National

Rains have affected transplanted *Aman* paddy on 9,228 hectares of land in four upazilas of Magura district, according to Agriculture Extension Department. Banana on 99 hectares, papaya on 92 hectares, vegetables and green chilly on 591 hectares have also been damaged completely due to the recent foul weather. ---Star photo

Abundant supply makes orange cheaper

BANDARBAN, Nov 3: Orange growers, who produced a record amount of orange this season, are in an upbeat mood seeing the bright prospect of orange farming in the hill district, reports UNB.

As harvesting has gained momentum, the daily orange supply from remote Thanchi and Ruma upazilas now stands at 50,000 to 60,000 pieces, pushing down its price in local markets.

A big size of orange is now selling at Tk 3 in retail shops while the price is much lower in the wholesale market.

"We would have been able to sell orange even at lower prices if the district had better road communication network," said an orange grower adding that the orange gardens are located in inaccessible areas, which are 70 to 150 kms off the district town.

He said the growers bring orange to the district headquarters by engine boats on every market day and sell it to middlemen and farias at throwaway prices.

In most cases, the orange growers have to take loan from the middlemen and thus they are committed to sell their produces to them at a nominal price fixed earlier.

Another orange grower said he had to sell orange at Tk 1.5 per piece to the moneylenders against its market price of Tk 3.

Even there are some farias who procure orange through engine boats from gardens and supply it to the wholesale markets across the country, including the port city of Chittagong.

Yunus Sawdagar, a local moneylender and orange whole seller, said, "There was a huge demand for hilly orange in the country and our orange is selling at Tk 5 per piece in Chittagong town."

He said: "Transportation costs have been our main headache. It takes Tk 2,500 to transport orange per truck from the district headquarters to Chittagong town and one truck can carry at best 80,000 pieces. My orange production this season is likely to exceed 1 crore pieces and it will need 20 trucks to transport those."

Apart from the carrying charges, the growers have to pay some due and undue taxes at least four times from Bandarban to Chittagong. As a result, the farmers cannot reap the benefits.

District Krishak Samity President Mustafizur Rahman Talukder said the Hill Tract Affairs Ministry directed the municipality, the district council and union parishads not to collect tax more than one time on agricultural produces. But its directive went unheeded.

Deputy Director of district Agriculture Extension Department M A Quddus said two varieties of orange Khasia and Nawabpur are cultivated in the hill district as those have better demand in the market than other varieties.

He said at least 4,000 pieces of orange could be produced from one tree in Thanchi and Ruma upazilas as soil and weather here have been proved to be very suitable for orange cultivation.

The AED official said the farmers also need a cold storage in the district to avoid harvesting of green oranges. Green oranges do not taste well.

267 Jhenidah educational institutions hit by floods

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Nov 3: A total of 267 educational institutions, eight BOP and eight community clinics have been damaged by the floods in Moheshpur and Kotchandpur upazilas in the district.

Primarily the loss is estimated at Tk two crore, said a government official, seeking anonymity.

According to district administration office sources, 22 secondary schools in Moheshpur upazila and nine schools in Kotchandpur upazila were damaged.

Besides, a total of 160 primary schools in Moheshpur and 53 in Kotchandpur upazila were damaged. All the 19 madrasas, in Moheshpur upazila were damaged. All the four colleges in Moheshpur upazila were damaged partially.

Source said the Border Observation Pharees (BOP), or border outposts, were totally damaged. The loss was estimated at Tk three lakh. Moreover, eight community clinics in Kotchandpur upazila were damaged.

When this correspondent visited some flood-affected areas of Napa, Kazirber, Azampur and some other unions of Moheshpur found some structures of many educational institutions have been washed away.

Jesim Mandal, 53, of village Sejia under Moheshpur upazila said many students cannot attend their respective institutions as these remain closed.

When contacted, district administration authorities said that they could not prepare any list of exact damage so far. But the figure would be available within a few days, officials said.

Authorities said they had submitted proposals to allocated fund for repair of affected educational institutions.

Seminar told

8,000 incidents of woman repression last yr

JHALAKATI, Nov 3: Lawyers and judges at a seminar here have blamed police for violating human rights, abusing section 54 of criminal code of procedure (CrPC) across the country, reports BSS.

