

National

Literacy movement in 4 dists progressing

Implementation of Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme is going on in full swing in Narasingdi, Mymensingh, Madaripur and Pabna districts, reports agencies.

The phase-1 programme is being implemented with the financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank. Other donor agencies for the programme are World Bank, IDA, SDC Norad.

The main objective of the pilot project is to educate 281,574 adults, including 1,30,963 males and 1,50,611 females, through the 9,540 centres by August 2000.

In a bid to give light of elementary education to adult men and women, the programme was launched in four upazilas Sadar, Raipura, Monohardi and Belabo in August 14, last year.

Of the total, some 38,469 males and 38,997 females were taken from Raipura, 44,042 males and 60,386 females from Sadar, 29,638 males and 30,287 females from Monohardi and 18,814 males and 20,941 females from Belabo upazilas.

Upazila-wise centres are: Sadar-2,607, Raipura-3,555, Monohardi-2,011 and Belabo-1,367.

These centres under 60 pilot education centres, set up on experimental basis, are imparting knowledge of reading, writing and simple arithmetic to 1,800 illiterate people of 56 unions in these upazilas. Some 30 persons are enrolled in each centre.

To teach the adult learners, some 9,540 trained teachers were appointed and some 630 supervisors were engaged to monitor progress of the programme. Each teacher is being given Tk 300 and a supervisor Tk 500 for their

services. The supervisors who are the teachers of local government primary schools are guiding the teachers of the centres.

The government has allocated over Tk 2.07 lakh initially for the programme.

The centres also provide books, slates, black boards, chalks, dusters, lamps, kerosene oil and sitting arrangements for the learners. Per head cost of learners has been estimated at Tk 313.

Local administration sources said it has sent a proposed budget of over Tk 11.44 crore to the higher authorities for successful implementation of the TLM project.

Commenting on progress of the project, Deputy Commissioner Rafiqul Islam told that the programme is not progressing satisfactorily, as the villagers are less interested to take the opportunity due to abject poverty. The teachers and supervisors are also less interested to work with nominal salary.

"The programme will be effective if the existing problems are solved and the learners are provided with financial incentives," he added.

Second phase of the TLM programme would be started after successful implementation of the first phase.

Long run aim of the programme is to develop human resources by growing awareness about life and livelihood, sanitation, drinking water, food and nutrition, population control, health care, plantation and income generating activities like agriculture, handicrafts, small and cottage industries.

The Taka 8 crore second phase of Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme under the title of 'Jagrata Mymensingh' is going on in full swing in three upazilas.

The programme was launched in Mymensingh Sadar, Gaffargaon, Gouripur upazilas recently.

The district administration chalked out an elaborate programme to eradicate illiteracy from these three upazilas. A TLM source said, 9,127 education centres were set up for holding classes for the learner. Each education centre has got one teacher on a monthly salary of Taka 500.

One supervisor will supervise 15 education centres. His monthly salary is Taka 1,200.

Besides, 26 teams have been formed to monitor the performance of these education centres.

The second phase of TLM programme would cost about Taka 8 crore for implementation.

The monitoring teams consist of a cross section of educated people including academicians, physician and lawyer.

According to the survey conducted by the district administration, the total number of illiterate persons in the area in the age group are 11-45 is 273,297. The upazila-wise illiterate are Sadar: male-47,771 and female-49,467; Gaffargaon: male-50,682 and female-48,474 and Gouripur: male-38,831 and female-38,072.

Madaripur district administration has undertaken a project to make successful the literacy campaign.

According to official sources, the district will be free from the curse of illiteracy in December next. So far 70 education centres have been opened in four upazilas to impart education to all illiterate people.

About 2.50 lakh illiterate people will be brought under the project.

Pabna is likely to be freed from illiteracy by this year as a massive campaign for Total Literacy



Education is right: A woman teaches a group of village women at village Kuchgar under Sadar upazila in Jamalpur district. The educational centre was opened recently under Total Literacy Movement (TLM), an anti-illiteracy programme.

Movement (TLM) has been going on in full swing in nine upazilas for the last six months, district administration sources said here.

