



Time to dive: Some children of Magura have a great time as the water of the River Nabaganga swell with the monsoon. — Star photo by Hossain Seraj

### Country passing thru' disaster: Ershad

JAMALPUR, June 30: Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad on Wednesday said there is no alternative to toppling the Awami League government from power forever to restore peace in public life and protect independence and sovereignty of the country, reports UNB. The country has now been passing through a great disaster and the countrymen leading their lives virtually in confinement. So, the government should immediately be dissolved to free the nation from this bad time. The JP chief told a meeting at Balshakhi mela ground here. If the government continues to cling to power, Islam would be endangered, state religion cancelled and "Bismillah" Rahman Rahman wiped out from the constitution, Ershad said. Awami League has come to power blurring the common people and pushed the country on verge of destruction. They destroyed the economy of the country through corruption, he alleged. He said the government, which pays the employees taking loan and runs the country emptying the bank, has no right to cling to power. Ershad said the government unleashed a reign of terrorism throughout the country. On an average 80 people were killed in the country everyday. Local markets of the country have now been swamped with foreign goods. "If we voted to power in the next general elections, we will uproot terrorism through modernisation of police. We will introduce free studentships upto SSC and increase the salaries of 24,000 non-government teachers to the level of government ones," Ershad told the meeting. Party president member Begum Roushan Ershad, Dr M A Matin, M A Sattar, secretary general Nazim Rahman, A B M Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Engineer M A Bari and Fakrul Inam, among others, addressed the meeting.

### Naria residents deprived of civic amenities

SHARIATPUR, June 30: The residents of Naria Municipality here have been facing a host of problems which include deplorable condition of roads, absence of drainage, inadequate street light, frequent power failure, mosquito menace and lack of recreational facilities, reports BSS. Most of the roads in the town area are narrow and uneven. After slight rainfall these roads become muddy. Rain water remains stagnant on Nargia Bazar Road, Bastala Road, Naria Bus Stand Road, causing difficulties to the pedestrians. Moreover, the roadside ditches filled with filth and garbage have turned into ideal place for mosquito breeding. Traffic jam at different points in the town is now a regular feature. Mosquitoes are causing untold sufferings to the town dwellers. Moreover, due to absence of public toilets, people use roadside ditches, polluting the atmosphere. Absence of drainage is another problem for the people of the town. Frequent power failure and fluctuation of voltage have become almost regular phenomenon in the town area. On the other hand, lack of adequate number of streetlights in the town area is another problem. Some areas with power connection also plunge into darkness just after the sunset due to absence of bulbs of the street poles. The pitiable condition of restaurants of the town is threatening to public health. Besides, selling of adulterated foodstuffs is a regular feature of this town. There is no recreational facilities for children or elderly people in Naria town except a few cinemas. The necessity of a municipal park is keenly felt here. Sports activities in the town are also very poor. The town has no gymnasium for physical exercise. As a result, the people specially the young generation are deprived of recreational facilities. The telephone subscribers of the town have been facing difficulties due to poor service of the T & T Department.

### Brisk Hilsa business in Shariatpur

SHARIATPUR, June 30: After a lapse of two and a half months since the beginning of Hilsa season almost all the centres for selling Hilsa in the district has become busy again, reports UNB. The wholesale Hilsa ghats in the district are bustling with activities and a large number of trawlers and boats laden with various sizes of Hilsa are unloading their consignment of fish at various ghats. According to the sources, the wholesalers have invested about Tk 21 crore this season for farming Hilsa. This is the first time of the year when all 39 wholesale Hilsa depots are making brisk business. But Yousuf Ali Khan, general secretary of Zila Matsya Aratder Samity and Alhaj Kaiser Khan leader of the Ice Mill Owners Association told that from the beginning of the season the Hilsa traders have been facing acute crisis of Hilsa. At present the catch is highly satisfactory due to the availability in huge quantity. Meanwhile the price of per maund Hilsa has also come down to Tk 4,000 from Tk 6,700. Some traders said some 42,000 maunds of Hilsa are waiting for disposal at different ghats for the last one week. Onal Kumar, an exporter of Hilsa told that they have been facing huge loss due to the wide gap between the LC value and the present market price.

