

National

News snaps

Tk 11.10 cr credit programme

PANCHAGARH, Nov 30: Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) has taken up a Tk 11.10 crore credit programme for the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Officials said Tk 2.30 crore out of the total target has already been disbursed among farmers. Of the total amount, Tk 1.65 crore has been earmarked for Aman cultivation while Tk 2.21 crore for Boro. Tk 60 lakh for wheat, Tk 1.20 crore for potato cultivation, Tk 1 crore for cattle-rearing and Tk 29 for purchasing agri-inputs. Meanwhile, the bank has fixed its loan recovery target at Tk 18.33 crore for the current fiscal. It has so far realised Tk 2.15 crore, Tk 80 lakh up than the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

2,808 mts of wheat sanctioned

PABNA, Nov 30: The government has sanctioned 2,808 mts of wheat to implement Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme (RIMP) and Rural Infrastructure Renovation Programme (RIRP) under its food-for-work programme during the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Officials said of the sanctioned wheat, 2,182 mts have been earmarked for implementing RIRP while 926 mts for RIMP in the 1st phase. They said 1,000 mts of more wheat would be sanctioned for the 2nd phase. Works on various schemes, including construction and reconstruction of rural kuchcha roads, have already begun in nine thanas. Upon completion of the programmes, road communication in rural areas will improve remarkably.

Housewife kidnapped

BENAPOLE, Jessore, Nov 30: A housewife was kidnapped allegedly by an identified terrorist from Navaron Gurubagan area in Sharsha thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Family sources alleged that the woman, wife of Shahin, was picked up at gunpoint. Her husband could not yet file any case in fear of further reprisal by the kidnapper.

Housewife killed for dowry

SATKHIRA, Nov 30: A housewife was beaten to death by her husband at Magura village under Tala thana recently, reports UNB.

Police sources said the victim, identified as Nasima Khatun Rupa, was beaten mercilessly by her husband Abul Kalam and members of his family because of dowry. The 19-year-old was injured seriously and was immediately taken to Satkhira sadar hospital where she died. A case was filed with Tala thana in this connection. Kalam and his family members managed to escape.

Rush Purnima celebrated

MOULIBAZAR, Nov 30: Holy Rush Purnima, traditional religious festival of the Monipuri Community, was celebrated at Shib-Bazar and Adampur Jura Mandaps under Kamalganj thana on November 23, reports BSS.

Kalpa Ranjan Chakna, Minister for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, attended the festival as the chief guest and inaugurated the festival programme. In his speech, the minister said that Bangladesh is a land of communal harmony. People of all communities are living here with their own culture and heritage, he added. The minister also said the government led by Sheikh Hasina has given importance to the development of tribal culture. A large number of people from all walks of life attended the festival.

Interest-free loan disbursed

MAGURA, Nov 30: Social Welfare Department has so far distributed Tk 29 lakh as interest-free credit among 580 poor families in sadar thana, reports UNB.

Under Poverty Alleviation programme, each family of 61 villages in the thana received Tk 5,000. The loans were disbursed in various income-generating programmes like paddy husking, animal husbandry, purchasing of rickshaw-van, cane and bamboo work, and small trading. Besides, the department has disbursed a total of Tk 1.70 lakh among 1,170 people under Old Age Allowance Programme while Tk 1.17 lakh among widows and women abandoned by their husband.

Illegal toll collection up

FARIDPUR, Nov 30: Illegal toll collection by extortionists, transport workers and a section of law enforcers on different roads in the town and its adjoining areas runs up to Tk five lakh a day, reports UNB.

Faridpur Pourashava Chairman Hasibul Hassan Labu, also an Awami League leader, gave the estimate while addressing the installation ceremony of the newly-elected office-bearers of Niltuly Businessmen Association here on Saturday. He also said police have failed to arrest the top terrorists of the district. Shahin and Jahangir, despite the Home Minister order on Oct 24 to bring them to justice. Chaired by association president Abdur Rashid, the programme was addressed, among others, by Munshi Harun, Syed Imamul Azam, ASP Niamat Ali and OC Afsaruddin.

Housewife commits suicide

BENAPOLE, Jessore, Nov 30: A housewife, mother of three, in Sharsha thana allegedly committed suicide on Friday night following a quarrel with her husband, reports UNB.

Police said Fulbanu, 30, wife of Nuruddin of Kaliani village, killed herself by taking poison. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A UD case was filed.

Man killed in road mishap

NATORE, Nov 30: A tractor carrying sugarcane skidded off the road and tumbled into a ditch, leaving a cane development inspector of North Bengal Sugar Mills dead and its driver critically injured, reports UNB.

The tractor fell down the ditch after hitting the railing of Koloshnagar Bridge, killing the inspector Shahajahan Ali, 28, on the spot on Nov 23, according to a delayed report. The driver, Lal Chand Mia, 35, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with grievous wounds.