Hundreds of men and women aged between 11 and 45 have been enrolled in around Taka 20 crore literacy movement project. It has been providing basic education to about 6.1 lakh illiterate people since January this year.

According to a survey of the district administration, the number of the illiterate people aged 11-45 of this northern district is about 7.5 lakh, while the literacy rate is 27 per cent which remained almost static for several years.

"As part of the government's commitment to freeing the country from illiteracy by 2006, we have launched 'Prodipta Pabna', a TLM project, in 1997, but began our formal journey on January 18 this year to enlist Pabna as the sixth among the successful districts which had already been freed from the curse of illiteracy," Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner of the district and Implementation Chief of the project, told newsmen.

He said after six months of basic education the target group was going through their first ever 'evaluation' examination on

July 25 at 1442 centres in nine upazilas.

"The number of examinees is encouraging, especially the women's presence at the centres," he observed. If anybody is found illiterate after the evaluation, he or she would be once again provided with education over the next three months, Rahman added.

Replying to a question, Rahman said out of the total amount of the project of Taka 19,705,070, Pabna has already received more than Taka 10 crore. "We do hope that the literacy rate of the district will reach almost 100 per cent by the end of this year," he said.

RU plan to cut session jam

From Kamran Reza Chowdhury

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, July 31: The university authority has taken a plan to solve the problem of academic session jam in the institution.

Under the plan, the admission tests for 2000-2001 academic session of all departments of the university will be completed within December of the current year and the classes will be started in the same month, the sources said.

Forms for the admission tests will be distributed within November of the current year to implement the plan, the sources added.

If the plan is implemented successfully the existing session jam will be reduced to a great extent.

At present, students get admitted into universities for degree

courses almost after one year of HSC results. So, the students are enrolled in the higher institutions with session jam of one year.

In the last academic session, the students of degree (honours) courses in the university got admitted in March 2000 and started attending classes on April 23.

"If the plan is implemented the existing one year session jam will be eliminated from the following year," said Abu Shams Bakshi, a teacher of Population Science Department, hailing the decision.

Now one-year jam exists in the university. However, Genetics and Breeding Department of the university has already been successful in eliminating session jam. The department has completed the 36-month degree (honours) course of 1996-97 session

in 32 months and published results. The classes were started in September 1997 and the results announced on June 03, 2000.

Besides, session jam in the Department of Public Administration is also reducing fast.

Vice Chancellor Prof Sayedur Rahman Khan vowed to eliminate session jam from the university. He held meeting with chairmen of departments recently.

Meanwhile, the university is going to enrol nearly four thousand students in the 2000-2001 academic session, 1,000 more compared to the previous session. The additional number of students will be admitted in some newly introduced departments such as Fisheries, Agriculture Economy and Animal Husbandry, and Veterinary Science.

Erosion makes 300 more families destitute

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, July 31: More than 300 families of different villages under Sadarpur, Char Bhadrans and Bhanga upazilas have been rendered homeless by the erosion of the rivers Padma and Arial Kha during the last few weeks.

The erosion which started just from the onset of the monsoon devoured 350 acres of arable lands with seasonal crops on.

The affected villages are

Nandalalpur, Biswanathpur, Char Khuni, Diara Khalpara under Diara Narikelbaria union, Char Munai, Fakir Kandi and Char Ujanpatti under Char Munai union in Sadarpur upazila, Hazi Dangi, Wazuddin Munshir Dangi, Natun Dangi and Gani Mattubbarer Dangi in Char Bhadrans upazila, Char Doar, Dogra Bazar, Pulla, Chanda and Char Chanda under Chanda union in Bhanga upazila.

The erosion victims have taken shelters on high lands and embankments erecting temporary shades. They have been passing their day in a very miserable condition.

According to some victims no relief either in cash or in kind has reached them as yet.

The authorities concerned should sanction relief immediately and take steps to rehabilitate the victims.



A group of locals flock Sluice Gate area by the side of the Nabaganga river in Magura town. The area, which offers a panoramic view and holds the potential to become a tourist spot, has become a very popular promenade for hundreds of residents. Despite the potential, the area remains neglected. There has been no facility for people who come here to relax and pass their time close to the nature.

