

## National

# No proper system to extract white clay in Netrakona

From Jahangir Alam

NETRAKONA, Dec 10: The largest white clay mine of Bangladesh is situated at the bordering upazila of Durgapur.

The mine is situated at Bijoypur, 6-km away from Durgapur sadar. The mine is situated at the foot of the Garo hills. There are many hillocks where white clay is found in abundance. But the invaluable natural wealth of Bangladesh is being wasted.

There is no proper system of extracting white clay. Companies are extracting it by digging deep spots. As a result the hillocks of white clay are threatened. Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) do not look into the matter.

On the other hand massive pilferage of white clay by dishonest government employees is being reported widely.

Not only that after its lifting it is kept in haphazard manner. But BCIC is indifferent regarding the matter.

In dry season, white clay is being extracted and piled up while in the rainy season it is sent to different places. But much of it washed away due to rains.

At present 10 to 12 private companies are extracting white clay from

this mine in an improper manner. There is none to supervise the extracting work. Even there is no office of BCIC in Durgapur. Only a guard of BCIC stays here.

The mine was discovered in the year 1953. It is 26 kms long and several hundred metres broad.

Four lakh 65 thousands metric tons of white clay have been accumulated here.

At first Kohinur Aluminium Works started extracting white clay. In 1973 the mine was handed over to Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

Another sad tale for Netrakona is that no ceramic industry has been established here as yet though the largest white clay mine of the country is situated here. White clay of Netrakona is being sent to different ceramic industries of the country.

Local elites have urged the government to look into the matter and take necessary steps.

Moreover, pilferage and other irregularities should also be stopped in the greater interest of the country.



White clay is usually extracted by digging the foot of small hills in an improper manner. As a result, the hillocks are threatened like the picture at left. Photo at right shows piled up clay under the open sky, large quantity of which is washed away during the rainy season. But there seems to be none to preserve the valuable natural wealth from massive wastage. —Star photo

## Bumper production of Aman likely in 16 districts

KURIGRAM, Dec 10: The farmers of 16 northern districts have started harvesting transplanted Aman crop in full-swing, reports BSS.

Production of the crop is excellent this year, which predicts a bumper yield of the main crop of the region. Festivals of newly harvested crop are on at the houses of affluent farmers everywhere. The farmers seemed to be very happy with the bumper production, but are also worried about the price. The farmers requested the government to procure more Aman paddy and rice during this season to provide them with fair prices.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources in the region, the production of transplanted Aman crop will be excellent during this season though there were insufficient rainfalls before blooming of

the plants. Incidents of pest attack were below the normal limit and the farmers successfully irrigated their fields of transplanted Aman crop when necessary. As a result, the production has become almost bumper everywhere in 16 northern districts.

Sources in the DAE informed that a target of producing 32,28,832 transplanted Aman rice from a total of 16,11,400 hectares was fixed during this season in all 16 northern districts. Of them, 24,45,320 tons of hybrid variety of Aman rice from 10,82,000 hectares and 7,83,512 tons of local variety Aman rice from 5,29,400 hectares were targeted to be produced. The targeted production rate of hybrid variety of transplanted Aman rice was 2.26 tons per hectare and that of local variety was 1.48 tons of rice per hectare. The farm-

ers brought 60,000 more hectares than the target. As a result, the overall production of T-Aman rice is expected to be 33.5 lakh tons, which is higher by about 1,30,000 tons of rice than the target.

According to officials of DAE in the region, a total of producing 19,99,432 tons of T-Aman rice from 10,08,400 hectares in eight districts of Rangpur Agriculture Zone was fixed this year. But the farmers of these eight districts have brought a total of 10,29,900 hectares under T-Aman cultivation this year which is higher by 21,500 hectares than the target, which will produce about half of a lakh tons of rice more in the area. On the other hand, the farmers of eight districts of Rajshahi Agriculture Zone cultivated T-Aman crop on more than 6,40,000 hectares against the target of 6,03,000 hectares to produce

12,29,400 tons of rice this year.

The fields of whole northern region have now turned yellow in colour as the ripe Aman paddy plants are lying on the soil and harvesting is progressing.

Agro experts of the region told that the cultivation of Aman crop was not hampered by low rainfall this year as the farmers provided water where necessary through irrigation. The harvesting is expected to be completed by the current month, they said.

A number of farmers of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Nilphamari and Gaibandha districts requested the government to procure more T-Aman paddy and rice through easing the procurement process. "We want to sell paddy or rice directly to the government purchasing centres to get fair prices," they commented.

## 1,580 homeless families in Rangpur rehabilitated

RANGPUR, Dec 10: A total of 158 barrack-like houses have been constructed in two upazilas under 10 Asrayan projects, providing shelter to some 1,580 homeless families, reports UNB.

