



Flood has multiplied the woes of poor villagers in Jhenidah district. Photo shows: (left) the flood affected people of Mohespur upazila set for an unknown destination in search of a shelter while (right) some distressed women in the same upazila weeping on the bank of a canal facing such a calamity.

--Star photo by Delwar Kabir

Disease takes toll on guava

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL. Oct 7: Southern districts in the country are regarded as major guava producing areas. The popular fruit, often dubbed as apple of Bengal, is being produced in abundance in the districts for over hundred years. But in the last two or three years, disease has seriously affected production, causing huge loss for garden owners.

A kind of fungus is responsible for spreading black-dots on guava, said an agriculture official. The disease spreads fast like wildfire from one fruit to another, he added. This infection is visible from the change of colours of plants. The disease is also responsible growing low quality of the fruit.

Recently agriculture experts termed this fungal infection as 'Anthroeknos' which is responsible for change in shape, colour and taste of the fruit. According to Swarupkathi upazila agriculture office, gardens on at least 300 hundred hectares of land in different areas have been attacked by this fungus this season.

The Agriculture Research Institute (ARI), Barisal region has now started working to stop the menace. The research revealed that 'noin' and 'topsin' - two kinds of anti fungal medicines - were more or less effective in controlling the disease in the guava gardens.

Among the southern districts, Pirojpur is leader in guava production. A large number of gardens are situated in Swarupkathi upazila of the district. Besides, the fruit is also produced abundantly in Barisal and Jhalakati.

Elderly people say guava cultivation started in the region more

than one hundred years ago by the then Hindu zamindars. Now guava is the second largest agricultural produce in the area after paddy. 'As guava is now profitable, more and more people are showing interests in the cultivation', said Abul Hossain, a local wholesale trader of guava.

According to Swarupkathi Upazila Agriculture Office, guava is currently being cultivated on more than six hundred hectares of land divided into six blocks in the upazila. 240 hectares are under

the cultivation in Kuriana, 260 hectares in Dhaluher, 22 hectares in Muslimpara, 7 hectares in Dalabari, 52 hectares in Ganapati, 20 hectares in Madra blocks.

Guava provides the area with steady employment opportunities, as some 1,200 families are engaged in guava farming.

'We prefer guava cultivation to paddy farming because the fruit gives a higher return', said Phanindra Nath Sikder, a school-teacher of Kuriana Girls High

School. Sikder, who owns two guava gardens, said 'I have a 90-year-old garden and it is still making money.'

RN Mandal, teacher of Adamkati Government Primary School and owner of 8 gardens, however, complained that farmers in the area are getting little help from the government.

Special measures should be taken up to introduce HYV kazl variety in the area, he added. 'The HYV variety does not grow easily in the area.'



Guava, the apple of Bangladesh, on sale at a wholesale market at Swarupkathi.

--Star photo

Pending cases pile up

NAOGAON. Oct 7: Crimes on women and children are mounting in the district in absence of separate court under Woman and Child Repression Prevention Act, reports UNB.

Sources said 45 cases were filed under the act with 11 thanas and court in August of which only eight cases were settled. With this, 703 cases have been lying pending with the collectorate office.

When the matter came up in a recent meeting, Public Prosecutor said the number of woman and child repression cases is high being big territory of the district and these are being handled by the judges along with other cases in absence of the separate court.

The meeting on Woman and Child Repression Prevention held with Deputy Commissioner in the chair also discussed various aspects of the smooth trial of the repression cases.

Another report from Netrakona says: A good number of cases under Women and Child Repression Act have been lying pending in the district due mainly to the

absence of investigation officers, medical officers and witnesses.

A Public Prosecutor told the news agency that want of proper coordination among the three separate departments of law, police and health the number of pending cases is increasing day by day.

Despite court orders, the concerned police investigation officers and medical officers often remain absent during the hearing date, he alleged.

Admitting the fact, an official of police said they are overburdened with many other businesses due to shortage of staff.

Besides, many police officials were transferred just after the completion of their investigation hampering the trial procedure, he added.

Local elite said women and child repression incidents are increasing in the district day by day due to the inordinate delay in the dispensation of justice.

Another report from Feni adds: Judicial and administrative works in the collectorate office in

the district are being hampered due to lack of magistrates and necessary officials, creating a judicial logjam.

According to official sources, a total of 68 posts, including that of magistrate, have long been lying vacant in the collectorate office.

They said there are only two first class magistrates against five posts for five upazilas of the district. One the two magistrates is now discharging the duties of five as another is going to be transferred somewhere else.