-- Star photo by Hossain Seraj

BFJA confce ends

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 31: Four-day National Conference-2000 of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BFJA) ended here recently.

The conference was inaugurated by Barrister Mainul Hossain, President of the Board of Editors of the Ittefaq and the New Nation and also President of Supreme Court Bar Association. The conference was attended by a large number of journalists from Chittagong, Comilla, Manikganj, Narayanganj, Habiganj, Sylhet, Khulna, Bogra, Rajshahi and Satkhira districts.

Presided over by GM Noor Islam, President Satkhira district unit of

BFJA, it was also addressed, among others, by Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam, Director General of PIB and Deputy Commissioner Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

BFJA President and General Secretary Md Salahuddin and AKM Mohsin respectively, Secretary-Generals of two factions of BFJA Akhtar Ahmed Khan and MA Aziz, President of Satkhira Press Club Subhas Chowdhury and President Jessore Press Club Faraz Azzam Hossain were also present.

Barrister Mainul Hossain have urged the photojournalists to project the true picture of the country through lens.

Separate incidents kill 8 in Kishoreganj dist

KISHOREGANJ, July 31: At least eight people, including four women and a child, were killed in separate incidents here in 11 days till July 24, reports UNB.

According to police and hospital sources, Pollab Roy Chowdhury, 26, committed suicide in his residence at village Shilunia in Itna upazila on July 14.

Dukhu Mia, 35, a rickshawpuller of village Jaoar in Tarail upazila, died of sunstroke on the day.

On the same day, Innas Ali, 70, of Katar Char in Sadar upazila was killed when a pickup

knocked him down from behind on Kishoreganj-Bhairab highway.

On July 13, police recovered the body of a 12-year-old unidentified boy from a paddy field at village Jasodal in Sadar upazila.

Shahnaaj Akhter, 28, of Pakundia upazila, Morsheda, 28, of Karimganj upazila and Emran Hossain, 20, of Tarail upazila allegedly killed themselves by taking poison on July 20. Family troubles were the reasons behind the suicides.

On the same day, Meena, 25, and her daughter Irin, 3, were killed in a traffic mishap at Satail in Sadar upazila.

Bomb blast in Rajshahi village

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, July 31: Three people were injured in bomb blast on Friday at Kankonhat Brahmanaganj, a remote village in Godagari upazila.

Two bombs went off one after another at the house of Naimul Huque in the early hours, police and witnesses said.

The house was seriously damaged in the blasts. The injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Police suspected that the bombs were being made. Owner of the house Naimul Huque and three others- Abdus Salam, Nurul Huda and Nasiruddin- were arrested in this connection.

Smuggled goods seized in Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, July 31: Police seized smuggled Indian goods from a Dhaka-bound bus near police line area in the town at around 5 pm on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the vehicle and recovered the contraband which included 22 sacks of sugar, 120 bottles of phenylidyl syrup, 1000 pieces of hand dryer, zarda, and 36 packets playing cards.

New roads giving in

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, July 31: A good amount of money was allegedly misused and misappropriated during implementation of some development works by the Local Government Engineering Department of Sirajganj.

In some cases the local people alleged below standard work.

In the current year LGED took up a programme to develop roads. Such a road from Shalanga to Tarash has been completed this month but the carpeting at several points eroded within a very short time. Another road from Nimgachhi to Ranirhat though completed yet it is of inferior quality.

It is alleged that some local people of the areas were chased by police as they protested the below standard work. The inferior standard work of the roads were done by dishonest contractors in collaboration with the concerned consultant and LGED officials.

This road is a very vital one. Huge quantity of paddy from the Chalan-Beel areas are carried to other places along this road.

Besides, 5,000 metric tons of wheat was sanctioned under Food for Works programmes in nine upazilas in 1999-2000 fiscal year. The project was formed for developing rural road's infrastructure building, mosque, madrasahs, temples, man graveyards and a project implementation committee was formed by the concerned upazila engineer.

Executive Engineer of LGED was the supervisor, but a good quantity of wheat was misappropriated in the work of development of graveyard and road construction work. Locals alleged that the contractors with the help of officials have drawn their bills without working in some cases.

