

Local AL, JP leaders demand

# Declare 2 flood affected Rajshahi thanas distressed area

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Oct 3: Local Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP) leaders in separate statements demanded of the govt to declare Bagmara and Mohonpur thanas of Rajshahi district distressed area.

BNP and other opposition parties exempted the thanas from their anti-government movement programmes.

Meanwhile, the overall flood situation in five thanas of Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts is unlikely to deteriorate.

The situation in other flood-affected areas is slowly improving with fall in water level of the rivers.

Onrush of flood waters inundated almost all the areas of Mohonpur and Bagmara thanas of Rajshahi and Manda thana of Naogaon when people of Tanore thana cut a dam at Tangra village two days ago to drain out flood waters from their areas.

More than four lakh people including about 1.02 lakh in Mohonpur and 1.85 lakh in Bagmara thanas have been hit by flood, official sources said. In these two thanas, in all 22 unions measuring more than 326 square kilometers have been inundated. A total of 21,750 houses and crops on 14,000 hectares of land have been damaged. When some journalists visited Jahanabad Union Parishad chairman Islam Ali Sardar, said that they had lost everything. The floods spared none, he said and observed that relief and rehabilitation works should be started immediately to save people from famine.

Mouqachi Union Parishad chairman Sohrab Ali Khan said in the same tone. Sorat Ali Pramanik, chairman of

Govindapara Union Parishad of Bagmara thana said that floods had left little places dry. "They are virtually living in water and starving", he said. Union Parishad member of Maria Al Mamun burst into tears and said that his family and the neighbours had been starving. Five ponds of fish, his only living means, have been washed away by floods.

In Chapainawabganj, flood situation deteriorated in Gomastapur and Bholahat thanas, as the River Punarvaha continued to rise. Onrush of flood waters from across the border has made the situations more serious. Road communications of the two thanas have been disrupted completely due to inundation and damage the roads.

In Bholahat thana, three embankment-cum-roads have been broken down by floods at Polladanga, Baburtola, Bindupur and Baraipara over flooding vast area. Out of total 81 square kilometer areas of the thana, 58 square kilometer areas went under flood waters. Standing crops on 3,245 acres of land and 15,324 houses have been damaged so far by floods. A total of 12 shelters have been opened, but no relief materials reached for the flood-hit people.

Meanwhile, overall flood situation in other thanas of Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts improved a little. But sufferings of the flood affected people increased. Scarcity of food, drinking water, medicine and fuel has become very acute in the flood affected areas. Relief works of the government and also of the non-governmental organisations are not satisfactory, local people said.

## Sirajganj DIARY

### 3 police officers suspended

From A Correspondent  
SIRAJGANJ, Oct 3: Three police officers—sub-inspectors Fazlur Rahman, Mojibur Hossain and assistant sub-inspector Merajul Huque—were suspended on Wednesday for allegedly not depositing seized money. Official sources said the suspended officers with some constables raided the house of robber Mofzel last week at Tukur Char village under Sadar thana and allegedly seized Taka one lakh during the raid, but failed to arrest the robber. Following the allegation, one member probe body headed by ASP Mannaf Hossain was formed. On September 27 report of the probe body was submitted.

### 15 students hurt in clash

At least 15 students were injured in a clash between two rival groups in the premises of Laxmikola Begum Nurunnahar Tarkabagish Degree College under Raiganj thana on Thursday. Police and witnesses said the clash followed a trifle quarrel between two students—Alamgir and Robin—of the college. Supporters of the two students equipped with sharp weapons locked in clash at about 11 am, injuring 15. Conditions of three students were stated to be critical. They were admitted to Raiganj thana health complex. Students also ransacked office of the principal. College authority suspended classes for three days.

### 2 Jubo League activists held

Detective Branch of police arrested two activists of ruling Awami League-backed Jubo League Jilur Rahman and Hanif in Shahjapur thana on Wednesday night in connection with several cases, including murder cases. Following the arrest Shahjapur Jubo League and Chhatra League brought out procession in the thana headquarters demanding their immediate release.

### Youth succumbs to stab injuries

A young man, who received stab injuries at village Gopinathpur under Ullapara thana, died in hospital on September 28. Local people said Milon Hussain, 20, received injury on September 27 when some delinquent youths led by Abdul Jalil attacked him over teasing a girl. On the day the delinquent youths teased the girl, Kalpana Khatun, who was going to school, Milon protested the incident and asked Jalil and his accomplices not to tease girls. Milon was an activist of local BNP.



