

Arsenic panic in Gopalganj

From Alimuzzaman Miah

GOPALGANJ, Jan 29: Public health is being threatened in five thanas due to increasing arsenic contamination in ground water both in town and rural areas.

As a result arsenic has created panic in all five thanas.

According to a NGO survey report, arsenic was detected in water of about 95 per cent tube-wells of Gopalganj sadar thana. Out of water of 15,400 tube-wells, water of 13,084 tube-wells are arsenic contaminated.

From 48,976 families, 3,18,448 members have been tested. There 371 patients have been detected in sadar thana. There are 91 patients at Chandradigulia village of Palkandhi UP. The survey had been conducted in eight groups in 22 unions under Gopalganj sadar thana. The programme has been completed in three months from October 1 to December 31.

A non-government organisation Gono Unnayan Prochasta (GUP) conducted the survey on 2,581 tube-wells of Chandradigulia village under

Paikandhi UP found in Gopalganj sadar thana. They found out 91 arsenic patients. Md Azharul Islam thana co-ordinator of Gopalganj sadar thana said this to correspondent.

According to Gopalganj Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) sources, about 10 lakh people are attacked with arsenic related diseases. Water of about 99 per cent tube-wells in different thanas are more or less arsenic contaminated. Arsenic contamination in tube-wells waters have been found in large number in Muk-sudpur, Kasiani and Gopalganj sadar thana.

A large number of people have been suffering in these thanas from arsenic related diseases for a long time. About 99 per cent tube-wells in these areas have already been sealed off by marking red and with warning signboard. DPHE has expressed that dangerous level of arsenic contents in water is above .05 mg.

During examination of water sample from different tube-

wells arsenic contents have been found below the danger level which is up to .02 mg in some areas.

Executive engineer of local DPHE told The Daily Star that steps are being taken to examine the remaining tube-wells. The department has already informed the concerned ministry about widespread arsenic contamination in the district.

People of the town area are drinking boiled water. People of rural areas are drinking water from rivers and ponds. Arsenic contents have been found in the municipal areas of Gopalganj and other thanas.

The sources further said, despite sealing off arsenic contaminated tube-wells many people of rural areas are found to be using water of arsenic contaminated tube-wells.

No alternative arrangement have yet been made in the rural areas for supply of pure water.

DPHE experts opined that surface water, rain water, water of river and ponds are free from arsenic contamination. Water of deep tube-wells under 500 feet are also free from arsenic.

Businessmen protest extortion

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Jan 29: Thousands of businessmen and traders on Thursday took to streets in the district headquarters and laid siege to the office of the deputy commissioner protesting the increasing trend of extortion and terrorism.

The businessmen handed over a memorandum to the deputy commissioner, Sheikh Altaf Ali, and urged him to take immediate steps to stop terrorism and extortion in the district.

The aggrieved business community also held a rally in the deputy commissioner's office premises. The rally was addressed, among others, by Abdus Salam, Khondoker Manan, Abdullah al Mannan and Manju.

Earlier, the businessmen and traders under the banner of Committee for Anti-terrorism and Extortion brought out a big procession.

Irregular AC sessions hampering academic activities in RU

From Kamran Reza Chowdhury

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 29: The 'go slow' policy for holding the Academic Council (AC) session by the university authorities is yet to be changed.

The irregular session is hampering the academic and research activities in the university.

Senior teachers think that the AC session should be held after every three months in a year.

The academic council is the body, which mainly takes decisions regarding academic policies, registration and conferring of M Phil and PhD degrees and recommendations of promotions of teachers.

Almost all the past administrations followed the policy in

holding the AC sessions. They used to convene the sessions after seven to eight months.

The last AC session was held on August 19, 1999, 11 months after the previous one.

However, the incumbent Vice Chancellor, Professor Sayedur Rahman Khan, assured the last session of holding regular sessions, after every four months in a year.