### 50,000 children suffering from malnutrition

NETRAKONA, June 30: Some 50,000 children in the district are suffering from malnutrition, a survey revealed. A survey conducted recently by an NGO revealed that these children of poverty-stricken families are also vulnerable to other diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, pneumonia, malaria and whooping cough. These poverty-stricken families mainly depend on agriculture. But natural calamities like flood, drought and storm play havoc every year with their crops. In many cases these children are suffering from malnutrition not only for poverty but also for lack of knowledge of nutrition, the survey said.

### Mango trader abducted in C'nawabganj

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, June 30: A mango trader was abducted in Rahampur upazila in Chapainawabganj district in broad daylight on Sunday. Some unidentified hoodlums attacked the trader, Nur Mohammed, 45, who came to Chapainawabganj from Tongi of Gazipur district to buy mango, and forced him into a microbus at gunpoint. Earlier, the trader along with one of his companions drew Taka 1.50 lakh from Rahampur branch of Sonali Bank at about 1.00 pm and was going to nearby mango market on foot. The companion of Nur Mohammed, however, managed to escape. A case was filed in this connection. The man was not rescued till filing this report.

### Frequent power outage in Magura

From Our Correspondent MAGURA, June 30: Erratic power supply in recent days has multiplied the sufferings of people here. The residents usually experience power outage twice or thrice every day. The authorities were able to supply power only nine hours during 24 hours on Sunday, the residents said. It is common phenomenon that power outage starts usually at 8 pm every day. Besides, frequent voltage fluctuation often cause damage to TV sets, refrigerators, cassette players, fans and other electronic goods. Production in mills and factories has also come down due to irregular power supply. It is also hampering water supply in municipality area.

### Cement prices up in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent NETRAKONA, June 30: Prices of cement have gone up abnormally in different markets in the town in recent days, hampering construction works. At present, Indonesian cement is being sold at Tk 280 against Tk 220, while Chinese cement sells at Tk 270 against Tk 230 a month ago. Taking the advantage of the situation, some unscrupulous traders have stocked cement, creating artificial crisis in the market. With the increase in cement prices, construction works in both private and public sectors have been facing setback. As many construction works are suspended, a large number of day labourers, especially masons and their assistants, are now out of employment here.

### Youth stabbed to death in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, June 30: An aborigine young man was stabbed to death at Audher Kotha in Paba upazila on Monday night. According to police, two unidentified youths stabbed Pradip Biswas, 20, and left him in unconscious state. He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead. A case was filed in this connection, but none was arrested.

### Satabdi obtains Junior Scholarship

By Staff Correspondent Satabdi Roy obtained the talent pool scholarship after being successful in the Junior Scholarship Examination from Swarupkathi centre. A student Swarupkathi Primary School, Satabdi secured the first place among girl students in the merit list. She is the eldest daughter of Subodh Kumar Roy, Upazila Food Controller of Nesarabad in Pirojpur district and Kanon Roy.

