

National

News snaps

20 hurt in police action

MYMENSINGH, Oct 29: At least 20 people, including women and children, were injured when police swung into action to take possession of a disputed land at Kristapur in town on Monday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said one person named Manju appeared in the scene along with police and a magistrate in the evening in a bid to take possession of the land and attacked the occupants. Some 10 dwelling houses were damaged and 20 people injured in the attack. Protesting the police action, nearly 200 men and women instantly brought out a procession and demanded punishment of those responsible for it.

Agri-loan disbursed

MANIKGANJ, Oct 29: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) disbursed Taka three crore as agriculture loan in seven upazilas during first three and a half months of the current fiscal year through its 12 branches, reports BSS.

A BKB source said, the bank has fixed a target of Taka 16.30 crore for disbursement as agriculture loan this year. The disbursement of loan in the seven upazilas — Manikganj sadar, Ghior, Daulatpur, Shivalaya, Harrampur, Shatulia, Singair — is in full swing.

During the period BKB realised outstanding loan amounting to Taka 3.50 crore from the borrowers. The target for realization of loan has been fixed at Taka 20 crore in the current fiscal year.

Heroin, phenidyl seized

SATKHIRA, Oct 29: Police and the officers of the Narcotics Control Department recovered 200 grams of heroin and 430 bottles of phenidyl syrup from different places of the town on Monday, reports BSS.

According to an official source, acting on a tip-off the officers raided the house of Abd Ali of Palashpur area and recovered 200 grams of heroin. 100 bottles of phenidyl syrup were recovered from the house of Shawkat Ali. A case was filed but none was arrested.

Cultural function

MANIKGANJ, Oct 29: A discussion meeting and cultural function organised by Sangskritik Kalyan Sangsad, a local cultural organisation, was held on October 22 at the captain Abdul Halim Hall here, reports BSS.

Col (Retd) M A Malek, former minister and ex-mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, attended the function as the chief guest. The function was presided over by the president of the organisation, Advocate Rahmat Ali.

Tk 5.04cr for female edn

RAJBARI, Oct 29: As part of encouraging female education, the local Education Department has distributed about Tk 5.04 crore among 65,759 girl students in four thanas in last two years, reports UNB.

Under the girl student sub-stipend project, the amount was handed over to the female students in schools, officials said. Of the amount, more than Tk 3.71 crore was directly handed over to girl students for purchasing school stationery and dresses while over Tk 1.32 crore was given in tuition fees of 168 schools and Madrasas. This financial assistance is provided to the female students of primary and higher secondary level in a bid to stop school dropouts. The government initiative has resulted in substantial increase of attendance by girl students at different educational institutions.

Girl killed in road accident

RAJBARI, Oct 29: A 12-year-old girl was run over by a speeding tempo in front of Shishu Sadan in the town on Sunday, reports UNB.

The overloaded tempo coming from Dadsi to the town crushed Ruby while she was crossing the road in the afternoon. She was rushed to Sadar Hospital but died there soon after arrival. After the accident, local people set the tempo on fire.

Houses for homeless

RAJBARI, Oct 29: Construction work of 50 houses for the flood-affected people of Gachhiyadah char area has begun under the Post-Flood Rehabilitation Programme, reports BSS.

Voluntary Health Services Society (VHSS), an NGO, is constructing the houses for distribution free of cost among the homeless people. Officials said the project costing Tk 12 lakh would be completed by December. VHSS executive director Abdus Sattar said renovation of five social establishments, installation of 10 arsenic free tubewells and 50 latrines are also included in the Ireland funded project.

Workshop on health care

COMILLA, Oct 29: A day-long workshop on mother and child health care organised by the district administration in collaboration with UNICEF was held in the conference room of the deputy commissioner here, reports BSS.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner ASM Mobaibul Islam inaugurated the workshop. Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Chowdhury Golam Maula, the workshop was addressed, among others, by Director Health Dr Abdul Matin Bhuiya, UNICEF representative Dr Saiful Islam, Director, Family Planning Md Rustam Ali, Additional Director of Agriculture Extension Department Abdul Kashem, Civil Surgeon, Comilla Dr Mokhlesur Rahman and District Primary Education officer Sadeka Begum. District and upazila level officers and representatives of different non-governmental organisations participated in the workshop.

AED plants 2,18,249 trees

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 29: Agriculture Extension Department (AED) planted a total of 2,18,249 trees here in the month of September '99, reports BSS.

According to an official source, a target has been fixed to plant 3,71,000 trees in the current tree plantation season. The rest 1,52,751 trees will be planted immediately, an AED source said. The farmers are cooperating in the tree plantation programme.

Training on irrigation

NAOGAN, Oct 29: A training programme organised by the Agriculture Extension Department for small farmers on irrigation technique in the dry season was held recently at Shapahar Upazila Agriculture Office, reports BSS.

A total of 108 small and marginal farmers including share-croppers from six unions of the upazila participated in the training. The agriculture department officers conducted the training programme. The participants were imparted training on the technique of irrigation in the vulnerable areas during dry season especially in the fields of Ropan-aman paddy.