The date for next academic council session is yet to be announced, much to the chagrin of research fellows and teachers.

At present, nearly 50 PhD and M Phil fellows are waiting for the next session, which will approve their registrations and confer degrees.



The onslaught : This is what the great deluge of 1998 left behind on the Dhaka-Sylhet road. According to an estimate by the Roads and Highways officials, more than 6,000 such trees have seen their demise following the prolonged flooding. To the delight of thieves, bureaucratic complications have not enabled the authorities to remove the dead trees and earn something for the exchequer. The fuel wood fetches up to Tk 100 per maund (about 38 kg) in the local markets. — Star photo by Sheikh Enamul Haq



People of Latchapali union under Kalapara thana in Patuakhali district caught recently a huge quantity of illegally smuggled Keora timbers brought from Khajura forest. — Star photo

Unabated smuggling of timbers

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Jan 29: Huge quantity of valuable timbers are being lifted and smuggled out to different destinations from Pirojpur, Barguna and Patuakhali forest range for a long time.

It is going on unabated despite different steps taken by the Forest Department to check timber smuggling.

A huge quantity of smuggled timbers are being sold to some saw mills and timber arats at Swarupkati in Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali and even at Barisal divisional headquarters.

The smuggling is going on by the smugglers even in broad daylight.

Huge timbers are being smuggled from the coastal forest areas.

Fatrar Ban, Khajura forest, Lalidia's forest including some other forest areas of the vast Sundarbans have a wide range of valuable woods. Valuable timbers including Sundari, Gea, Kakra and some other timbers are being lifted by illegal timber traders almost regularly through local smugglers.

Firstly, the timber logs are being taken to nearby saw-mills at Patharghata, Bamna, Betaji of Barguna, Mathbaria Swarupkathi of Pirojpur, Golachipa, Rangabali, Mahipur,

Alipur, Barabaisdia, Ranagoaldi, Dashmina, Kalapara of Patuakhali from where huge timber logs are sowed and sized.

After that the timbers are smuggled to different destinations by boats, trawlers in the river ways, by trucks through an organised gang of smugglers in the southern districts.

Most of the owners of the saw-mills, built almost illegally, are the local influential backed by political high ups and black money.

Local people said, these organised smugglers are felling and smuggling valuable timbers from the Sundarbans an its adjoining areas for a long time.

They are doing so by defying the government ban on cutting valuable trees like Sundari, Keora and Pasur including some other trees without having any valid pass from the concerned authorities.

Local people alleged that the Forest Department personnel remain unaware most of the time or remain silent about the illegal misdeeds of smugglers.

Some unscrupulous people of the Forest Department also help smugglers continue smuggling from different forest areas of the coastal belt.

Besides, a source from the Forest Department said, they lacked the required number of manpower, arms, transports to move inside the forest areas to control crime and smuggling of woods, honey, 'goal leaves' and hunting of deers.

UNB from Barguna says: A huge quantity of timbers were seized from a trawler in the River Bishkhali here on January 22.

On suspicion, forest guards challenged the timber-laden trawler at Nishanbaria on its way to Kuakata.

The smugglers on board fled the scene leaving behind the timbers worth Tk 8 lakh. Several gunshots were also traded between the two sides during the raid.

Obituary

GAZIPUR, Jan 29: Md Ibrahim Sheikh, President of Jamalpur Union Awami League under Kaliganj thana expired at his village home recently. He was 65, reports BSS.

Ibrahim was suffering for long from heart diseases.

Meher Afroz Chumki MP on hearing the news went to the deceased's house. She expressed her sorrow at the death of the senior leader and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

He was buried at the family graveyard.

Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Bhola Road Division, Bhola
Phone No. 0491/55553

Notice for RHD Inviting Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited in Bangladesh Form No. 2911.