Common people's apple: Suppliers at Swarupkathi ghat carrying guavas through local country boats for marketing to various places. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

### Locomotive oil lifting rampant

From Our Correspondent  
GAIBANDHA, Oct 3: Lifting of oil from locomotives is rampant in the western zone of the state-owned Bangladesh Railway.

It has become a source of regular income for a section of railway employees and local influential quarters. The evil practice has been continuing in different areas for a long time, causing huge loss to authorities.

Unscrupulous railway employees and local influential people are particularly active in Banarpara, Rangpur, Kawnia, Bharatkhal, Ishwardi, Bheramara, Sonatola, Rajbari, Darshana, Khulna, Parbatipur and Sayedpur stations under the western zone.

Generally after dusk organised groups, in collaboration with a section of railway employees, lift oil from engines in the outer signals of stations.

No action has been taken to stop fuel lifting despite public appeals and media reports.

Moreover, everyday a huge quantity of oil is being lifted from different engine-sheds, workshops and stores.

### Fish scarcity in Chuadanga markets

From Our Correspondent  
CHUADANGA, Oct 3: Supply of fish in local markets has dwindled in recent days, triggering price-hike.

Indigenous species such as tangra, shol, magur, shing, gazar, boal, padma, puti and koi have virtually disappeared.

Local fish traders said these species are now getting dearer in local markets.

Fisheries Department officials said use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers on croplands is polluting waters of beel, haor, canals and rivers, the natural sources of fish, hampering production.

Moreover, fishing of fries is one of the main reasons for the decline, they said.

Hilsa is now being sold at 140.00 taka per kg. This price has been static for the last seven days.

Small size tangra is being sold between Tk 90 and 100 per kg. Big size ruhi is not available. However, small size ruhi is being sold between Tk 100 and Tk 120 per kg.

Shol is being sold at 100 per kg while magur and koi are being sold at 200 taka per kg.

### Jute growers being deprived of fair prices

From Our Correspondent  
NETRAKONA, Oct 3: Jute growers are being deprived of fair prices of their product as middlemen are active in local markets.

Farmers had bumper jute harvest this season, thanks to favourable weather. However, land under jute farming has decreased this year.

14,080 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation this year against 15,120 hectares of land in the last year.

Because of bumper production, most of village markets are flooded with the newly harvested jute. But taking the advantage of bumper harvest the middlemen are controlling the markets. Tasha variety is being sold at Tk 280 and local variety between Tk 230 and Tk 250 per mound.

Purchasing centres of Adamji Jute Mills and other jute mills are yet to start functioning this year. On the other hand, marginal jute growers are under severe pressure to repay loans they borrowed from local moneylenders, forcing them to sell their products at throw-away prices.

The marginal jute growers have appealed to the authorities concerned to purchase jute immediately through the purchasing centres.

### Tigers kill 25 fishermen in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Oct 3: Tigers from the Sundarbans ate up 25 fishermen and injured four others in August and September last, reports UNB.

Villagers said the fishermen fell prey to the tigers while fishing in the river adjacent to the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest of the world.

## T-Aman on 13,000 hectares under pest attack

KURIGRAM, Oct 3: Farmers are suffering from a problem that is all too familiar to other parts of the country: pest attack, reports UNB.

When the farmers were expecting a good harvest this year, pests have been raging through their croplands cutting a swath of destruction.

Officials said transplanted Aman on some 13,000 hectares of land came under pest attack squandering the chances of a bumper harvest.

Earlier, standing Aman on about 28,135 hectares of land was damaged by floodwaters.

The officials said some 1.19 lakh hectares of land have been brought under Aman cultivation this year, of which cultivation on over 1.15 lakh hectares has already been completed.

An agriculture official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he visited different areas of Sadar thana, Ulipur and Rajarhat thanas and found that Aman plants have widely been damaged by the pest attack.

The official attributed the epidemic to the high birth rate of pests caused by lack of potassium and zinc in croplands and "its widely seen in the lands, the quality of which is regarded as No. 11."

He suggested the farmers to install poles in croplands alongside using light-trap to keep majra at bay and use tilt for preventing the roots from rotting and use Nagos, Dimecron, potassium and urea for preventing the leaves from drying up.

Nasiruddin, 45, a farmer of village Kendarhat in Rajarhat thana, alleged that they were not getting adequate support from the government to overcome the problem.