Six academic bldgs built

NARSINGDI, Oct 29: The constructions of academic buildings of six educational institutions in Monohardi upazila were completed recently, an official source said, reports BSS.

The Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education took up the project at an allocation of Taka 65.60 lakh in the last fiscal year. The educational institutions are Narsingdi Dakhil Darul Islam Madrasa, Shekhertek Madrasa, Monohardi Pilot High School, Chandanbari Girls High School, Chandanbari Girls Vocational Institute and Gaishgaoan High School.

BKB loans for farmers

MUNIKGANJ, Oct 29: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) will disburse Taka 48 crore as loans among the farmers of six thanas here through its 16 branches here during the fiscal 1999-2000, reports BSS.

Of the total amount, Taka 3 crore 80 lakh has so far been disbursed, according to official sources. The loans will be given as running capital for crop production, pisciculture, poultry farming, poverty alleviation and potato-preservation in cold storage. BKB also realised Taka 9 crore 31 lakh outstanding loans in the current fiscal.

Meeting of village doctors

BENAPOLE (Jessore), Oct 29: A general meeting of Sharsha Thana Village Doctors Welfare Association was held on October 17 at Navaron Burujbagar Madrasa premises, reports BSS.

Presided over by Dr Mohammad Mortaza Hossain, president of the Association, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr Abdul Hamid, Dr Abdur Rouf, Dr Faruk Hossain, Dr Lutfar Rahman and Dr Abdus Sobhan. The meeting decided to establish a diagnostic centre and clinic at Sharsha under the auspices of the association to provide medical facilities to poor people.

Problems grip hospitals

SHARIATPUR, Oct 5: When the government is setting up community clinics in rural areas, government hospitals in the district have been grappling with numerous problems, reports BSS.

Apart from shabby conditions and lack of modern equipment, some 166 posts out of 813, including that of physicians, have been lying vacant in different health complexes of the district.

Rains damage Aman crops worth Tk 24 cr in Dinajpur

From Delwar Kabir



A damaged paddy field at village Nayabad in Kaharol thana of Dinajpur district.

—Star photo

DINAJPUR, Oct 29: Standing Aman paddy worth at least Taka 24 crore has been damaged in Dinajpur district by incessant rains recently.

As a result the farmers of Dinajpur have become frustrated.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) of Dinajpur, they had fixed a target to cultivate Aman paddy on a total of 249,160 hectares of land in 13 thanas of the district in current season. The farmers showed their eagerness to cultivate the paddy on 271,437 hectares which exceeded the target by 22,277 hectares. But the incessant rainfalls accompanied by gusty wind damaged standing crops of 20,066 hectares of land.

AED sources said excluding affected 20,066 hectares of land the department had fixed a target to produce 50,080 metric tonnes (mt) of paddy on 25,400 hectares in Dinajpur, sadar thana, 47,180 mt on 23,900 hectares in Chiribandar thana 53,860 mt on 27,300 hectares in Parbatipur thana, 56,200 mt on 28,500 hectares in Birganj thana, 54,860 mt on 27,800 hectares in Biroli thana, 44,180 mt on 22,400 hectares in Nababganj thana, 36,900 mt on 18,700 hectares in Fulbari thana, 31,820 mt on 16,100 hectares in Birampur thana and 11,350 hectares of land in Ghoraghat thana of the district.

When this correspondent visited Kumudpur, Kantonagar and Nayabad villages of Kaharol thana, Ruppur, Teromali, Kabirjhaj, Golapganj and Jineswari villages of Birganj thana, Nasipur, Pulhat, Ramasagar and Kosalanda villages of Dinajpur thana, he saw that standing Aman paddy on a vast tract of land had been damaged due to heavy rainfalls and wind. The farmers were affected badly by the deluge.

Nanigopal Biswas, a farmer of village Baruliahat in Birganj thana told that Aman paddy on

Khansama, 13,710 hectares in Kaharol, 15,162 hectares in Bochaganj, 8,435 hectares in Hakimpur thana and 11,350 hectares of land in Ghoraghat thana of the district.

When contracted Mosaraf Hossain, Deputy Director of AED, Dinajpur, he said that the farmers were affected three times during this Anan season.

According to him, 540 millimetre (mm) of rainfall recorded on September 24 to 26, 355 mm on August 28 and 29 and 242 mm of rainfall on October 19, 20 and 21 last which affected the farmers badly.

The deputy director said that about 20,000 mt of paddy were damaged so far. Furthermore, banana, maskolai and vegetables were also affected. As a result the prices of all types of vegetables have been increasing

in early period of winter. He informed that the farmers of the district still did not lose their courage and energy even after repeated rainfalls in the current season. The farmers have now been encouraged to recover the loss. They harvested huge paddy in IRRI-Boro season this year, he added.

AED sources said, about 400mm rainfall is required for Aman farming. But over 2,412 mm rainfall was recorded so far. As many as 330 mm rainfall was recorded in the district in June, 406mm in July, 656 mm in August, 709 mm in September and 31mm till October 23 this year which was at least six times more than the requirement.