1. Tender Notice No : 28 Bh. Road Division of 1999-2000.
2. Name of work : Construction of RCC concealed Box culvert at different KM of Sikderhat-Kalihat-Baydderpool Road under Bhola Road Division during the year 1999-2000.
3. Estimated cost : As per group list.
4. Earnest money : As per group list.
5. Time allowed for : As per group list.
6. Eligibility of contractor : 'A to C' class special category of RHD and 'D' class special category of Barisal Road Circle.
7. Name of offices of : 1) Planning Division (P&D), Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka
2) Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bhola/Barisal/Pirojpur/Patuakhali/Borguna/Jhalakathi/Sub-Divisional Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Division, Bhola/Charfession.
8. Name of offices to receive : 1) The Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barisal Zone.
2) The Superintending Engineer, RHD, Barisal Road Circle.
3) The Superintending Engineer, RHD, Procurement and Monitoring Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka.
4) The Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Bhola/Barisal/Jhalakathi.
9. Last date of selling tender : 23.02.2000E/11.11.1406B up to office hours.
10. Last date of receipt tender : 24.02.2000E/12.11.1406B up to 12-30 PM.
11. Date of opening tender : 28.02.2000E/16.11.1406B at 11-00 AM.
12. Date & time for lottery : 6.03.2000E/23.11.1406B at 11-00 AM.

Md. Abdul Khaleque Miah
Executive Engineer, RHD
Bhola Road Division, Bhola

Directorate General Defence Purchase
Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders are invited in foreign currency from bonafide manufacturers/dealers/suppliers/indentors (enlisted firm and firm applied for enlistment) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh "Army":

Ser No	Nomenclature	From	To	Date of opening	Currency	Tender No
a.	Spare parts for Water Tlr 250 & 400 Gallon (Qty-20 line items)	07-02-2000	21-03-2000	22-03-2000	Foreign/Local	2026/P-1

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (not refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hrs and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of all tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/2000/41
DFP-1362-24/1
G-153

Major
For Director General

Directorate General Defence Purchase
Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders in local/foreign currency are invited from bonafide manufacturers/ dealers/suppliers/indentors (enlisted firms in DGDP) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh Air Force.

SI No	Name of items & qty	From	To	Date of opening	Currency	Tender No
a.	Oxygen Mask Type-MBU-12/P, Qty-25 Ea	2.2.2000	09.3.2000	12.3.2000	Foreign	7709/AP-6
b.	Helmet Flying Type-HGU-55/P and Type-SPH-4B, Qty-50 Ea	2.2.2000	09.3.2000	12.3.2000	Foreign	7710/AP-6

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment in respective value (non-refundable) on any working day between 0800 hrs to 1300 hrs. The tender will be opened on the specified date at 1000/1200 hrs in presence of the bidders (if present).

ISPR/Misc/2000/38
DFP-1365-24/1
G-158

Squadron Leader
For Director General

News snaps

40 old women get allowance

JHALAKATI, Jan 29: Forty poor old women, either abandoned by their husbands or widows, will get old-age allowance, reports UNB.

Sources at Social Welfare Department said the women from 32 unions of Rajapur, Nalchhiti, Kathalia and Sadar thanas will receive Tk 100 each per month. They said the department has already sent the money to the respective thanas for distribution.

Loan for poor

JHALAKATI, Jan 29: Social Welfare Department has distributed soft loan amounting to Tk 1.06 crore among the poor and distressed people in four thanas, reports UNB.

Official sources said the department under its Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme distributed the loan among 25,073 families to help generate self-employment opportunity during the current fiscal. The loan will be utilised in poultry farming, beef fattening, crop production, pisciculture, cane and bamboo work, rural transportation and small trading.

Health workshop

JHALAKATI, Jan 29: A five-day workshop titled 'Health Service and Information for Rural Practitioners' concluded at the Civil Surgeon office on Thursday, reports UNB.

Some 200 rural practitioners from Rajapur, Nalchhiti, Kathalia and Sadar thanas took part in the workshop organised in collaboration with UNICEF.