BSS from Barisal reports: Pamri and Majra insects have attacked Aman crops on 2,50,000 hectares of land in different areas of Patuakhali district.

According to relevant sources, a total of 2.12 lakh hectares have been earmarked for the cultivation of aman in this district this year. Meanwhile, 1,79,268 hectares have been brought under this programme till September 12 and the cultivation is going on to exceed the target.

Different types of insects have attacked the crops. At least 2.18 thousand hectares have already been attacked by 'Pamari' and 345 hectares by 'Majra' insects, the sources added.

The insect affected areas are: Patuakhali Sadar, Galachipa, Kalapara, Baulal, Dashmina and Mirzaganj thanas of the district.

According to district Agriculture Extension Department sources, a total of 152 squads have been formed for spraying the insecticides on an emergency basis in the affected areas of this district.

Besides, the department took up measures to check the insects under 'Food for Pamari' programme here, the source added.

## News snaps



A typical scene of a rural home where housewives seen winnowing Aus paddy following their thrashing. The picture was taken recently from village Balidia in Mohammadpur thana of Magura district. — Star photo

### AL rival factions clash: 10 hurt

CHANDPUR, Oct 3: Two rival factions of Awami League clashed at Alagittur union in Haimnchar thana over leadership of party's union unit on Friday leaving 10 people injured, police said, reports UNB.

Two of the injured, Habibur Rahman and Goutam, were admitted to Haimnchar thana health complex while others were given first aid. Police were called in from the district headquarters amid a tense situation after the clash.

### Three child traffickers held

PATUAKHALI, Oct 3: Police arrested three child traffickers from Morichbunia village in sadar thana on Friday, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said local people caught red-handed the traffickers while they were trying to take away two children—Ilhas, 8, and Shaheen 6, sons of Afzar Mridha of the village. They were handed over to police. The arrested were identified as Kashem, 70, Yusuf, 35, of Chunakhali village in Amtali thana of Barguna district and Noor Banu, 32, of Morichbunia. Yusuf admitted that his wife had been serving in Dubai and engaged in child trafficking since long. Mother of the children Rashida Begum filed a case with the police.

### Rat-killing campaign

NAOGAON, Oct 3: The National Rat-killing Campaign '99 sponsored by the Agriculture Extension Department began last week, reports BSS.

The inaugural function was held in the auditorium of Sapahar Upazila Parishad on September 20. The function was presided over by Sapahar upazila BNP president Abdul Noor. District production specialist officer of the Agriculture Extension Department Chanchal Kumar Bose was the chief guest in the function. Upazila Nirbahi Officer Syed Mizanur Rahman and Upazila Agriculture Extension Officer MM Amzad Hossain, among others, spoke on the occasion. Another function to mark the rat-killing campaign was held at Patnitala Upazila Parishad premises.

### Agri-rehabilitation scheme

JUYPURHAT, Oct 3: Local agriculture office is going to take and agriculture rehabilitation programme in a bid to recoup the output losses caused by the recent flood, reports UNB.

The office has sought Tk 46 lakh to bring some 1,250 hectares of land under the agriculture rehabilitation programme. Official sources said transplanted Aman on 6,481 hectares of land out of 71,000 in five thanas have been damaged by the recent flood. Under the proposed programme, 500 hectares of land would be brought under mustard cultivation while 300 hectares under wheat and 450 hectares under Boro cultivation. The officials said some 9,375 farmers would be benefited if the programme could be implemented successfully.

### Youth falls from bus roof, dies

THAKURGAON, Oct 3: A youth died after he fell down from the roof of a Panchagar-bound coach coming from Dhaka at Bhulli in Sadar thana here on Thursday, reports UNB.

Abdul Majid, 18, son of Abul Hossain of Balarampur village in Atoary thana, was travelling on the roof of the bus. He was hit by electric wire in the early hours killing him on the spot. Many night coaches in the northern region, including Thakurgaon and Panchagar, carry passengers on roofs at cheaper rate.

### Workshop for women, children

BHERAMARA, Oct 3: A two-day workshop on the development of women and children and mass communication organised by Kushitia district Information Department was held in the auditorium of Bheramara Upazila Parishad last week, reports BSS.