Of the homeless families, 130 were given shelter in 13 barracks under Chotorupai extension, 250 in 25 barracks under Bagdohara and Chalakhal projects, 240 in 24 barracks under Bagdohara extension, Chalakhal and Easli Asrayan projects in Gangachar upazila.

Besides, 70 families were given shelter in seven barracks under Lalchandpur Asrayan Project and 40 families in four barracks under Kadirabad Asrayan Project in Pirganj upazila.

According to officials, the families were also given Tk 82 lakh so that they could start life anew by undertaking small but income-generating programmes.

Of the total, Tk 13 lakh was distributed among the families under Chotorupai Asrayan Project, Tk 12 lakh under Chotorupai extension, Tk 25 lakh under Bagdohara and Chalakhal projects and Tk seven lakh under Lalchandpur Asrayan Project.

Besides, community centres have been set up in the 10 Asrayan projects each at a cost of Tk 25 lakh while Tk 7 lakh spent

on their training and Tk 5 lakh on afforestation.

Apart from the 10 projects, works on two new Asrayan projects are progressing at Morneya and Char Eshore Kul in Gangachar upazila.

The earthworks on 32 barrack houses, spending 500 MTs of wheat, are in progress. Some 32 landless families will be rehabilitated under the two new projects.

Besides, district administration has planned to implement nine more Asrayan projects for 680 landless families in four upazilas.

Work on these new projects are likely to start soon, depending on the approval of the department concerned.

BSS from Satkhira reports: The construction of Kalabari Asrayan Project was inaugurated at a function held at Burigoalini village under Shyamnagar Upazila recently.

The project is being constructed on 5 acres of land. A total of 100 tons of wheat has been sanctioned for the project.

Deputy Commissioner, Satkhira, Abdul Matin Chowdhury inaugurated the construction of Kalabari Asrayan Project. Burigoalini Union Parishad Chairman Gazi Leakat Hossain presided over the func-

tion. The inaugural function was addressed, among others, by the Shyamnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Nezirullah and Nezarath Deputy Collectorate Zakir Hossain.

After the completion of the project, about 50 destitute families will get shelter in the Asrayan project.



Rahima Begum of village Guabaria under Jamalpur district was once a poor housewife, but she has changed her fate within three years by turning her home into a farm. Wife of Golam Kibria, an ailing block supervisor of the Agriculture Department, Rahima got an advantage of undergoing training course in the modern farming system. After her successful training she set up an ideal home being inspired by the Prime Minister's slogan to turn a home into a farm. —Star photo by Muhammad Ali

## Mass grave in Thakurgaon remains uncared

THAKURGAON, Dec 10: A mass grave of 1971, where 36 people were buried after they were killed by the Pakistanis and their stooges, still reminds the people here of the brutality and atrocities of the occupation forces during the Bangladesh liberation war.

The grave is situated at village Dakshin Batina, behind Abdur Rashid Degree College, near Farabarihat under Thakurgaon Sadar Upazila. It is only 10 kilometres north of Thakurgaon town.

The mass grave was originally a well belonging to a village doctor Shashadhar Barman (generally called Bangali Dakatar), who died in 1991. When the liberation war began on March 25, 1971, Shashadhar Barman and the villagers left the village for India.

When the Pakistani Army occupied Thakurgaon town on April 15, 1971 Sheikh Shahar Ali and Sheikh Bahar Ali, two freedom fighter brothers and along with their family members and some other people of Thakurgaon town took shelter in that village. The Ali brothers took training and joined the Mukti Bahini.

On getting information from the secretary of the then Peace Committee of Saladar Union Parishad, a truck-load of Pakistani Army and their stooges, about 40 in number, went to the village in search of them. It was on May 16, 1971 the Pakistani Army reached Farabarihat at about noon and set fire to some houses around the hat (market) and picked up some people from the nearby villages.

Then they went to the village where the two Alis,

their families and some other freedom fighters took shelter. It was Jorh prayers time when some of them were offering prayers while others were taking lunch. The Pak army entered into the houses and brought the inmates near the well of Bangali Dakatar.

The Pakistani army unloaded the people from the truck they picked up from the villages near Farabarihat and shot them dead. Sobratu Mohammad was the only one who survived the carnage. The army personnel ordered him to carry the 35 dead bodies and throw them into the well. After Sobratu Mohammad had carried out the order the marauding Pakistani soldiers also killed him.

Together with Sobratu Mohammad, 36 people were buried into the well. It was the first incident of mass killing in occupied Thakurgaon district. Out of

## Fish production in Magura declines

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Dec 10: Fish production has been declining in the district mainly due to absence of proper planning of fish cultivation in khas, or disputed, water bodies.