Workshop on HACCP

KHULNA, Jan 29: A daylong technical workshop on HACCP and Value Added Goods was held here on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Officials from quality control departments of 18 shrimp processing factories attended the workshop organised by Bangladesh Frozen Foods Association at its conference room.

Scouts camp concludes

CHANDPUR, Jan 29: A three-day scouts camps concluded on January 24 at Chandpur Government Technical High School premises amidst great enthusiasm, reports BSS.

The camp was organised by Bangladesh Scouts in cooperation with Chandpur District Scouts. About 300 scouts from 38 educational institutions participated in the camp. The camp was inaugurated by Rezaul Karim, Deputy Commissioner, Chandpur. A discussion meeting was held at the auditorium of Chandpur Technical High School on this occasion.

Demonstration plots for winter crops

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 29: A total of 589 block demonstration plots for winter crops were set up in the seven Upazilas this year, reports BSS.

The demonstration plots were set up under the supervision of Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department (BAED). An official source said, the demonstration plots were set up to acquaint the farmers on irrigation management, fertiliser use and integrated pest management system.

Afforestation programme

BARISAL, Jan 29: Afforestation Department of Jhalakathi district has taken up a comprehensive programme to disburse a sum of Taka 2.52 lakh among 63 destitute freedom fighters under Self Reliance Afforestation Programme this year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, each freedom fighter will get Taka four thousand for purchasing equipments for afforestation and other purposes. Of the total, 19 freedom fighters will be benefited in Jhalakathi Sadar, 12 in Kathalia, 13 in Rajapur and 19 in Nalchhity thana.

Three alleged dacoits arrested

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 29: Akhaura Police arrested three alleged inter-district dacoits at Tantar Bus stand under Akhaura Upazila on January 22, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off, Akhaura Police raided the Tantar Bus stand area where a gang of inter-district dacoits, numbering about seven, were taking preparation for committing dacoity at the bus stand. Police caught three dacoits red-handed. The dacoits are identified as Iqbal Ahmed Jiban, Mahfuzur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman. Other dacoits managed to escape.



A procession was brought out in Chandpur town last month by the local district administration in cooperation with the Health Department on the occasion of World Aids Day. — Star photo

Workers go on rampage

BARISAL, Jan 29: Unruly supporters of a local sramik leader in Kashipur area went on a rampage damaging 20 tempos and injuring 20 people on Friday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the ravers, allegedly led by Nasir, son of former leader of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal Tota Kazi, blocked Dhaka-Barisal highway at Kashipur Bazaar and damaged at least 20 passing tempos. They also attacked tempo drivers and passengers leaving 20 people, including 12 tempo drivers, injured. Nasir and his men earlier attacked the Tempo Sramik Union office near Nathullabad Bus Stand at about 8 pm and assaulted its peon Nazrul. Additional police have been deployed in the area to fend off further trouble.