The workshop was inaugurated by Additional District Magistrate Kushiya Mohammad Abul Hossain. The workshop was addressed, among others, by Upazila Family Planning Officer Jebun Nesa and District Officer of Bheramara Pourashava Dr Santosh Kumar Saha. The participants included teachers of different schools, imams of mosques and NGO workers.

### Defeated candidate 'elected'

BARGUNA, Oct 3: The local election tribunal here on Wednesday declared a defeated candidate elected as UP member after two years of the election, reports UNB.

Official sources said the returning officer declared Abdul Kader Akond elected in December 1997 Union Parishad election, as member of Betagi union against his rival Lucky Akhter. After the result, Lucky Akhter lodged complaint with local election tribunal. After examining the evidences, the tribunal judge, Jalal Uddin Ahmed, declared Lucky elected.



Happy days: A lively rural boy holding Shapla plants out of fun. He collected the plants from nearby ponds or other waterbodies. Poor rural people use the plants as their regular food item in the rainy season as these are now available widely everywhere. This picture was taken recently from village Gobindapur in Jhenidah. — Star photo by Delwar Kabir

## Waterborne diseases up in 16 northern dists

PANCHAGARH, Oct 3: Various waterborne diseases have increased in the 16 northern districts, including frontier Panchagarh district due to paucity of pure drinking water and proper sanitation facilities, reports UNB.

As a result various measures undertaken by the authorities

### Office-bearers of CJKS

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 3: If-takhar Uddin and Munjurul Alam were made Chairman and General Secretary respectively of the Chittagong Jela Krira Sangstha (CJKS) for the year 99 at a general meeting of the organisation recently.

41-member new executive committee of the organisation was elected at the meeting.

Md Abu Taher Putu, S M Kamal Uddin, Mozammel Huq and Hazi Rafiq Ahmed were made vice chairmen. Zahir Ahmed, Chowdhury Nazrul Islam and Aminul Islam were made joint secretaries of the committee.

concerned have failed to combat the diseases.

According to an official figure some 600 people in the northern districts died of various waterborne diseases in last year, which was much higher than that of previous years. Some 177 people died of diarrhoea in 1996, 288 in 1997 and 581 in 1998.

Around 90 per cent people in the region take tubewell water but less than 40 per cent people use sanitary latrine, officials said adding that only 25 per cent people use tubewell water in their household work.

One of the reasons behind increasing frequency of waterborne diseases in the region is that many tubewells, which went out of order during devastating floods last year, are yet to be repaired and reinstalled.

Besides, the process to sink new tubewells remained stopped since long depriving a large number of people of pure drinking water.

People of Bogra, Naogaon, Natore, Rajshahi, Nawabganj, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts have to suffer much in dry season as tubewells in these areas remain

inoperative.

Public Health and Engineering department has undertaken a programme to install and re-install 5,656 tubewells in 14 northern districts to supply safe drinking water in last fiscal year.

Another programme was taken up to install 6,288 tubewells and tara-pumps in 10 northern districts in 1997-98 fiscal year. But the programme could not eventually see the light of success.

### Housewife raped

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Oct 3: A gang of miscreants raped a housewife in the town recently.

Police said miscreants led by one Shiblu, 25, intercepted the housewife, 30, who was travelling in a rickshaw and took her in a nearby school and raped her.

The victim was sent to Sadar hospital for examination. A case was filed.

## Pneumonia claims 74 lives in 7 months

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 3: Pneumonia claimed lives of at least 74 children in the district in seven months from January to July this year, district civil surgeon office sources said.

During the period over 16,000 children were attacked by the disease, the sources added.

As many as 17 children died in January, 11 in February, six in March, eight in April, 13 in May, 16 in June, and 3 in July.

About 230 children were attacked by pneumonia in January, 2,394 in February, 2,530 in March, 2,860 in April, 2,932 in May, 2,912 in June, and 2,812 in July.

About 37,873 children were attacked by the disease in 1998.

Of them, 261 children died. When contacted a child specialist in Jhenidah Sadar Hospital said parents usually do not take their children to hospitals in early stages, giving rise to the number of deaths.

"Most of the affected children die because of negligence", the child specialist said. About 17,912 children were given treatment during seven months.

When contacted Mohammed Mainuddin, Civil Surgeon of Jhenidah, said the Sadar hospital has facilities for pneumonia treatment.

Awareness of parents can reduce pneumonia death rate, he said.