Fish production in the district this year stands at 9,500 metric tons, much below the annual demand, official sources said.

A large number of ponds and water bodies in the district are out of pisciculture, the sources added.

According to the district Fisheries Department, the district has 9,515 ponds covering the area of 2,894.02 hectares of land. Of them, the local Fisheries Department runs only 30 ponds while the other 9,485 are privately owned.

Besides, eight rivers flowing

through the district and at least 39 canals are also the source of fishes. 39 beels (water body) and seven haors (water body) covering the area of 42,944.09 hectares of land produce fish here.

Moreover, indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers in cropland has also been attributed to the decline in fish production. The fertilisers pollute the waters of rivers, canals and water bodies.

Many think that fish output can be increased by making the Pond Development Act 1993 fully effective. The law allows the deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers to cultivate fish in ponds and water bodies under the government management if their owners fail to cultivate fish within a stipulated time.

## Massive Rabi farming scheme undertaken in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Dec 10: Local Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has undertaken a massive Rabi crop cultivation programme in the district this year.

Under the Rabi crop farming scheme, 25 thousand hectares of land will be brought under wheat cultivation with a production target of 57,500 metric tons, 300 hectares under onion cultivation with a production target of 30,000 metric tons, 2100 hectares of land under garlic cultivation with a production target of 12,000 metric tons, 200 hectares under potato cultivation to produce 2000 metric tons, 350 hectares under sweet potato farming with a production target of 3,500 metric tons, 15 thousand hectares under mustard cultivation with a production target of 13,500 metric tons, 22,500 hectares of land under groundnut cultivation to produce 3750 metric tons of yields, 800 hectares under green chilly cultivation to produce 1600 metric tons of yields, 50 hectares under

turmeric cultivation to produce 132 metric tons of yields, 18,400 hectares under pulse cultivation to produce 14,350 metric tons of yields, 15 thousand hectares under gram cultivation with a production target of 13,950 metric tons, 1700 hectares under mug pulse cultivation to produce 1200 metric tons of yields, 1000 hectares of land under maskalai pulse cultivation to produce 1750 metric tons of yields, 1700 hectares under matar pulse cultivation to produce 1200 metric tons of yields, 1000 hectares under khesari pulse cultivation to produce 760 metric tons of yields, 75 hectares under orhar pulse cultivation to produce 53 metric tons of yields, 200 hectares under maize cultivation to produce 650 metric tons of yields and 4000 hectares of land under vegetable cultivation to produce 80,000 metric tons of yields.

AED officials said some 225 field-supervisors have been working in the district to make the programme a success.

## Mamun Murder Case: Accused arrested

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 10: Police arrested an accused in the sensational cement trader Qamrul Hasan Mamun murder case from Pathankandi village in Sadar upazila on Friday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, police arrested Muktar Ali, 58, a former retired government employee, from his father-in-law's house.

He was produced before the magistrate court seeking a seven-day police remand. But due to the weekly holiday the magistrate sent him to jail without giving any decision on police remand.

While coming to the town by a rickshaw after lter on Wednesday from his residence Mamun was intercepted by the armed gang led by his neighbour Shamim near the town hall and at one stage they fired him at his chest and leg injuring him grievously.

He was rushed to the Sadar Hospital and later he succumbed

on way to Bajitpur Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital.

A murder case was filed against eight people, including Shamim, Selim and Wasim and their father Muktar Ali.

The investigating officer SI Abu Sayed said Mamun was murdered as a sequel to the dispute over the ownership of a shop and a plot of land.

Another report says that police with the help of the local people arrested two notorious dacoits from a village in Sadar upazila on the same day.

The arrested Kanchan and Delwar were also wanted in connection with the murder of a police constable. The cop was killed near Boroitola on Kishoreganj-Nikli road recently. Both the robbers were arrested in connection with a robbery committed at village Dampara in Sadar upazila on December 1.

## News snaps



A discussion was held recently in Barisal on the occasion of the first death anniversary of Begum Sufia Kamal. —Star photo

### Discussion on Sufia Kamal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 10: A discussion was held here recently commemorating the first death anniversary of Begum Sufia Kamal.

Organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (a women's organisation), Barisal unit, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Nikhil Sen, A K Azad, Dilip Kumar Roy, S Ali Mohammad, Bimal Chakravarty, Sajeda Matin, Puspita Guha, Nurjahan Begum, Minu Ganguly, Bandana Nath and Nurunnahar Begum. The discussants paid glowing tributes to the poet for her immense contribution to social services in the country. The discussion was presided over by Rani Bhattacharja.

### Liberation Day of Comilla

COMILLA, Dec 10: The Liberation Day of Comilla was celebrated here on Friday with enthusiasm, reports BSS.

