

Kazal shifted to Dhaka

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Sept 22: Farooq Ahmed Kazal, the much talked about hundi trader, was shifted to Dhaka on Tuesday for interrogation.

Kazal, who skimmed crores of Taka through his so-called Kotchandpur Syndicate Bank, was awarded four months detention earlier and later duration of his detention was extended for another two months. He was staying in Jhenidah district prison.

Kazal collected about Taka twelve hundred crore from investors. The investors were assured to be provided with ten per cent to twelve per cent monthly interests. Kazal was doing the illegal business for the last eight years.

On May 8 this year police arrested Kazal from his house.

A committee was formed to collect the money from Kazal and his agents. The committee will return the money to genuine investors.

Municipality polls Electioneering gets momentum in Comilla

COMILLA, Sept 22: Electioneering gains momentum here with only few days left for the Comilla Municipality polls, reports BSS.

Meetings are being held. Supporters of different candidates are bringing out processions and using loud speakers to attract voters.

The town also wears a festive look with walls of buildings are covered by posters having colourful election symbols of the respective candidates and banners and festoons being displayed in important places.

The total number of voters is 70,281 including 34,625 women. Five candidates are vying for the lone post of Chairman, 107 candidates for 17 posts of Ward Commissioners and 28 women candidates for five reserved seats in the election.

Although municipality elections are not held on the basis of political party lines, the candidates have blessings of the major political parties.

Of the five candidates contesting for the post of chairman, the incumbent chairman of Comilla pourasabha Kamaluddin Chowdhury and Farhad Jamal Shaheen are supported by the main opposition BNP and the remaining three Jasimuddin Ahmed, Shafiqul Islam Sikder and Advocate MA Azad are known to have blessings of the ruling Awami League.

There is no candidate having Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami affiliations. Anjun Sulatana, a female candidate in Ward No. 3 of the five reserve seats and Amaullah Khan Himmat in Ward No. 7 have already been elected due to withdrawal of their opponents.

District election office sources said a total of 473 presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and polling officers will be appointed in 32 polling centres for holding the elections.

A large number of members of the law enforcing agencies, including Police, BDR and Ansar will be deployed during polling to maintain law and order, the sources added.

Four jailed under PSA in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Sept 22: Four people were sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) each under the Public Safety Act in a district court Tuesday.

Convicts Abul Kalam Howladar, Ali Sardar, Moslem Mollah and Kausar Howladar were also fined Tk 5000 each, in default, to suffer two more years of RI. Absconding Akbar Hossain was acquitted.

According to prosecution, the convicts had snatched away Tk 1700 and a wrist watch from one Rafiqul Islam, a vegetable vendor on a boat on March 10 at Chhabipur under Muladi police station. Rafiq filed a case against them with Babuganj thana under PSA on the same day.

Police after investigation, filed charge-sheets against the accused on June 8 and Special Tribunal Judge Md. Abdus Samad handed down the punishments.

Acute fish scarcity

CHANDPUR, Sept 22: Acute scarcity of fish has been prevailing throughout the district for a long time, reports BSS.

Chandpur was once an important fish producing centre of the country. Fishes like hilsha and common carps were supplied to other districts from Chandpur. Besides the country exported a large quantity of fishes to other countries from Chandpur. But now pisciculture here has been badly affected by various reasons.

Pisciculture has been hampered due to unplanned use of chemical fertilisers on croplands. Two big irrigation projects are situated in the district.

Besides, fishermen have been facing problems including shortage of fund, shortage of nets and price hike of other fishing materials.

Plight of Tangailites

From A Correspondent

TANGAIL, Sept 22: Residents of Tangail Municipality are being deprived of civic amenities for a long time.

Although the population of the municipality is increasing day by day, yet the municipality authorities are not providing basic civic amenities to them.

Town dwellers suffer much due to absence of proper drainage system, deplorable condition of roads, inadequate street light, lack of proper sanitary frequent traffic jam and absence of recreational facilities.

Absence of proper drainage system is a major problem in the municipality area. The town dwellers face difficulties due to stagnation of water in drains. Most of the drains are filled with filth and garbage which are not cleaned in proper time.