## National Noakhali Irrigation Project unimplemented for 25 yrs

NOAKHALI, June 30: Noakhali Irrigation Project, an ambitious scheme undertaken in 1975 raising hope among farmers of the region, could not be implemented in 25 years, reports UNB. Official sources said the project, comprising 11 upazilas in Chandpur, Comilla, Noakhali and Luxmipur districts, has virtually been abandoned due to its overestimation. The project involving Tk 104.36 crore, was taken up to control flood and provide irrigation facility to 68,487 hectares of cropland. The project area covered Shahrasti (partially), Hajiganj, Fardiganj (partially) upazilas in Chandpur, Laksham (partially) in Comilla, Sindharam, Begumganj, Chakhal and Senbagh in Noakhali and Ramganj, Ramgati and Sadar upazilas in Luxmipur districts. The officials said a departmental office, constructed at Dalabazar in Luxmipur districts to implement the five-year project, is now lying unattended. As per the project profile a final report was also placed in 1993 after conducting feasibility studies and necessary surveys. They said crops worth about Tk 1,000 crore could be saved on the lands each year from recurring floods by implementing the project. Crops on vast tracts of land and huge thatched houses in the region are damaged by flood every year, causing colossal loss to the farmers. According to an estimate, crops and property worth of Tk 2,200 crore were damaged by the 1998 prolonged flood alone. Crop intensity will rise by 184 per cent while fish cultivation by 21.03 per cent if 75,000 hectares of land under the project area could be brought under irrigation facility, the officials said.

## Programme to make Chukur cultivation popular

From Our Correspondent MYMENSINGH, June 30: As 'Chukur' a kind of vitamin enriched fruit, is disappearing fast, local horticulture centre has taken up a programme to make the cultivation of the fruit popular. The centre has taken up the programme because the cultivation of the traditional indigenous fruit is more profitable than those of other crops, said Zakia Begum, assistant horticulturist of Ketwalkhali Horticulture Centre. This fruit is also rich in food value. 100-gram Chukur contains 100 grams protein, 21.69 grams minerals, 0.02 grams fat, 30 mile grams (mg) Vitamin B-1 (Thiamin), 0.96 mg Vitamin B-2 (Riboflavin), 17.5 mg Vitamin-C (Ascorbic Acid), 56 mg Calcium, 12.4 mg Iron, 11.4 micro-gram Carotene and 0.56 kilo calorie, said Zakia Begum. In a bid to encourage farmers the centre has cultivated the fruit on a demonstration plot. Once the fruit was available in rural areas, Chukur plants grow in fallow lands with little or no care. Chukur, which tastes sour like amlaki, is not only regarded as fruit but also vegetable. A view of a demonstration plot of Chukur at Ketwalkhali Horticulture Centre in Mymensingh. — Star photo

## Marriage without registration increasing in Natore

NATORE, June 30: Marriage without registration is on the rise, confounding the better intentions of the government to eliminate early marriage and repression against women, reports UNB. Experts attribute the rising trend of unregistered marriage partly to exorbitant registration fee charged by marriage registrars and widespread illiteracy. Despite campaign by the government and NGOs, early marriage in rural areas of the district is still too common. Poor parents marry off their teenage daughters due to poverty and lack of social security. "Not only the poor families, but also the solvent people in rural areas marry off their daughters before they become adult," said Biprobegharia Union parishad chairperson Mohua Perveen Lipi. Dilara Begum Parul, general secretary of the district unit of Bangladesh Mahila parishad, said, "in most cases, marriage are solemnised without registration in rural areas as the poor guardians cannot meet the demand of marriage registrars." Marriage without registration is by no means safe and 60 per cent marriages in rural areas end up in divorce for lack of documents, she said quoting the findings of a survey conducted by an NGO. Parul said the responsibility of giving shelter to the divorcees ultimately falls on their poor guardians, as they cannot take legal measures against the culprit husbands. The survey also showed that the young men belonging to low income group are prone to polygamy and they hardly can refuse the lure of dowry. These guys never hesitate in divorcing their first wives. Some greedy marriage registrars are also there who show the ages of teenage girls above 18 in marriage registration. However, different non-government agencies have been conducting workshops on human rights and legal education in different areas of the district since 1995 to make the people aware about their responsibilities to put an end to child marriage and polygamy. But they could not yet achieve any tangible success.