On the other hand LGED informed that it spent a total of Taka 16 crore 21 lakh 40 thousand 150 for various development work during the last four years. But a survey showed that no development work was done under those projects.

In the current fiscal year the following projects were undertaken in the upazilas given below.

Upazilawise project number and allocation. Project No Ullapara upazila 273 Tk 68 lakh,



Damaged newly constructed Nimgachhi-Ranirhat road which runs through Good Pipul village in Sirajganj district.

--Star photo

Belkuchi Project No 100 Tk 45 lakh, Sirajganj Sadar Project No 119 Tk 51 lakh, Tarash Project No 154 Tk 37 lakh, Raiganj Project No 140 Tk 43 lakh, Kamarkhand Project No 176 Tk 33 lakh, Chowhall Project No 184 Tk 41 lakh, Kazipur Project No 223 Tk 83 lakh, and Shajadpur Project No 194 Tk 53 lakh.

In the year total number of project was 1563 and the allocated money was Tk 4 crore 54 lakh.

However, when this correspondent contacted with A K Azad, Executive Engineer of Sirajganj LGED, about misuse and misappropriation of money, he denied all the allegations.



A combination of two pictures taken recently shows two weavers working in handloom factories at village Diggait under Sadar upazila in Jamalpur district. Weavers say dearth of capital, price-hike of thread and dye and lack of marketing facilities are taking toll on their traditional profession. Many are contemplating to opt for other professions. They have urged the government to take measures to help the weavers.

-- Star photo by Muhammad Ali

News snaps

Arsenic panic in Shariatpur

SHARIATPUR, July 31: High arsenic contamination has been detected in tubewell waters in 12 unions of Naria upazila causing grave concern among the people, reports UNB.

According to World Health Organisation, permissible level of arsenic in water is 0.05 microgram per litre. But, local sources said, arsenic toxicity in the water of Naria is several times higher than the accepted level. Arsenic contamination in Naria is the highest among the seven upazilas here as per investigation report, said a Sub-Assistant Engineer of the local Public Health Engineering office. To ensure supply of arsenic free drinking water, a non-government organisation, Shariatpur Development Society, has taken up a massive programme. A high official of the organisation said people of the area would get pure water after implementation of the programme.

Young girl gangraped

SATKHIRA, July 31: A young girl was gangraped at village Dhandiya in Tala upazila on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said, Hablu along with two of his accomplices picked up the girl, aged about 22, to a jute field while she went to collect grass and raped her one after another. Later, the villagers rescued her hearing her cry for help. She was sent to the health complex in a critical condition. A case was filed with the police.

Night guard killed

BARISAL, July 31: A night guard of a secondary school at village Shikarpur in Ujirpur upazila was strangled to death by unidentified miscreants last week, reports UNB.

Police and local people said, the victim Ishaq, 60, night guard of Shikarpur Ganga Gobinda Secondary School used to sleep at night at the library compound of the school. On July 23 night he came under attack by some local terrorists when he tried to resist them from playing cards at the classroom of the school. Later on the following night, the miscreants broke the door of the library open and strangled him to death, local people added. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy and a case was filed with the police.

Two smugglers convicted

JESSORE, July 31: A court here has sentenced two people to five years rigorous imprisonment each in absentia in a smuggling case, reports UNB.

The court also fined each of the convicts -- Mizanur Rahman, son of Akmat Ali of Durgapur in Sharsha upazila and Sobhan, son of Munsef Ali of Botkhana in Jhikargachha upazila -- Tk 1,000, in default, to suffer six months more imprisonment. According to the prosecution, a team of Bangladesh Rifles arrested them from border area along with smuggled goods, including Indian *saree* and *lungi* on August 25, 1997. Later they were enlarged on bail and went into hiding. After examining the witnesses and records the Judge of Assistant Sessions Judge Court-1 and Special Court-5, Mohammad Motahar Hossain, found them guilty and handed down the verdict on July 24.

Housewife commits suicide

MANIKGANJ, July 31: Being failed to repay the loan of an NGO, a housewife allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at village Manta in Sadar upazila on Saturday, reports UNB.