Man killed in clash

SATKHIRA, Nov 30: One person was killed and eleven others were injured in a clash between two rival groups at Dighlara thana under Assasuni thana recently, reports BSS.

The dead was identified as Abdul Rashid. Police said the clash between the supporters of Jahiruddin Sana and Ruhul Amin over harvesting paddy in a disputed land of village Dighlara. About eleven persons from the both sides were injured seriously in the clash. Abdul Rashid died on his way to Jayirmon Health Clinic. All the injured persons were admitted to hospitals. A case was filed with Assasuni thana. Later, police arrested five persons in this connection.

Girl raped

NATORE, Nov 30: A girl was allegedly raped in Sadar thana here on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said Shariful Islam, 30, of Mollikhali area picked up a class III student of local primary school on way to school and took her to a sugarcane field in the area and raped her. Hearing the screaming of the girl, local people rushed to the spot and caught red-handed the culprit Sharif and handed him over to police after giving a good trashing. Later, he was sent to the district jail. The girl was admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital. The condition of the victim was stated to be critical. A case was filed with local police in this regard.

Tk 14 cr loan disbursed

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 30: Bangladesh Krishi Bank disbursed Taka 14 crore 53 lakh and 68 thousand as agricultural loans among the farmers of 13 thanas here through its 20 branches this year, reports BSS.

The loans were disbursed under the bank's loan disbursement programme in 1999-2000 fiscal year. According to official sources, the loans were given for cultivation of Aman, Aus and Boro paddy, wheat, groundnut, mustard, potato, sweet potato and other winter vegetables, pisciculture, dairy and poultry farming, buying of power-tillers, tractors and for investment in agro-based small businesses.

The bank also recovered outstanding loans of Taka 13,46,500 here during the period.

Man gets 20-yr RI

NATORE, Nov 30: A court here on Monday sentenced a man to 20 years of Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) in absentia in two cases, reports UNB.

The convict was identified as Sirajuddin of Amhati village in Sadar thana. The judge awarded 10 years RI to Siraj and fined Tk 1,000, in default, to suffer another one-year imprisonment for making liquor. He was also sentenced to another 10 years RI and fined Tk 1,000, in default to suffer one-year more imprisonment for possessing equipment to make liquor. According to the prosecution in brief, an anti-drug taskforce of Narcotics Control Department of Rajshahi region raided the house of Siraj and recovered 110 litres of local-made wine, 20 litres of liquor and some equipment on July 25, 1995.



A field of 'Sonali Sharisa'.

— Star photo

New HYV mustard gains popularity

From Our Correspondent

JAMALAPUR, Nov 30: Cultivation of 'Sonali Sharisa' a new High Yielding Variety (HYV) mustard has become popular among the local farmers, according to the Additional Director of Agriculture Extension Department of Myensingh zone.

This new variety has been introduced by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BAR). This variety may produce 2,400 to 2,500 kg per hectare as against 600 to 700 kg per hectare obtained from the existing local variety (Tori 7). The oil recovery of the high yielding SS75 is 44 per cent whereas that of Tori 7 is 40 per cent.

The salient feature of this

new variety is that it requires two times irrigation per crop, the first prior to forewing stage and the second during 35-40 days after sowing during flowering stage. The per acre yield can even be increased considerably if sowing is done in time. The timely sowing can also prevent from the attack of diseases. Moreover the plant grows 5 to 6 feet high which can also be used as firewood.

Now the cultivation of Sonali variety of mustard is being done through establishment of demonstration plots in each blocks by the field officials of Agriculture Extension Department under the Crop Diversification

Programme (CDP) providing seeds, fertilisers and pesticides.

It may be mentioned here that the total annual requirement of edible oil in the country stands at five lakh metric tons, whereas the present production of edible oil in the country is 1.45 lakh metric tons. The figure leaves a deficit of 3,55 lakh metric tons which is imported every year at the cost of huge foreign exchange. The Agriculture Extension Department has achieved tremendous success in reducing the volume of import of edible oil through CDP.

Fuel crisis in brick fields

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Nov 30: Brick field owners in southern-west districts have been facing severe fuel crisis as importers have stopped coal imports from India through Tamabil border point.

Brick field owners said coal importers have recently stopped imports due to complexities regarding new measurement system. Coal traders in India have recently introduced new weighing system instead of

method in respect of measurement.

According to brick field

owners, importers have stopped importing, saying method will affect their businesses.

However, local people said

brick field wood used as fuel in violation of law, causing huge damage to environment.

They have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to stop use of wood as fuel in brick fields.

Prices of coal have increased in markets due to import crisis. A brick field owner said production cost of brick will increase if the crisis persists.

However, local people said

many brick fields wood are used as fuel in violation of law, causing huge damage to environment.

