.

The members of the association demanded punitive action against those who besieged and confined the learned district judge MA Shahidur Rahman and his staff in his room following cancellation of bail petitions of four accused in the daily Patradoot editor S.M. Alauddin Murder Case on July 26.

The terrorists turned violent and put the two main gates of the premises under lock and key, creating panic in the area from 11 am to 8 pm.

The meeting of the association held with Advocate SM Haider in the chair also demanded withdrawal of DC.

The four accused of the murder case Abdus Sabur, Khalilullah Jhharu, Abul Kalam and Abdur Rouf, who surrendered to the court, however, were sent to jail.

### 40,000 hectares to be brought under aman farming

From A Correspondent

NARSINGDI, Aug 9: Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a massive project to bring 40,000 hectares of land under transplanted aman paddy cultivation in six thanas of the district.

The department has also set a target to produce 1,20,000 metric tons paddy, official sources said.

Thana wise break up of land to be brought under the cultivation is 8500 hectares in Raipura, 4300 hectares in Palash, 8500 hectares in Shibpur, 9500 hectares in Manohardi, 5500 hectares in Belabo and 3700 hectares in Sadar thana.

Different government agencies have provided seeds and fertiliser to aman growers to achieve the production target, official sources said.

**Taking over:** Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan taking over as the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University from Prof Abdul Khaleque, the outgoing VC at a simple ceremony on August 4 last. Prof Khan topped the VC panel securing the highest number of votes. He has been appointed the 17th VC of the university by the President and the Chancellor of Universities Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. —Star photo



**No more Hiroshima:** Former election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf addressing a discussion meeting on Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day arranged by Hiroshima Academy at Chittagong College auditorium recently. —Star photo



**Rajshahi city mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu** recently distributed prizes among the winners of a cultural competition held in the metropolis. —Star photo



**Changing food habit:** Dhuliapara farmers of Sailkupa thana in Jhenidah district cultivating maize extensively as the grain proved to be a profitable one. —Star photo