They observed that organised muscle power under the patronisation of different political parties was mainly responsible for the violation of human rights.

Women and children are becoming the worst victims of human rights violation as the incidents of rape, trafficking, oppression and killing are gradually increasing every year, they told the seminar on Human Rights and Role of Lawyers at Jhalakati District Bar Association Bhaban recently.

"The incidents of woman repression rose to more than 8,000 last year from 3,646 in 1996," Advocate MA Salam Talukder, Chairman of Human Rights and Legal Aid Committee of Bangladesh Bar Council, said in his keynote speech at the seminar.

He said lack of proper investigation system, expensive litigation, absence of the office of ombudsmen, and sometimes harassment by unscrupulous lawyers are making people deprived of their rights.

Jointly organised by Bangladesh Bar Council and Jhalakati District Bar Association, the seminar was addressed by Jhalakati District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hannan, Secretary of Legal Education and Training Institute (LETI) Advocate Mahbubul Huq, President of Jhalakati District Bar SM Ali Hossain, Secretary Mominuddin Khalifa, and Advocate Mallik Nasiruddin Chowdhury.

Salam Talukder said lawyers are the watchmen of the rights of people as they have access to every sphere of society. "Lawyers have to stand by the victims and earn love and respect from people instead of money," he said, adding that lawyers have to keep in mind that legal profession is a noble one where scopes are abundant to protect the rights of people.

District Judge Abdul Hannan said the government alone cannot protect the human rights. He said all concerned, including judges and lawyers, have to educate the citizens about their rights.

He also said the court has to be kept above everything. "Despite limitations, all have to respect the court and its verdicts." He also urged the lawyers to be more active to protect civil rights in the country.

2 commissioners of RCC sued under PSA

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Nov 3: A case was filed under Public Safety Act (PSA) on Wednesday against six people including two ward commissioners of Rajshahi City Corporation.

The case was filed after the accused allegedly demolished a house of one Shamsul Haque of Fudkipara in the city.

In his petition Haque alleged that the six people led by commissioner Shariful Islam Babu and Commissioner Abdul Hamid Sarkar Tekon demolished three rooms of his house.

However, the accused are yet to be nabbed, police said.

Degree examinees' demonstration

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 3: About 100 vehicles were stranded near Goal Chattar intersection here as degree examinees of three colleges put up barricades on Dhaka-Bogra highway on Tuesday about 11 am protesting the decision to change their examination centres.

Police and local people said that about one hundred degree examinees of Hajee Wahed Moriuyam Degree College, Sholonga College, and Begum Nurunnabari Tarkabagish Degree College in Raiganj upazila under the district put up barricades, halting vehicular movement on the highway from 11 am to 12:30 pm.

The authorities cancelled the examination centres after reports on malpractice in the examinations were published in newspapers. The situation was brought under control after police rushed to the spot.

Chapainawabganj road in bad shape

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Nov 3: The Jamtarha Road running through the village areas in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila has become unfit for plying vehicles.

This is due to development many cracks and potholes.

The five kilometers long road starts from Jamtarha and runs through a vast tract of croplands upto Jabukabun village via Karnakhari. One of its branch then meets with Dharail-Shyampur-Amnura road and the other branch connects with Kartipur-Chapaipalsa road. Thus Jamtarha Road has become a very important means of road communication in the area.

There are many of croplands on both sides of the road stretching a long distance with a very few clusters of houses here and there.

Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) has installed deep tubewells in the area and two to three crops are being produced now every year in the area. Several lakhs of tonnes of paddy and other foodgrains are produced in the area every season. Jamtarha Road is the only means to carry the crops to the houses and markets.

Only bamboo-carts driven by bulls and buffalos can be plied along the road throughout the year. During the rainy season. The road is usually covered with knee-deep mud. On the other hand knee-deep dust covers it during the dry season.

The farmers, on their own initiatives, and sometimes Jhilim Union Parishad authorities make earth-works to keep the road fit for carts.

There are also a good number of ponds and 'kharis including the 'khas' ones along the vast tracts of crop fields on both sides of the road. Abundant fish is produced in these water bodies. Jamtarha Road is the only means for transportation of these fishes.