In many areas there are no drains. During the rainy season the drains are accumulated with dirt and filth. It causes health hazards to the inhabitants of the municipality, especially during the rainy season. Due to lack of proper maintenance and repair work, most of the roads of the municipality area are in deplorable condition.

The damaged road are: Ammighat road, Choiana Bazar road, Kazipur road, Gurrpatti road, Chaulpatti road. Crocks and potholes have developed at many points of the roads.

Most covers of the drains are broken and the footpaths are generally occupied with makeshift shop owners. Some roads of the town are very narrow which are unfit to ply even two rickshaws at a time. After a slight rainfall most of the roads become muddy and slippery. Rain waters remain stagnant on the road causing difficulties and sufferings to the Passers-by and vehicular movement.

Violation of traffic rule has become a normal affair. It causes serious traffic jam in different points of the town. Main road Chaulpatti road, Maszid road, Tangail-Mymensingh road are seriously affected by traffic jams.

Because of increasing in number of rickshaws traffic jam has become a regular phenomenon here. According to office source of the municipality, there are about 6,000 licensed rickshaws on the road, but actually about 10,000 rickshaws are plying on roads here.

Street lights are inadequate. Most of the street lights have broken down and gone out of order for a long time. After dusk the court area becomes a ghost area. As a result sex-workers and muggers take refuge in the area.

Sanitary system of the town is not satisfactory. A few dustbins have been set up in the town which always remain unclean. Garbage of the drains are not removed at day time creating obnoxious odour. Some people who are floating respond to the call of nature in the road side places and drains causing inconvenience to common people. Consequently the environment of the surrounding places is polluted.

It is a matter of a great regret that, there is no recreation facilities except a small park, but nobody takes care of it. As a result the park has been turned into a grazing field and drug addicts remain engage in Anti-social activities.

Residents of Tangail Municipality have urged the authorities concerned to take proper steps to mitigate their sufferings.



A family on board a raft moves to a safer place. Low-lying areas in Sirajganj town have been inundated with floodwater. The photograph was taken from Char Malsha Para area in the town on Wednesday. The flooding has damaged crops on about 2000 hectares of land, snapped road communications and affected more than one lakh people in Sirajganj and neighbouring Pabna and Bogra districts.

—Star photo by Akteruzzaman Bablu

Sugarcane under pest attack

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Sept 22: Production of sugarcane in the district will be affected severely due to flood and pest attack.

According to an unofficial estimate, the recent flood has affected sugarcane on about 10,000 acres of land. Besides, pests have attacked the submerged sugarcane plants.

Due to the pest attack, the sugarcane leaves have turned yellow. The pest-affected sugarcane will not yield sufficient and pure juice for producing molasses or sugar, farmers said.

According to sources, 17,000 acres of land have been brought under sugarcane cultivation in the district this season.

When contacted, General Manager of Kushtia Sugar Mills admitted the pest attack. The only way to combat the menace is to cut the affected sugarcane stems and burn those, he said.

Shortfall of sugarcane production target will surely cast an adverse impact on sugar production in the district and the country as well, Kushtia Sugar Mills' officials said.

Meanwhile UNB from Benapole, Jessore says:

Fifteen sugar mills of the country have fixed a target to produce 1.3 lakh mts of sugar in the current season.

Of the total target, 12,600 mts will be produced in Darshana Sugar Mills, 8,000 mts in Mobarakganj, 9,000 mts in Panchagarh, 6,400 mts in Thakurgaon, 6,000 mts in Setabganj, 4,800 mts in Shyampur, 6,300 mts in Rangpur, 8,900 mts in Joypurhat, 7,100 mts in Rajshahi, 10,300 mts in Natore, 12,500 mts in North Bengal and 4,500 mts in Pabna Sugar Mills.

According to officials, the mills will require some 16.23 lakh mts of sugarcane to achieve the target.

Meanwhile, some 1.89 lakh acres of land under the zones of the sugar mills have been brought under sugarcane cultivation from where 29.92 lakh mts of cane are expected to be produced.

Some 16.23 lakh mts of sugarcane, the officials said, would be supplied to the sugar mills while the rest to molasses producers.

They said sugar production in the mills would begin in November next.