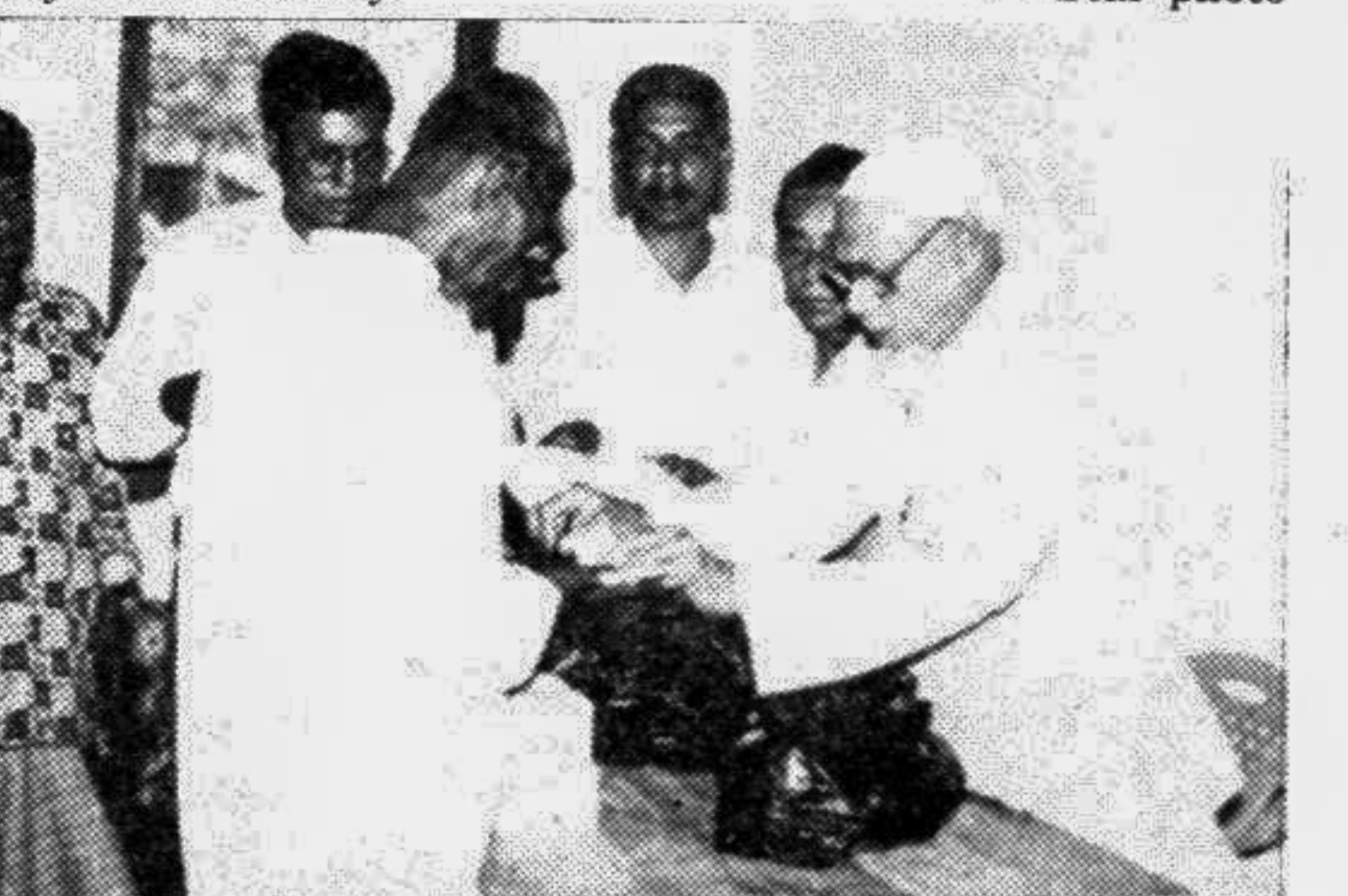
## Events of districts in picture



Women Affairs Department conducting a training course for the distressed women recently with a view to making them self-reliant in Netrakona town. — Star photo



Hindol Sangskritik Gosthi, a cultural organisation of Rajshahi arranged a programme of classical songs in memory of eminent singer Ustad Mozammel Hossain at a city hotel recently. — Star photo



A cataract patient being operated upon at an eye camp which was arranged recently by Faridpur district unit of Bangladesh Andha Kalyan Samity. — Star photo



Jatiyo Party brought out a procession in Magura town recently as part of their out-government movement. — Star photo