Wholesale merchants cannot reach the farmers with their vehicles for miserable condition of the road. For the same reason the farmers themselves cannot go with their produces to the wholesale traders. They are to sell their produces to the fariahs. So they do not get profitable price of their produces.

Fariahs are also to suffer for transportation of their goods in terms of carrying costs and time.

Local people said, BMDA has constructed many roads in the Barendra region bringing a tremendous development in road communication system, but for an unknown reason, Jamtarha Road is yet to draw their attention.

Jamtarah Road in Chapainawabganj district is an important road of commercial interest, but it is now in a very bad shape. It needs to be reconstructed on emergency basis. --Star photo

Vegetable, sugar dear in Faridpur, Netrakona

By Staff Correspondent

Acute crisis of vegetable has been prevailing in Faridpur and Netrakona markets, fuelling abnormal price-hike. Price of sugar is also showing upward trend in Netrakona.

Buyers, especially those of low-income group, in the districts face difficulty in kitchen markets as prices have almost crossed purchasing capacity.

Wholesalers and retailers in the markets have attributed the abnormal price-hike of vegetables to unprecedented flood in the south-west region. Traders also say the flood has damaged various kinds of vegetables on hectares of lands in the region, a major vegetable growing area in the country.

Our Faridpur correspondent says: Prices of vegetables have soared, causing concern among people.

At present, 'patal' is selling at Tk 20 a kg as against Tk 10 two weeks ago, 'karala' at Tk 32-35 as against Tk 12-15, brinjal at Tk 20-25 as against Tk 10, potato at Tk 12 as agaisnt Tk 8, one slice of pumpkin at Tk 10 as agaisnt Tk 3, 'lal shak' at Tk 20 as agaisnt Tk 8, 'pui shak' at Tk 20 as against Tk 10.

The price of green chilli has soared sharply. The item now sells at between Tk 70 and Tk 80. When contacted, a green chilly trader told this correspondent that there is no possibility of coming down the price as most of the green chilli plants have been destroyed either by floods or by excessive rains. He added the price of green chilli will steadily soar until the newly harvested green chillies start arriving markets by late November.

Our Netrakona correspondent adds : The price of sugar has also shown an upward trend during the last 15 days. Many have attributed the hike to illegal hoarding by a section of unscrupulous traders. One kg of sugar was being sold at Tk 32 in the local markets on September 17, but the price stood at Tk 38 to Tk 40.

When asked about the sudden price-hike of sugar, a grocer attributed the price-hike to short supply of sugar.

Meanwhile, acute crisis of all kinds of vegetables has been prevailing in markets here, causing price-hike.

Excessive rains in greater Mymensingh district have destroyed vegetable farming to a large extent, causing scarcity in supply.

Agriculture official sources said rains have damaged vegetable fields in Kalmakanda, Durgapur, Purbadhala, Madan and parts of Netrakona Sadar and Atpara upazilas in the district.

Akram Ali, a wholesaler at Barabazar, said, "Now the supply has come down to almost one third". Because of dwindling supply, the prices of vegetables have soared abnormally, he added.

In the markets last week, brinjal was selling between Tk 18 and Tk 20 a kg against the normal price of Tk 7, 'patal' at Tk 16 against Tk 8, 'karala' at Tk 30 against Tk 10, a standard size pumpkin at Tk 20 against Tk 10.

'Puishak' and 'lalshak' were selling at Tk 10 per kg against the normal price of Tk 4.

Green chilli has become the hottest. It was selling at Tk 80 to 100 a kg. Papaya was being sold at Tk 6 against Tk 3.

Prices of potato, onion and garlic, however, marked a slight increase and were selling at Tk 10, 18 and 38 respectively against Tk 8, 15 and 25.

Separate incidents kill 3 in Jhalakati

JAHALKATI, Nov 3: Three people were killed in separate incidents in the district by the rival groups in three days, reports UNB.

Police said following a land dispute the opponent group raided the house of Ali Akbar of village Bheron Baria in Nalcity upazila recently and stabbed him indiscriminately. He died on way to Barisal Medical College Hospital.