A seller weighs a fish at a fish market at Shailakupa upazila in Jhenidah district. Fish production in the district like other places in the country has been declining day by day mainly due to lack of modern cultivation method. Besides, indiscriminate use of fertilisers in croplands pollutes water in natural water bodies like beels, canals and rivers, taking toll on fish production.

—Star photo

Grandiose health scheme

JESSORE, Sept 22: Government has taken up a project to build 275 community hospitals in eight upazilas under a Five-year Plan to provide treatment to the people, reports UNB.

According to the project, a total of 13,000 community hospitals will be constructed all over the country by 2003.

At the Cairo conference held in 1994 it was suggested to carry on the functions of health service and family planning jointly.

As per the recommendation the government has decided to set up 275 hospitals, each on 400 square feet of land at a cost of Tk 2 lakh for each 6,000 people under its five-year plan (1998-2003).

Health Department, Family Planning and LGRD have been implementing the project jointly.

Of the total, 58 hospitals will be constructed in Sadar, 23 in Baghapara, 39 in Sharsha, 33 in Jhikorgachha, 23 in Chowgachha, 26 in Avoyagar, 30 in Keshabpur and 43 in Monirampur upazilas.

Construction work on 124 hospitals has been progressing well and is expected to be completed by

December next, official sources added.

Of the hospitals, 25 have been built in Sadar, 10 in Baghapara, 17 in Sharsha, 12 in Avoyagar, 14 in Keshabpur, 18 in Monirampur, 10 in Chowgachha and 16 in Jhikorgachha upazila. The rest will be implemented within 2003.

A health assistant and a family planning assistant will be appointed for each hospital at the preliminary stage.

Dr Rahmat Khoda, district civil surgeon while contacted told the news agency that it was decided to begin work on the project in 1998 but the work delayed due to want of requisite land.

A committee has also been formed comprising UNOs, family welfare officers, people's representatives and representatives from different other sectors to supervise the work of the project.

After the completion of the project, the community hospitals will provide different vaccines, necessary medicines and treatment facilities to the rural people.

Twelve more godowns under construction

RAJSHAHI, Sept 22: As production of godowns rose to 2.50 crore metric tons this year with bumper harvest of Aman, the government is constructing 12 godowns on priority basis in northern districts at a cost of Tk 12 crore to improve the storage facility, reports UNB.

Besides, work on construction of a CSD godown at Rangpur with a capacity of 11,000 metric tons has been taken up with financial assistance from Japanese government.

Officials said construction of eight godowns, each with a capacity of 500 metric tons is nearing completion. These godowns are located at Bagha in Rajshahi, Dhupachhia in Bogra, Kheulal in Joypurhat, Faridpur in Pabna, Bhulirhat and Jaduranihat in Thakurgaon and Ghodaghat and Vaduria in Dinajpur district.

Tender has been invited for construction of four similar

godowns at Hariparaghat of Dinajpur, Phulchharighat in Gaibandha, Chowhali in Sirajganj and Mokamala in Bogra district.

Under another programme of developing seven CSD godowns, 20 godowns at Santahar have been renovated that will have a storage capacity of 12,000 metric tons. The dilapidated CSD godowns at Muladoli in Pabna have also been renovated.

According to Food officials 16 districts of Rajshahi division have 4.19 lakh metric tons food storage capacity under the government. A recent survey showed the division needs storage capacity of another 2.66 lakh foodgrains.

The government could not go for desired level of procurement of foodgrains this year in the absence of adequate storage capacity. This resulted in fall in price of foodgrains in the market to the distress of farmers.

Godowns unused for 13 yrs

BHAIRAB, Sept 22: Three large fertiliser godowns of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) in Bhairab, Kishoreganj, Sadar and Kuliarchar remained unused for over 13 years, reports UNB.

BADC constructed the godowns with a storage capacity of 11,000 metric tons. These godowns were the primary points of fertiliser supply.

Besides, BADC constructed 12 more mini godowns at Bajitpur, Sadar, Kuliarchar, Hossainpur, Pakundia, Katladi, Nikli, Karimganj, Astagram, Tarail, Mitamain and Bhairab upazilas in Kishoreganj district to ensure fertiliser and seed supply to the farmers to boost agriculture production.

In 1987 government had

reduced the activities of BADC and withdrew its control from the selling of fertiliser. Since then these godowns remained unused.