## Myanmar mango traders incur loss at Teknaf

COX'S BAZAR, June 30: As mango season begins in Myanmar its traders, who are doing legal border trade with Bangladesh, have tried to export mangoes to Bangladesh but met with heavy loss as the price offered here is much less than what they expected, reports BSS. Traders from Arakan state and other parts of Myanmar carry mangoes via water route and sell them to the wholesale dealers at Teknaf. Bangladesh traders at Teknaf are offering one taka (about seven kyats) per mango, Myanmar traders said. The traders had to buy a mango with ten kyats at home but the total cost reached to 15 kyats (about Taka two) after all "Hafat" or protection money imposed by police, customs and army personnel was added, they said. "If we don't sell the mangoes with the price given by the Bangladesh traders, as soon as we could, our mangoes will get perished," said a Burmese trader. As a result, a trader loses one taka per mango, he added. UNB from Natore says: Mango traders of the region are doing good business this year even the price of the delicious fruit is high in local markets. Market sources said a good number of varieties of mangoes, including Gopalbhog, Khirshapat, Mohonbog, Langra, Kalua and Himsagor have flooded the markets but the prices are higher than those of the previous year. In consideration of size and quality per kg standard size of mango is being sold between Tk 30 and 50 while Guthi mangoes at Tk 15-20.

## BAU Anglers' Club executives

Md Sahid Dad Khan and Md Hafizuddin Akhanda have been elected President and General Secretary respectively of the Anglers Club of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) at a general meeting recently at the BAU Administration building where Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Anwarul Islam would be the chief patron, says a press release. Other office-bearers are: Vice-President Md Shamsuddin (Kamal), Treasurer Md Nooruddin Khan, Joint Secretary Md Abdur Rahim, Members: Md Sahabuddin Akhanda, Md Moshraf Hossain, Md Golam Ahmed Sonai, Md Kamaluddin and Md Abdul Motaleb (Babul). Club members congratulated Prof Md Anwarul Islam on his appointment as BAU Vice-Chancellor. Vice-Chancellor Dr Islam allotted two ponds for the BAU Anglers' Club.

## News snaps

**Soma wants to be a physician**  
By Staff Correspondent Kazi Sabrina Siddique (Soma), Roll Number 128724 obtained the 10th place in the Science group of Combined Merit List in this year's SSC examination from Comilla Board scoring 912 marks. Daughter of Kazi Siddique Rahman, a resident of old Chowdhury Para in Comilla town, Soma appeared in the examination from Fazlunnessa Government Girls' High School. She captured the sixth place among the girl students. She wants to be a physician. She used to read story books and listen to songs during leisure. Humayun Ahmed is her favourite author. Her parents inspired her in achieving this glorious result. She is indebted to all the teachers of her school. She spoke highly for her teachers Biddut sir and Pijush sir of Ganga Coaching Centre.



**Shameem wants to study MBA**  
From Our Correspondent BRAHMANBARIA, June 30: Md Shameem Siraj, a student of Chandpur Tamij Uddin High School secured 14th position in the combined merit list from business education group in the SSC examination under Comilla Board this year. Shameem obtained 804 marks in total with five letters in Mathematics, General Science, Islamic Studies, Business Introduction and Agriculture Education. He is the son of Md Mahabbal Ali Bulyan of village Machhata under Sadar thana. He wants to study MBA.



**Cotton farming scheme**  
JESSORE, June 30: Non-favourable climate and scarcity of quality seeds hit the cotton cultivation programme in the southwest region of the country, reports UNB. The target of cotton cultivation may not be achieved during the current season in the region, which produces 70 of the country's total production. Cotton Development Board has fixed a target to produce 72,150 bales of cotton from 36,000 hectares of land under four zones covering Jessore, Jhenidha, Magura, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Kushtia districts. The price of cotton in the local market has come down as the price marked a fall in the international markets. As a result the target the growers have also lost their interest in cultivation cotton.