Villagers said Batasi, 32, wife of a day labourer Khalil, took loan from local BRAC office. But, she, despite pressure from the organisation, could not repay her weekly installment due to poverty. It was alleged that the concerned officer rebuked her seriously for non-payment of the installment.

Valuables looted

MUNSHIGANJ, July 31: A gang of robbers looted valuables worth over Tk 3 lakh from two houses at Jhapla village in Sreenagar upazila on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said the gang, numbering 12/14, first stormed the house of Moteab at 2 am and later the adjacent house of Solaiman. They looted all the valuables of the two houses at gunpoint and decamped with the booty safely. The dacoits chopped Moteab with sharp weapon while he tried to resist them. He was admitted to the local health complex.

Bank cashier arrested

KISHOREGANJ, July 31: Bhairab police arrested the cashier of local City Bank on July 20 on charge of embezzlement of fund, reports UNB.

The cashier, Golam Sayeed Azam Kaderi, was arrested following a case filed by the concerned authorities for allegedly misappropriating Tk 1.65 lakh. An audit team from bank's head office primarily found that Kaderi, in association with another office Shah Alam Sarker, misappropriated the amount. Shah Alam, who remained absconding, has been put under suspension. An official preferring anonymity said the audit team also detected embezzlement of huge cash from different funds of the branch of the bank. But they are yet to determine the exact amount, he added. Meanwhile, depositors got panicky at the embezzlement of fund and many of them were trying to withdraw their deposit from the bank.

They are deprived of voting rights

BARISAL, July 31: The woman voters of Magar union of Nalchiti upazila in Jhalakati district are being deprived of their voting rights for the last 31 years, reports UNB.

The unwritten embargo on women came into force during Pakistan period when some women were allegedly harassed at a vote centre. An elderly man of the union said following the incident, the then chairman of the union Malek Meer imposed ban on women's voting. "Over the time, the embargo turned into a tradition," he said explaining the reason behind it. "In recent years the situation has slightly been changed. But still now hardly 2-3 per cent female voters go to the polling centres to cast their votes in any election," he said.

Road accident kills man

MADARIPUR, July 31: One person was killed in a road accident at Katokpur in Kalkini upazila recently, reports BSS.

Police said, Shah Alam Bapari, 21, of village Katokpur in Kalkini upazila was run over by a bus. The body was sent to the Sadar hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Kalkini thana in this connection.

Sericulture extension project

RANGAMATI, July 31: The government has taken up a three-year special sericulture extension project in the three hill districts at a cost of Tk one crore, reports UNB.

The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs in principle has approved the project. The project would be launched after securing approval from an inter-ministerial meeting to be held shortly. The sericulture project, which started in the hill districts in 1995, could not be expanded due to bureaucratic tangles. Silk Board sources said another 800 new mulberry cultivators along with the old ones would be brought under the programme. The cultivators would be given saplings to nurture silkworms and necessary equipment to collect fibres and imparted training on cocoon collection. Of the total, 500 cultivators would be imparted training on bringing up silkworms while 100 on production of fibres and 150 weavers on weaving silk threads.

Six hurt in road accident

BARISAL, July 31: Six people, including three girls, were injured in an accident at Katak in Gourmadi upazila on Dhaka-Barisal highway on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said the accident took place when a microbus bound for Kuakata skidded off the road while saving the passengers of a van. The injured people, identified as Sanjib Kumar, 25, Joya Rani, 19, Sumana, 18, Khokan, 20, and Rowsy, 17, were admitted to the hospital. Police seized the vehicle but its driver managed to flee the scene.

Aman farming on 69,000 hectares

FENI, July 31: Agriculture Extension Department has set a target to bring 69,000 hectares of land under Aman cultivation during the current season, reports UNB.

Of the total, 50,000 hectares of land will be brought under HVT and 19,000 hectares under local variety cultivation. It is expected that three lakh metric tons of rice would be produced if the target is fulfilled. Official sources said against the target of raising seedbeds on 4,391 hectares of land, seedbeds were raised on only 2,490 hectares of land so far. The Agriculture Department has created over 100 demonstration plots to encourage the farmers in producing HVT paddy by using quality seeds, fertiliser and modern technology. The farmers alleged that they do not get necessary guidance during their needs as the block supervisors hardly visit fields.