The quality of the foodgrains is so poor that they are not safe to eat and there is no alternative to dump them, one of the guardians said.

The godown keepers in

conjunction with contractors are stockpiling such substandard foodgrains in various godowns and supplying those to the people, they alleged.

On Wednesday, the students

of Mulzan Primary School in

sadar thana refrained from

taking foodgrains brought for

distribution among them after

they found that the foodgrains

are rotten.

The District Food Controller

was not available for comments

but the TNO of Sadar thana said

he would look into the matter.



— Star photo

Problems grip 2 municipalities

By Staff Correspondent

Town dwellers are being deprived of basic civic amenities due to manifold problems in Chandpur and Sirajganj municipalities.

Our Chandpur correspondent reports: Chandpur Municipality established in 1896 covers an area of 12 square miles with a population of one lakh. The municipality having A grade status is beset with multifarious problems including deplorable condition of roads, absence of proper drainage system, scarcity of pure drinking water, inadequate street lights, traffic jams, frequent power failure, absence of public toilets and recreational facilities.

Most of the roads, lanes and by-lanes, in the municipal area are in a pitiable condition. These roads are not being repaired for a long time. Most of the roads and by-lanes were damaged by the flood of 1998.

Many roads in the newly created ward no 5 are still kutchha. The roads are Bishnudi, Bank Colony, Madrasah Road, Bhuiya Bari Road, Bakaul Bari Road. The roads of Puran Bari are also in bad shape. Many roads damaged by '98 flood remain unrepairs.

The town dwellers are facing serious problems of water stagnation caused by rain and flood water. Nazirpara, Professor Para, Taltala, Bishnudi, Government Staff Quarters usually go under water after rain. There is no proper drainage system in this areas. Most of the roads, lanes, by-lanes are filled with filth and garbages. Water stagnation remains in the area for months together.

Recently Chandpur Municipality has extended the municipal area upto Bishnudi, a new ward. But there is no development work in the newly created ward. The municipal authority has recently increased the municipal taxes. The municipality

also lacks a slaughter house for a long time. So cows and goats are slaughtered here and there threatening the public health and environment.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent says: Sirajganj Municipality lacks all kinds of civic amenities, causing immense sufferings to one lakh eighty-five thousand town dwellers.

The population of the municipality, which was established 120 years ago, has increased over the years, but no new roads, streets and lanes were constructed. There remains a chronic traffic jam in the town. At least 15,000 rickshaws and rickshaw vans have been plying on the streets in the Sirajganj Municipality area.

But according to the authorities concerned, only 4,000 rickshaws and rickshaw vans have valid licences. As a result the municipality is being deprived of huge revenue.

Usually no attempt to seize the unlicensed rickshaws and rickshaw-vans is made. But only during the traffic week the authorities become active.

The roads and streets which

were damaged badly during the



— Star photo

UNESCO declaration hailed

CHITTAGONG, Nov 30: Chittagong University Teachers Association (CUTAJ) has expressed satisfaction over the UNESCO declaration of February 21 as International Mother Language Day, reports BSS.

Bangladesh and Bengali language have been accorded unprecedented honour through this recognition.

Sugarcane crushing begins at Kushtia Sugar Mills

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 30: Sugarcane crushing for the year 1999-2000 began at Kushtia Sugar Mills on November 19.

It was inaugurated by Abdul Mannan Bhuiya, former Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kushtia and former member of Public Service Commission (PSC) as the chief guest.

This mills require one lakh 63 thousand metric tons of sugarcane to achieve the target.

For want of adequate sugarcane this mill had been sustaining loss for several consecutive years.

Growers are usually reluctant to supply sugarcane to the mills for various reasons. They prefer supplying sugarcane to the local crushers for more profit as the mills' authorities pay them less than the individual crushers. Moreover, the individual crushers pay the price to the growers on the field.

However, about 300 power driven crushing machines are engaged in making molasses by crushing sugarcane within the mill zone area one month ahead of the beginning of crushing in the mills zone area.

According to Shafi Biswas, a farmers' representative, high-breed sugarcane seeds are not adequately available in mills zone area. He sought cooperation of the mills' authority to supply high breed sugarcane to the growers.

He, however, assured that huge quantity of sugarcane has been produced in the area. He suggested that growers should be motivated and their grievances solved for uninterrupted supply of sugarcane in the mills.

About 1,800 acres of land will be cultivated on 7,450 hectares with an estimated production target of 5,620 mts.

Besides, 3,700 hectares of land, including 300 in sadar, 250 in Kaukhali, 1,200 in Nesarabadi, 450 in Bhandara, 500 in Mathbaria, 1,000 hectares in Nazirpur thanas have been brought under vegetable cultivation.

The production target has been fixed at 5,55 lakh mts.

About 5100 hectares have been brought under various winter vegetable cultivation in 13 thanas of Kishoreganj district.