An official, who declined to be named, said a standstill will be created in the lower court if the authorities fail to appoint first class magistrates to it soon.

The situation in other departments is not different. The posts of NDC, District Election Officer, AD (Local Government), RDC, Land Acquisition Officer and General Certificate officer are also lying vacant.

More importantly, some posts of sub-inspectors and constables are lying vacant in the police department.

Three killed in Netrakona road accidents

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA. Oct 7: Three people were killed in separate road accidents in the district on Tuesday.

A twenty-year-old man, identified as Ripon, was killed on the spot at Bairaura on Kendua-

Netrakona road at about 9 in the morning when a passenger bus turned turtle. The young man was travelling in the bus.

In another incident, a woman and a child, both unidentified were killed on the spot when a speeding inter-district passenger bus hit them noon near Bangla Bazar on Mohanganj-Netrakona road. The victims were travelling in a rickshaw.

Two others travelling in the rickshaw were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

More importantly, some posts of sub-inspectors and constables are lying vacant in the police department.

Two Jubo League activists held in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ. Oct 7: Two Jubo League activists were arrested in connection with a mugging case on Wednesday.

The arrested were identified as Mahmudul Hasan alias Mridul, 23, son of Abdul Mannan Talukder and Murad alias Sanowar Hossain, 22, son of Sudam Ali.

According to police, a group of youths led by Suman, an activist of ruling party-backed Jubo League, intercepted a rickshaw passenger, stabbed him and snatched Tk 15,000 from his possession in Masumpur area in the town at about 11 am on the day. The victim was identified as Abul Kalam, 24, a rice trader. He was rushed to Sirajganj General Hospital.

However, local Jubo League said the group of youths involved in the mugging were expelled earlier from party.

Robbery

NOAKHALI. Oct 7: A gang of robbers looted valuable worth about Tk 3 lakh from five houses at village Koshabila in Chatkhil upazila recently, reports UNB.

Villagers said the armed muggers numbering 20/25 broke open the doors of the houses and decamped with the valuables including gold ornaments and cash.

Because of lack of patronisation

From Our Correspondent

MOLUVIBAZAR. Oct 7: Srimongal Adarsha College, a higher secondary level college in Srimongal upazila headquarters has been closed down due to ineffective management and lack of patronisation.

According to the college source, the managing committee of the college decided to close down the college after five years of its establishment.

Mohsin Miah Modhu, Chairman of Srimongal Municipality in association with some local elite had established the college in 1993. A 31-member managing committee was formed headed by the municipality chairman. At that time seven teachers including the principal were appointed and activities of the college started at Srimongal Municipality Library and auditorium as its temporary campus.

A total of 95 students were admitted in the first batch. In 1994-95 and 1995-96 academic

sessions total number of students in this college rose to 215. In the meantime, the managing committee of the college became inactive and the principal also failed to show his proficiency.

The college was not included in the MPO list and salaries of teachers and employees became irregular. Since then teachers of the college started deserting. At this crisis of the college, the committee played a silent role. Students and guardians had also lost attraction towards the college.

Last year, the Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Comilla refused to renew its affiliation. In the last year's HSC examination, 17 examinees from the college appeared in the examination. However, as there are no registered students in the college, it will not affect any student for declaring closing of the college.

A safe haven of anti-socials

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ. Oct 7: Sirajganj Bazaar railway station is in deplorable condition for a long time.

Lack of latrine, sitting problems, lack of security and vagabonds' disturbance have made the station a hell for the passengers. In first class, second class and third class waiting rooms there is no arrangement for sitting. First class waiting room remains always under lock and key and the railway employees use it as bedroom. In second class waiting room which is for females, there is no arrangement for sitting. It is now being used by anti-social elements. The second class waiting room remains under lock and key.

After sunset, the floating prostitutes move freely in the station area and give obscene hints to the male passengers. Due to lack of latrines, the waiting passengers mainly women are in trouble. After 10 pm the platform of the station becomes a garage of rickshaw.

When contacted the station master told this correspondent that he has no capacity to solve these problems.



Sirajganj Bazaar Railway Station has become a safe haven of anti-socials. Photo shows an inter-city train is standing here, while beggars, goat and hawkers are seen on the platform. Such is the situation due to indifferent attitude of the station authorities. Besides, snatching is a regular affair here.