Pulse cultivation scheme

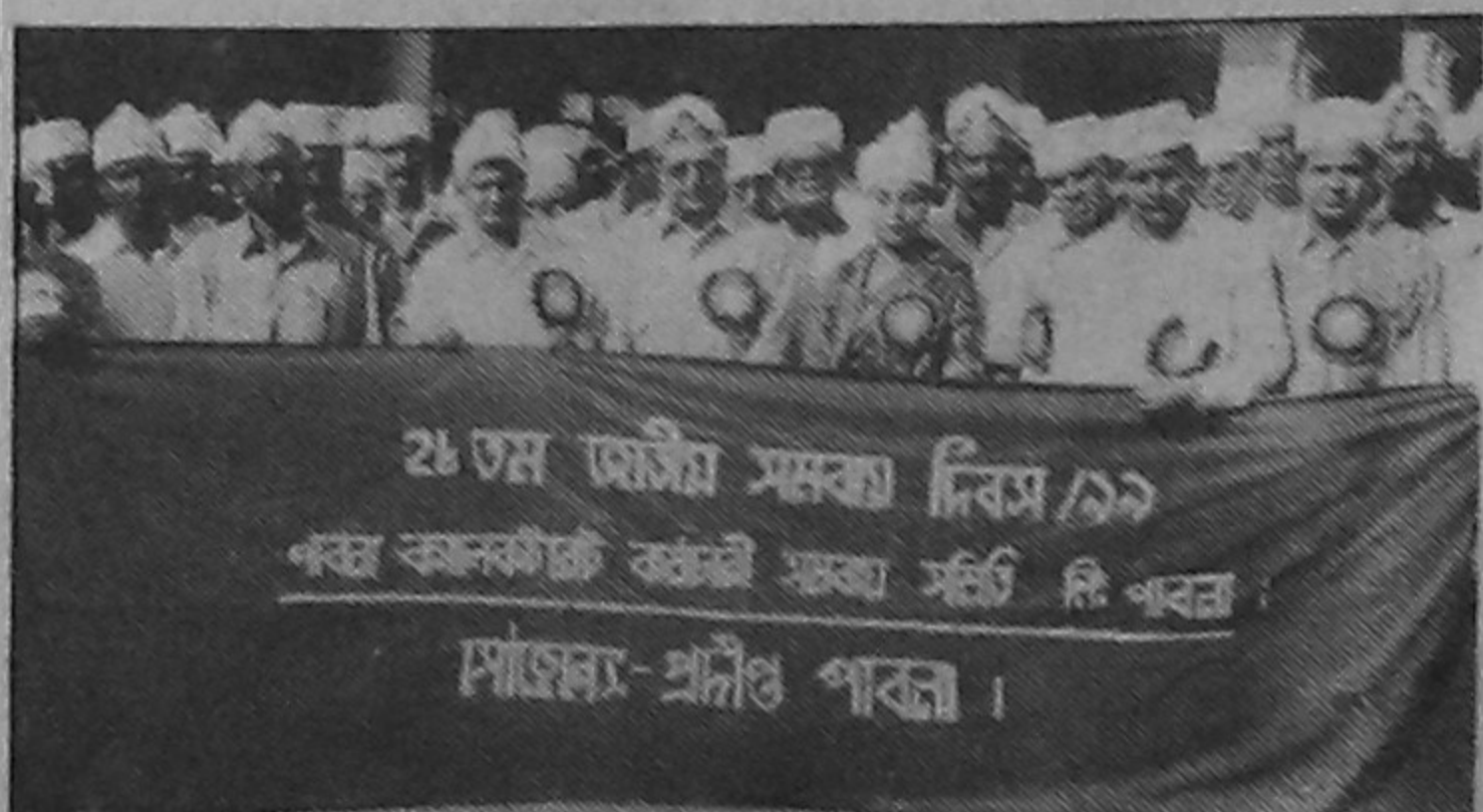
CHUADANGA, Jan 29: A total of 16,000 hectares will be brought under musur pulse cultivation in all the four thanas in the current intensive Rabi crop season, reports BSS.

The four thanas of the district are — Chuadanga sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar. According to an official source, of the total land 5,100 hectares will be brought under cultivation in Chuadanga Sadar, 2750 hectares in Alamdanga, 4,400 hectares in Damurhuda and 3,750 hectares in Jibannagar. The cultivation of musur pulse is now nearing completion. The production target of musur in the current season has been fixed at 12,500 tones.

Man beaten to death

BENAPOLE, Jan 29: A man was beaten to death allegedly by his nephew over a land dispute at village Namaj in sadar thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Police said Jonab Ali, 45, was critically injured as his nephew Omar Ali allegedly beat him up mercilessly at one stage of a quarrel. Jonab was rushed to the thana health complex where he died after admission. Omar went into hiding after the incident.



A colourful rally was brought out recently in Pabna town on the occasion of National Cooperative Day. — Star photo