Another group attacked the house of Mansur Ali, 50, of village West Nanguli in the same upazila and stabbed him to death in front of his family members over a land dispute. The rivals also grievously injured his son Majid Khan, 25 and daughter Lily, 16. They were rushed to the hospital in a critical condition.

In yet another incident Fazlur Rahman of village Kachua in Kathalia upazila was injured seriously when he fell into a ditch following a hot chase by his rival Sultan Hawladar of the same village. He was rushed to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Three separate cases were filed with the police.

Another report from Habiganj says that the assailants in separate incidents killed two people including a woman recently.

Witnesses said Seju Mia, 35, of village Khagaura in Baniachang upazila was stabbed to death by his opponents following a previous enmity recently.

In another incident Ramchan Bibi, 55, of village Habijpur in Bahubal upazila was killed in a clash over land dispute. She met the tragic end of her life when she tried to rescue her son from attackers.

The bodies were sent to hospital morgue for autopsy and separate murder cases were filed with the police.

Erosion by the rivers Modhumati and Jamuna has taken a devastating turn in Narail and Sirajganj districts in recent days. Photo at left shows the River Modhumati is about to devour Mallikpur Academy under Lohagara upazila in Narail, while the photo at right shows unabated erosion along the old flood protection embankment in Shahjadpur upazila under Sirajganj district. The erosion affected people in the area observing helplessly the wrath of Jamuna standing on the affected dam. ---Star photo

News snaps

Maiden journey obstructed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 3: Sirajganj-Sylhet bus communication via Dhaka could not be started by the United Special Chair Coach Service on Wednesday.

The Sirajganj district Bus, Minibus and Coach Owners' Association obstructed their maiden journey. United Chair coaches have been plying from Bogra to Sylhet for a long time for the passengers in Sirajganj, the United Special Chair Coach authority arranged 10 seats in the coach to travel to Sylhet. But on the inaugural day of the service, the Bus Minibus and Coach Owners Association, Sirajganj demanded illegal toll from United Chair Coach service. The incident annoyed the people here.

Alleged snatchers held

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Nov 3: Police arrested two alleged snatchers from the district town on Thursday.

Police said, Rana and Rubel were travelling by two rickshaws at about 4 am along Swadeshi Bazar and Corporation Street areas of the town. On suspicion, police arrested them and recovered a sword and a knife from their possession. They were sent to jail hajat, police said.

Youth killed by rivals

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Nov 3: Nazrul Islam, 16, of village Jadavpur in Sailkupa upazila was killed when rivals hit him with lethal weapons on his head on Tuesday, according to police source.

The incident took place following a trifling matter. Nazrul was rushed to Sailkupa Health Complex and was advised to shift to Dhaka. But he succumbed to his injuries on way to Dhaka.

Abducted persons still untraced

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 3: Even after a massive police hunt none of the 5-member minority family of Barthi village under Gournadi upazila could be traced till Thursday.

They were allegedly abducted by a local BCL leader and terrorist Habul Peada and his armed gang on Tuesday night. Police could not arrest even Habul, though his motorcycle was recovered and seized by Gournadi thana police from Barthi village on Thursday. Earlier on Tuesday Dhirendra sold out his 2 acres and 40 decimals of land property, house, shops and all other valuables to Aziz and Anis Fakir for Taka 3.20 lakh and registered it with Gournadi Registration Office on Tuesday. Later at night, Habul Peada with his armed associates abducted Dhirendra, his wife Jatsna, son Samir and daughters Banika and Manika and took them to an unknown place. In the morning, Aziz and Anis Fakir took possession of some of the property while the other portion of the property has been taken forcibly by Habul. Amid such a tense situation a local Awami League leader Raju Ahmed Harun came to the scene and assured that all the property would be handed over to the real owners, according to legal papers and documents.

Two killed in road mishaps

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 3: Two people were killed and three others injured in two separate road accidents at Subornoshara on Sirajganj-Belkuchi road under Belkuchi upazila on Thursday night.