During the first six months of the current year, highest numbers of crimes were committed in Gobindganj thana. A total of 133 cases were lodged in the thana followed by 281 in Sadar thana.

Lowest numbers of crimes were committed in Fulchhara thana. Only 62 incidents of



Prof Abdul Mannan, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University speaking at the workshop held at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries auditorium which was jointly organised recently by Bangladesh Association of American Studies, Bangladesh Society for American Studies and US Information Service.

—Star photo

Tale of a different type of snake charmer

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 29: Snake charmer Mohammad Dudu Miah (Sharparaj) said that Bangladeshi snakes have great demand abroad.

Dudu Miah, 60, said his monthly catch of deadly snakes is eight to ten. The present market rate of one tola of Cobra venom is about Taka 2,000. At least 80 to 100 snakes are required for one tola of venom he says.

Venomous snakes are largely available in Barisal, Pataukhali, Bogra, Chittagong, Rangamati, Rangpur and Dinajpur. He claims that there are not many snakes in Dhaka, because of thick human settlement.

Born in a Muslim family at Masdarai in Narayanganj district, Dudu Miah who put 40 years in the profession, went to Kamrukanakha in Assam province in India at the age of 15 where he learnt about the treatment of snake-bite victims, eating and catching of snake. He claimed that he not only catches snakes for monetary benefit but also treats the victims of snake-bite free of cost. He further claimed that he has treated about 5,000 snake-bite victims over the last few years alone and he can save victims bitten by snakes, even 21 days ago. He also runs a centre near Masdarai crematorium in Narayanganj to treat the victims of snake-bite free of cost.

Dudu Miah holds a licence of a snake charmer bearing a number issued by the Narayanganj district administration.

Every week he eats one or two snakes without any herbal medicine because his 'ustad' Ashraf Ali Sarder in Assam, asked him to the practice eating snakes, Dudu miah says.

He sucks out the venom from those who have been bitten by snakes. He normally takes no money for his services but the satisfied patients naturally give tips (bakshis). He has caught more than 70 cobras and other snakes from the homes and gardens of people. He also gets bakshis from such places which is usually about Tk 100 to 200. When any snake bites one's hand, he ties it on two places and sucks out the poison. He then applies juice of roots to the

Bangladesh. They pay him Tk 200 to 500 for each snake. They eat snakes as part of their grand dinner with great relish, he comments.

Another reliable source of income he claims is treatment of patients for piles, stomach trouble, rheumatic ailments and tumour. There is no fixed rate of payment for this herbal doctor. He accepts whatever he gets and sometimes it is as much as Tk 1000 by a grateful

survivor of snake-bite.

Snake populations is being gradually reduced in the country, Dudu claims. This is because of reduction of wild bushes and trees. In the fields there is the use of pesticides to get rid of pests and these destroy the eggs of the snakes. The snakes lay eggs in winter season, he informs, and are hatched in the warm season. Each snake lays about 50 to 60 eggs.

Dudu claims, he knows nothing of black art when asked about the application of 'matra' on snakes.

He once visited Japan and goes to Ajmir Sharif regularly. He is a 'murd' of Maizbandari Peer Shahab and loves 'jikir' and 'qawwals'. He does not like films or videos.

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Born at Aligarh Sikder, 29, son of Aligarh Sikder of village Kongshur under Sadar thana, was crushed under the wheels of a passenger bus near Kuadanga bus stand.

Witnesses said the victim fell from the bus while alighting from the bus and was crushed under the wheels. He ran over the spot.

In separate incidents, a female student of Government Kazi Nazrul Islam College was killed on the same road as a bus ran over her.

The dead was identified as Monisha Rani Kitania, 18, daughter of Harendra Nath Kitania of village Satpar under Sadar thana.

Exceptional: Sarparaj Dudu Miah eating a Cobra.

—Star photo

Road accidents kill 8 in two districts

By Staff Correspondent

At least eight people were killed and 22 others injured in two separate road accidents in Khulna and Faridpur.

Of them, five were killed in Khulna and three in Faridpur.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna reports: Five people were killed and 15 others injured, four of them severely, in a road accident near bus stand at Rupsha thana under Rupsha thana yesterday.

Three of the dead were identified as Ansar Molla, 40, and Amrit Mondal, 35 while the identity of two others could not be known, police said.

The accident occurred when a rupsha-bound passenger bus (Dhaka-Ja-4047) from Mollarham rammed a minibus on Khulna-Mollarham road at around 9 am.

Eyewitnesses said that driver of the passenger bus lost control of the brake and overturned, leaving five passengers dead on the spot. Driver of the killer bus, however, managed to escape.

The injured were admitted to Sadar hospital. Condition of

four of them were stated to be critical, hospital sources said.

A case was filed with Rupsha thana in this connection yesterday.

In Faridpur, three people were killed and seven others injured when a coach collided with a tempo on Khulna-Dhaka road at about 3 pm yesterday, according to UNB.