Then the mini godowns were used as seed store for sometime but these became fully useless as the government withdrew staffs from these godowns eight years ago.

Due to the lack of maintenance and long absence of use the godowns are getting old and damaged day by day.

As the government procurement drive of rice and paddy suffered set-back due to shortage of storage facilities in the country, local leaders suggest the government to use the unused godowns as government granaries after necessary repair works.

Goitre patients rising

NETRAKONA, Sept 22: The number of goitre patients is on alarming rise in the district as the unscrupulous traders are selling non-iodized salt in markets, reports UNB.

Despite a government restriction on packing, distribution and selling of non-iodised salt a section of the traders are selling it under the very nose of the law enforcers, causing the health hazard to the ignorant poor people.

A recent survey conducted by a non-government organisation revealed that the number of patients has increased in rural areas of the district owing to iodine deficiency that hampers their physical and mental growth. According to medical science,

an adult should take 150 microgram of iodine per day which could be collected from the water and soil, the main sources of iodine. Excess rainfall and flood water wash away iodine every year.

To meet the deficit of iodine in human body, government enacted a law in 1994 making the production, sale and use of iodised salt compulsory.

A section of unscrupulous traders are engaged in selling non-iodized salt to earn windfall profit at the cost of the people's health, the survey revealed.

Local people alleged that the traders are cheating the people by selling the non-iodized salt in colourful packets labeling it as iodized one.

Six unnatural deaths

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 22: Six unnatural deaths were reported in three districts Kishoreganj, Jhenidah and Jessore in a week till September 10, reports UNB.

Four of the victims were identified as Rehana Khatun, 25, Asma Khatun, 35, and Suruj Mia of Kishoreganj district and Salma Khatun, 20, of Jessore district.

Police said Rehana Khatun, wife of Rokonuddin at village Joyka in Karimganj upazila, allegedly committed suicide by hanging over family troubles.

Rokonuddin remained absconding just after the incident.

Housewife Asma Khatun of village Charteel in Pakundia upazila reportedly killed herself by taking poison over a family feud on September 3.

On the same day, Sabuj Mia of Dhulsuri village in Hossainpur upazila succumbed to his injuries at Zahurul Islam Medical College Hospital. Unidentified miscreants tortured him and left him at the hospital.

In Jessore, young housewife Sultana Khatun was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at village Nachalpur in Monirampur upazila on September 10.

Two unidentified labourers in Jhenidah district were electrocuted while they were working at village Kalicharan in Sadar upazila on Friday.

All the bodies were sent to hospital morgues and separate cases were filed with the police.

Activities of community police start

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Sept 22: Activities of the community police started at Shamsnagar Bazaar under Kamalganj upazila in the district recently.

The activities started through an inaugural function, which was presided over by Abdul Mosabbir, Chairman of Shamsnagar union parishad.

Police officials of the upazila were also present on the occasion. Initially, a 13-member force was formed.

Basic training was also given to the members of the force.

News snaps

Literacy campaign

PIROJPUR, Sept 22: Communications Minister Anwar Hossain on Sunday inaugurated a grand rally for achieving total literacy in Pirojpur Government High School premises, reports BSS.

Speaking on the occasion he said that the government had already initiated a social movement for total literacy by 2005 and urged the people to make the 'Shikshadiptra Pirojpur' a success. The Communications Minister said the present government has been materialising different programmes for fulfilling the basic demands of the people like food, clothes, shelter, medicare and education facilities. He said the rate of literacy has increased to 62 per cent from 42 per cent during the last four years. Hossain called upon all to put in their sincere efforts in educating the age group from 11 years to 45 years by 2005. Mahmuda Sawgat, MP, Sudangshu Shekhar Halder, Barisal Divisional Commissioner Md Yahya Mollah, and local leaders also spoke on the occasion.

Uplift schemes implemented

RANGPUR, Sept 22: A total of 353 special Food for Works uplift schemes were completed in eight upazilas of the district under Rural Infrastructure Renovation programme during the last fiscal year, reports UNB.