Police and witnesses said when the driver of a Belkuchi-bound speeding truck lost its control over steering. A result one people was killed and three others injured. Identity of the victim is Abdus Satter, 25, of Subornoshara in Belkuchi upazila. Three seriously injured are Majeda Khatun, 40, Nurul Alam, 16, and Abdul Mannan, 27. They were sent to Siraganj General Hospital in a critical condition. The other accident took place at the same village where a bus passenger Millon Mian, 30, killed when a Belkuchi-bound bus driver lost control over steering and fell in to a road side ditch at about 8:30 pm. Police seized both the vehicles, but drivers and helpers managed to escape.

Trader burnt to death

HABIGANJ, Nov 3: A businessman was burnt to death after explosion of a gas oven at Munsefi residential area in the town Sunday, reports UNB.

Family sources said Jamal Ahmed, 40, met the accident as he lit a matchstick to fire the gas oven at 11 am. The entire room engulfed by the fire following the explosion. Jamal was rushed to Dhaka from Sadar Hospital but died on the way.

Valuables looted

BAGERHAT, Nov 3: Robbers looted valuables worth over Tk one lakh from three houses at Dasani in the town on Sunday midnight, reports UNB.

Witnesses said about 14 armed men entered into the house of Habibur Rahman and two other rented houses at 2 am identifying them as police and looted gold ornaments and cash tying up the house inmates. They also beat Habibur Rahman and his tenant Jahanara Begum when they tried to resist them. A case was filed. Police visited the houses this (Monday) morning.

Cultural function "Dotara" held

KURIGRAM, Nov 3: The monthly cultural function of "Dotara" organised by Ulipur Vaoyaiya Parishad was held recently at Vaoyaiya Academy premises of Durgapur under Ulipur upazila, reports BSS.

Famous radio and TV artist Ananto Kumar Dev as the chief guest attended the function. Director of Vaoyaiya Academy, Ulipur Bhupati Bhushan Burma chaired the occasion. The discussion meeting on the occasion was participated by Shantana Dev, Jatindra Nath Roy, Jiban Chandra Paul, SR Rana and Adhir Chandra Burma. Artistes Mayuri Ghosh, Lipi Debnath, Sheouly Roy, Adurini, Shefali Roy, Nobin Shabuz,, Nanda, Nabir Hossain, Shaju Ahmed, Shaheen Sarker and Shahjamal Sarker performed popular Vaoyaiya Songs in the function.

Extension of Comilla Judge Court bldg

COMILLA, Nov 3: The construction and extension of Comilla Judge Court Building was inaugurated by Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru on October 28, reports BSS.

District Judge Sardar Alauddin presided over the inaugural function. Judge Mazedul Hoque, Public Prosecutor Advocate Abdul Latif, G P Advocate Mujibur Rahman, President of Bar Association Advocate M Ismail and Special PP Advocate Mujibur Rahman spoke on the occasion. Public Works Department is constructing the extension of Comilla Judge Court Building at a cost of 70 lakh taka.

Training of Ansars

SHARIATPUR, Nov 3: A 14-day training course for Ansars and VDP members concluded recently at District Ansar and VDP Office premises, reports BSS.

A total of 100 Ansars and VDP members took part in the course. The course included PT, drill, lessons on the aims and objects of the Ansars and VDPs, public security, child and mother's health care, social discipline, maintenance of security in election centres and disaster management. Nirmalendu Biswas, District Adjutant of Ansars and VDP presided over the concluding function.

Conviction

BAGERHAT, Nov 3: A court here on Monday convicted a man and sentenced him to life term rigorous imprisonment for killing his wife, reports UNB.

The court also fined the convict Tk 5,000 in default, to suffer three months more RI. The case history in brief: Joynal Gazi, 28, of Goabari village in Morelganj upazila beat his wife Anwara Begum to death at one stage of quarrel on August 6, 1995. Abdus Salam, brother of the victim, filed a murder case and police charge sheeted against Joynal. After examining the records and witnesses, the Additional District and Sessions Judge handed down the judgement.

Road link snapped

MUNSHIGANJ, Nov 3: Road communication between Munshiganj and Dhaka remained suspended following development of a huge breach on Munshiganj-Dhaka road at Charmuktarpur on Monday night, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a 10-feet width breach was suddenly developed on the road at about 8pm suspending road communication. Several hundred vehicles got stranded on both sides of the breach till writing this report at 10pm.