On this day in 1971, Comilla was liberated from the Pakistani occupation forces. A colourful procession was brought out in the town to mark the day. Hundreds of people including Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, Chairman of Public Administration Reform Commission A T M Shamsul Haque, Whip Mujibur Haque and officials of the Mujibnagar government, leaders of different political and socio-cultural organisations joined the funfair as the procession marched through the town. Later on at a rally at the Town Hall premises, the Law Minister called on all concerned to remain alert against the distortion of the history of the Liberation War.

### Copies of Daily Inqilab burnt

KISHOREGONJ, Dec 10: Bangladesh Chhatra League, Kishoregonj district committee, held a protest meeting on Monday at its office premises demanding ban on the Daily Inqilab for insulting the National Anthem, which was earned at the cost of 30 lakh martyrs in the year 1971 during our Liberation War, reports BSS.

The activists of Chhatra League set on fire some copies of the Daily Inqilab after the meeting. Speakers of the meeting also condemned the undiplomatic utterances of a Pakistani diplomat in Bangladesh. The meeting was presided over by the convenor of Kishoregonj district Chhatra League committee Basiruddin Repon.

### 46 clinics under construction

KHAGRACHHARI, Dec 10: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been setting up 46 community clinics to provide better health care for the poor people during the fiscal year 2000-2001, reports BSS.

The projects of the community clinics is being implemented at a cost of about Taka one crore. Construction of Karalyachhari Community Clinic, out of 46, has been completed and opened recently by District Council Chairman Jatindra Lal Tripura. Executive Engineer of LGED Anwar Uddin Khan, Assistant Engineer Ziban Rowaza and Awami League leader Nirmal Chowdhury were present in the inaugural function.

### Workshop on Children's Page

BARISAL, Dec 10: A four-day long workshop on 'Children's Page in Newspapers' concluded here at the Bangladesh Development Society (BDS) auditorium premises on Monday, reports BSS.

Organised by Bangladesh Press Institute, the concluding function was addressed, among others, by the Coordinator of Chanderhat Mintu Bose, UNICEF official Shah Jaman, President of Khelaghar Jiban Krishna Dey, journalist Kazi Makbul Hossain and Coordinator of the workshop and Instructor of PIB Rahmat Ali Howlader. A total of 23 persons including journalists, NGO members, children organisers and radio and information officials took part in the workshop. Certificates were awarded to the participants on the concluding day.

### Phensidyl seized

COMILLA, Dec 10: Police seized 833 bottles of phensidyl from a microbus and arrested 13 people in this connection here on Thursday, reports UNB.

The arrested, including a woman identified as Halima Khatun, were sent to jail hajat.

### Separate incidents claim 4

HABIGANJ, Dec 10: Four people were killed in separate incidents in the district during the last week, reports UNB.

Police said Moharram Ali, 35, was killed by a group of his fellow-villagers following a dispute over irrigation at village Rasulpur in Bahubal upazila on Sunday. On the same day, a bicycle rider, Hafez Nannu Mia, 22, was killed near Mirpur Bazaar in the upazila as he was hit by a Dhaka-bound coach. In another incident, a newlywed woman Nilufa Akhter, 18, of village East Joypur in Madhabpur upazila was run over by a bus near Basnari village in Bahubal upazila on Dhaka-Sylhet highway Friday. Yet in another incident, a young boy, 14, Inat Uddin of village Rasulpur in Ajmiriganj upazila died of poisoning while spraying insecticide on a cropland on the day. Separate cases were filed.

### Man killed by rival's supporters

HABIGANJ, Dec 10: One person was killed when attacked by the rival group at Rasulpur village in Bahubal upazila on Monday, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said an altercation ensued between Maharam Ali, 35, and his neighbour Wahabullah over irrigation on a disputed plot of land and at one stage Maharam was stabbed by the supporters of Wahab. Later on seriously injured Maharam took shelter in a nearby house where the attackers stabbed him again mercilessly causing his instantaneous death. The body was sent to sadar hospital for autopsy and a case was filed with the police.

### Valuables gutted

PANCHAGARH, Dec 10: Valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh were gutted in a devastating fire at Islampur village in Boda upazila on Monday evening, reports UNB.

Local people said the fire originating from the kitchen of a villager engulfed 40 nearby houses leaving Tahmina Khatun seriously injured. According to an estimate the blaze charred 473 maunds of paddy, rice, cash and other valuables. Chairman of the Benghari Union Parishad said the fire fighters from Sadar upazila reached the spot late and brought fire under control with the help of the local people. He said local people have been demanding a fire station at Boda upazila headquarters since long but no step has yet been taken in this regard. He urged the authorities concerned to set up a fire station at the upazila without further delay.