**Chhatra League conference**  
NAOGAON, June 30: The biennial conference of Mohadevpur Upazila Chhatra League was held at upazila auditorium recently, reports BSS. It was presided over by M Kamruzzaman Zuel, Naogaon District Awami League General Secretary and Freedom Fighter M Abdul Malek attended the conference as chief guest. The District Chhatra League President Bivas Majumder Gopal inaugurated the function. Ibrahim Biswas, Amjad Hossain Tara and Shaidul Islam spoke on the occasion. Later, 41 members Mohadevpur Upazila Chhatra League Committee was formed. Kamruzzaman Zuel and Nipon Biswas Ripon were elected president and secretary respectively.

**Low price of Boro paddy**  
SHARIATPUR, June 30: Despite a bumper Boro production the growers are facing problems with their produce due to the low price in market, reports UNB. Local farmers said the Boro production this season surpassed the previous records but they are compelled to sell the paddy at throwaway prices in absence of government procurement drive. Moreover, the middlemen and Farias are controlling the paddy markets depriving the growers of fair price. The farmers said that the paddy is being sold per maund between Tk 240 and Tk 250 in the market as against the production cost of Tk 280. They urged the authorities concerned to start procurement drive immediately to ensure fair price of the paddy.



Millennium Olympic Day Run, organised by Sylhet Divisional Sports Association, was held in Sylhet recently. — Star photo by Iqbal Siddique

**Price hike of bldg materials**  
PANCHAGARH, June 30: Price hike of necessary ingredients in the local market has been hampering the construction of houses in the public and private sectors, reports UNB. Official sources said prices of bricks, rods, cement, CI sheets and other construction materials have shot up abnormally. Anisur Rahman, a contractor said at present they are to buy per thousand bricks between Tk 2,400 and Tk 2,500 which is much higher than they showed in tender schedule. Like previous years, a section of dishonest traders hoarded the construction materials to create artificial crisis in the market, he said adding that as a result most of the government construction projects would not be completed in time. Due to the slow pace of construction work of different projects a large number of day labourers have been rendered jobless and passing their days in great hardships.

**Erosion takes serious turn**  
MANIKGANJ, June 30: Erosion by rivers Padma and Jamuna has taken a severe turn displacing over 20,000 people in four districts in last three days, reports UNB. Officials said floodwater rolling down from the rivers submerged crops on vast tracts of land and damaged educational institutions, homesteads, government establishments and roads in Manikganj, Rajbari, Pabna and Sirajganj district during the period. Some 20,000 erosion-hit people, who have taken shelter on flood protection embankments and highlands, are living a subhuman life under the open sky for lack of relief materials from the government. The worst affected villages in Manikganj district are Shibulaya, Bashed, Anoirpur, Harirampur, Ghior and Daulatpur. Officials at Water Development Board said the erosion might take a turn for the worse in the districts if the two rivers continue to swell.

**Phensidyl recovered**  
MANIKGANJ, June 30: Police on Tuesday recovered 950 bottles of phensidyl smuggled from India from a Dhaka-bound rice loaded truck, reports UNB. On a secret information, OC of Shibulaya thana held the truck at Aricha ferry ghat and brought to the thana. On investigation the phensidyl bottles were found in 16 sacks. The truck with rice from Kalganj, Jessore was destined to Jui Enterprise at Farashganj, Dhaka. Driver Shah Alam and helper Ajit Shah were taken into custody and a case was filed against them.

**Rampant fishing in Kaptai Lake**  
RANGAMATI, June 30: Fishing in Kaptai Lake is going on rampantly although the breeding season has been on since early this month, reports UNB. Fishing in the lake, which is prominent for its hydroelectric plant, is strictly prohibited during breeding season. But a section of unscrupulous fishermen are fishing from the lake is Sadar, Longodu, Baghachhari, Nonchar, Blatchhari Barkal and Jurachhari areas. The fishes caught from the lake are openly being sold in local markets, but the authorities concerned stand silent spectators.



A tree was uprooted during a recent storm in Rangpur. The tree fell on a busy road on the outskirts of the town, suspending vehicular movement for hours. — Star photo