--Star photo

Dhaka WASA Tender Notice

পানীর অগচ্ছ রোধে কাজ শেষে করেন মুখ বন্ধ করন

SIRAJGANJ. Oct 7: A gang of robbers looted valuable worth about Tk 3 lakh from five houses at village Koshabila in Chatkhil upazila recently, reports UNB.

Tenders are invited from Dhaka WASA enlisted 1st class civil contractors for construction of 450mm dia pipe drain & 4 nos interim manholes at Khaje Dewan 1st Lane & Umesh Dutta Road. Estimated cost of the work is Tk 14,58,172.39. Tenders will be received up to 12.00 noon of 23-10-2000 and opened on the same day at 2.00 pm in presence (if any) of the tenderers or their representatives.

Tender schedule will be available at the office of the Chief Accounts Officer of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhawan, 98 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka. Other detailed information will be available at the office of the undersigned.

Address: Segunbagicha, Dhaka
WASA-PI-313/2000
DFP-23874-2/10
G-1757

Md Mosharraf Hossain Faruk
Executive Engineer
Drainage Division-2
Dhaka WASA

News snaps

Pest attack on Aman field

JHALAKATHI, Oct 7: Aman paddy on over 600 hectares of land in Sadar, Kathalia and Rajapur upazilas came under pest attack, disheartening the beleaguered farmers, reports UNB.

Agriculture officials said Majra pest attacked over 400 hectares of land in Sadar, Nalchiti and Kathalia upazilas while Panni some 185 hectares in Sadar and Rajapur upazilas. They said field workers of Agriculture Extension Department, who received training on IPM method, are working hard to destroy the pests. They have so far destroyed pests on over 400 hectares of land in the upazilas by spraying some 75 kgs of insecticides.

Valuable metals smuggled out

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 7: Huge valuable metals, including brass, bronze and zinc, are being smuggled out of the country to India through the district everyday, reports UNB.

Officials said Bangladesh imports metals for local industries, but an organised gang of bootleggers smuggle it out to India as the border guards of the two countries have turned to be onlookers. Witnesses said the metals are smuggled out of Bangladesh through Battalohat, Arambagh, Sangarkati and Ramkrishnapur frontier areas everyday. Once Chapainawabganj was famous for brass industries, employing over 30,000 people. But the number of workers in the sector now stands at 2000. Metal smuggling to India continues to rise, as there has been a marked rise in demand for metal-made household appliances in the neighbouring country in last two decades.

56 projects implemented

BOGRA, Oct 7: As part of the countrywide programme to develop communication network, the government has implemented 56 projects in the previous fiscal, reports UNB.

The projects, under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance programme, were implemented by Local Government Engineering Department at a cost of over Tk 3.12 crore. The works included construction of 213.42-km roads and 52.56 meter bridges and culverts.



Prodigy, a centre for human resource development, took its development partners to Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Comilla under its Live-in Field experience programme recently. Photo shows the development partners and the facilitators of Prodigy with BARD officials in the academy premises.

Municipality chairman sued

JHALAKATI, Oct 7: A female municipality commissioner has filed a case against their chairman accusing him of taking her signature forcibly on a meeting resolution book, reports UNB.

According to the case filed with Sadar police station on Monday, the female commissioner, Meherun Nesa, alleged that municipality chairman Balyet Hossain forced her to sign on the resolution book at gunpoint. Her other nine colleagues also substantiated her allegation and charged the chairman with misusing power, an allegation denied by Balyet Hossain. Police are investigating the case.

Acid attack on girl

SUNAMGANJ, Oct 7: A teenage girl of Brahmapur village in Sadar upazila suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly by one of her neighbours on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said Nazmul Huda, son of Samar Uddin, hurled acid at Farzana while she was going to a marriage ceremony. Refusal of a marriage offer by Huda was said to be the reason behind the acid attack. On hearing her screaming, guests from the programme rushed to the spot and caught Huda red-handed. He was handed over to police. Farzana was admitted to Sadar Hospital in a critical condition. A case was filed.

Taka 24,000 looted

NAOGAON, Oct 7: Robbers looted Tk 24,000 in cash from two trucks blocking the road near the Mataji Bailey bridge in Mahadevpur upazila on Friday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the gang of miscreants from Poinari village in same upazila intercepted two cow-laden trucks by placing logs on the road and snatched away the money from the two trucks. The armed miscreants decamped with booty when patrol police appeared on the scene. Earlier, the patrol police foiled a robbery bid by the same gang of bandits when they tried to rob two trucks on Badalgachi-Nazipur road in the same upazila.

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