Officials sources said the schemes were implemented by utilising 3,242 metric tons of wheat. Of the total schemes, 11 were implemented in Sadar, 84 in Mithapukur, 89 in Pirganj, 41 in Pirgachia, six in Kaunia, 68 in Gangachara, 38 in Badarganj and 16 in Taraganj upazilas. The works included earth filling of educational institutions, and repair and reconstruction of roads, culverts and bridges.

Man convicted for acid throwing

NETRAKONA, Sept 22: A man was awarded life-term imprisonment in an acid throwing case, court sources here said today, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convict Shankar Kumar Devnath Tk 5000, in default, to suffer two years RI more. According to the prosecution, Shankar of Fashka village in Madan upazila threw acid on his co-villager Abdul Halim following a previous enmity on September 20, 1999. A case was filed and police after investigation submitted charge sheet against him. District and Sessions Judge Alhaj AKM Istiaq Hussain after examining the records and witnesses pronounced the verdict on September 12.

Loan for jobless people

MAGURA, Sept 22: In a bid to create self-employment opportunities in the rural areas the government has disbursed interest free loans among 67 jobless poor people in Sreepur upazila, reports UNB.

Social Welfare Department disbursed Tk 2.51 lakh among the unemployed youths of Sabdalpur and Sreepur unions. Upazila Social Welfare Officer Syed Israil Hossain said the youths would utilise the loans to set up dairy farms, small trading and cottage industry. The department also earlier disbursed interest free loan among the unemployed youths in three other upazilas of the district, he added.

Four terrorists held

LUXMIPUR, Sept 22: Four armed terrorists were caught from the campus of Panitwala High School in Ramganj upazila and handed over to police on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said the local terrorists identified as Saiful Islam, 19, Kamrul Hossain, 18, Faruq Hossain, 19, and Khorsheed Alam, 28, entered the school compound at 8.30 am and were preparing to kidnap a girl of the school. While they were moving suspiciously on the campus some teachers and students challenged them. At this they became furious and threatened their life pointing pistol at them. Later they were caught with the help of the local people. Police recovered one pistol, two bullets and one knife from their possession. When produced the court sent them to jail hajat.

15 hurt in clash

NOAKHALI, Sept 22: At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of auto-rickshaw workers at Sonapur Bazar here Sunday, reports UNB.

According to a delayed report, the clash took place following a dispute over the forming of a standing committee of Auto-rickshaw Workers' Union for 2000-2001. Three of the injured Faruque, 22, Shamim, 21 and Humayun Kabir, 23 were admitted to a local hospital.

Man gets life term

BOGRA, Sept 22: A court here has sentenced a man to life term rigorous imprisonment in a murder case, reports UNB.

The court also fined convict Kabir Ali, son of Forman Ali in Shaulagati upazila, Tk 5,000 with a provision to suffer six months more RI in default. He was tried in absentia. According to the prosecution, Kabir along with his associates looted Tk 6,220 from Tomser Ali, 56, son of late Asmatullah in Sherpur upazila and stabbed him to death on June 2, 1994. After examining the records and witnesses, the Judge pronounced the judgement on Wednesday.

Dengue diagnostic kits distributed

KHULNA, Sept 22: Diagnostic kits of dengue fever were handed over to Sandhani of Khulna Medical College unit on behalf of Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd on Tuesday, reports BSS.

A function was held on this occasion which was presided over by President of Sandhani, Khulna Unit, Zahedul Islam. Vice-President of BMA Shaikh Baharul Alam was the chief guest. The function was addressed, among others, by President of Khulna BMA, QH Asgar, Moni Mohon Saha, HM Nazmul Ahsan, Monowar Ahsan, Sheikh Mahfuzul Haq, Dhiraz Mohon and Monowar Hossain. Monowar Hossain, on behalf of Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd, handed over the kits for Sandhani to the acting Superintendent of Khulna Medical College Hospital Nurul Haq Fakir.

414 schemes implemented

PATUAKHALI, Sept 22: As part of the government efforts to develop road communication in rural areas, some 414 development projects, out of 547 taken up during 1999-2000 fiscal, were implemented, reports UNB.

The projects, including road carpeting, construction of earthen roads, bridges and culverts, were undertaken at a cost of Tk 24.89 crore and 4,623 mts of wheat. Works on the rest of the projects are expected to be completed soon under the supervision of Local Government Engineering Department.