

National

Entrepreneurs planning to set up tea gardens in Panchagarh

Tk 100 cr export by 2010 expected

PANCHAGARH, Jan 5: A number of private entrepreneurs are planning to set up tea gardens in Tentulia upazila of the district with the expectation of exporting tea worth some Tk 100 crore by the year 2010, reports UNB.

They hope that with the establishment of all the planned tea gardens in the area job opportunities would be created for nearly 30,000 people.

Though tea is a cash crop of the country, its cultivation is confined to Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts regions only.

Experts and agriculturists say climate of the district is favourable for tea plantation.

Besides, the local administration with the help of Agriculture Extension Department also submitted favourable reports to the government for setting up tea gardens in the region.

Soon after the independence in 1971, initiatives were taken for tea production in the region and a number of private companies took lease of land and loans from the government for the purpose. But due to reason not known, they later abandoned their initiatives.

Encouraged by favourable reports about tea production in the region, two private companies set up two tea gardens in Tentulia last year.

Tentulia Tea Company, a private enterprise of some 120-tea professionals, started planting tea saplings from April 2, 2000 at Mandupara village in the upazila. Tea Board Chairman Brig Daniel Islam inaugurated the plantation programme.

Within four months of the inauguration of the first garden, another company Kazi and Kazi Tea Estate started its plantation at

Dahuk village in Tentulia in August last year.

The owner of the company and editor of the Ajker Kagoj, Kazi Shahid Ahmed inaugurated the plantation work.

The plants of the gardens by this time grew two feet high and the entrepreneurs said they expect production within next ten years.

Another private enterprise, Panchagarh Tea Company, also set up a nursery at Kaldaspura village of the upazila on a 10-acre plot for producing tea saplings. Manager of the company, Syed Fazle Rumi said they hope to produce 10 to 15 lakh saplings from the nursery per year.

Besides, about a dozen other companies have also purchased lands and completed the preliminary works for setting up tea gardens in the upazila, officials said.

Inaugurating the plantation programme of Tentulia Tea Company, Tea Board Chairman Daniel Islam said the board would provide tea saplings to the private entrepreneurs free of cost for the first five years to encourage tea gardening in the region.

Besides, he said, loan amounting to Tk 1.5 lakh per hectare of tea plantation would also be provided to the entrepreneurs.

Official sources said the government has undertaken project to encourage small tea gardens to increase the country's export of tea.

Initially, the government sanctioned Tk 9 crore under the project to set up three tea processing factories, and three development and expansion centres in Panchagarh.

The European Union has expressed its willingness to provide financial support to the government for boosting tea production in the country.



Boats coming from Tangail, Jamalpur and Bhuapur reach the new terminal at Sirajganj covering 50-mile extra area. This is due to silting along the River Jamuna. Boatmen fear they will lose job if dredging is not done immediately.

---Star photo

Siltation hampers navigation along Jamuna

From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 5: The Jamuna was once a mighty river, but now it has been dying gradually.

This is because of silting and dumping of waste and garbage in the river which goes on unabated. During the dry season, the river, passing by the district headquarters wears a deserted look. Navigation in the river is being hampered following emergence of shoals.

In August-September, water level in the river starts falling. By December many parts of the river are exposed to the sun. About 1,000 small and big shoals have emerged along Jagannathganj ghat to Aricha ghat, hampering navigation in the river routes. When contacted an engineer working with the local Water Development Board

(WDB) said a large quantity of silt is being deposited in the riverbeds because of geological characteristic of the country. He said that as most rivers in the country flow slowly, these leave silt, resulting in emergence of shoals. Silt has been depositing for years, hampering navigation, he added. Many sewer lines in the town end up in the river, causing slow death of the river. The drains carry garbage including polythene bags.

Dumping of garbage along the bank, apparently to reclaim land, has been going on over the years. In the rainy season, following heavy rainfall, the wastes find home in the riverbed. Siltation in the Jamuna has also affected other small rivers.

As a result prices of fertiliser, rice, flour and other items will increase. The cultivation will also be hampered ultimately.

Road accidents increase: 10 killed in five dists

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 5: A college student was stabbed to death by a group of extortions in the city last Sunday.

The victim was identified as Rezaul Hasan Ripon, 25, student of Philosophy Department of Dhaka College.

The hoodlums killed him following an altercation. When the miscreants demanded toll from a doctor at the physician's chamber at Ghoshpara Ripon, who was present during the time, resisted the extortions.

Later as Ripon was returning home at Bishimila, he was intercepted in Kalabagan area at about 8.30 pm and stabbed indiscriminately. He succumbed to injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital at about 10 pm.

Police arrested two youths in connection with the killing. Ripon is son of Afzal Hossain, deputy controller of Rajshahi Education Board.

Obituary From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Jan 5: Syed Abdul Matin, senior vice-president of Bangladesh Awami League, Moulvibazar district unit and executive member of district unit of Mukti Joddha Sangsad (an organisation of freedom fighters) died at his residence in TB Hospital, Road area in the town on December 18. He was 62.

He was suffering from cancer and other complications, family members said.

Late Matin joined the War of Liberation. He left behind wife, two sons and a host of relatives.

There is an alarming rise in road accidents in five districts and 10 persons were killed recently, report agencies.

A three-year-old girl was killed in a road accident at Mohishpur village under Pirojpur district on Sunday morning.

Witnesses said Sraboni, daughter of Monna Bepari died on the spot when she was run over by a Bagerhat-bound truck. The driver managed to flee with the vehicle.

At least 14 people were injured in a road accident at Maniknagar in Jajira Upazila on Shariatpur-Dhaka highway recently.

According to informed sources, the accident occurred when Shariatpur-bound bus from Dhaka and a Dhaka-bound bus from Shariatpur collided head-on and the Dhaka-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch.

Jajira thana police seized the Shariatpur-bound bus. Drivers of both the buses managed to flee.

Three people were killed and 20 others injured in a head-on collision between a night coach and a buffalo cart at Lakhipur under Kotwali Thana on Dinajpur-Gobindaganj Highway recently.

The deads are identified as Islam, 32, Rahim, 35, and a helper of the bus.

Police said the accident occurred when the bus hit the sugarcane loaded cart and fell into the roadside ditch. The unfortunate victims died on the spot. Five critically injured have been admitted to the Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Rangpur district on Wednesday.

Police said the first accident took place at Jamtala in Pirojpur.

The girl was run over by a bus on December 22 at Sadhpura of

Kashiganj on Jharia-Mymensingh highway under Tara Kanda Police Station. Immediately after the accident the poor girl was sent to MMCH, where she was under treatment for five days.

Tarkanda police took necessary measures for handing over the body to the members of her family.

At least 14 people were injured in a road accident at Maniknagar in Jajira Upazila on Shariatpur-Dhaka highway recently.

According to informed sources, the accident occurred when Shariatpur-bound bus from Dhaka and a Dhaka-bound bus from Shariatpur collided head-on and the Dhaka-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch.

Police said the accident took place when their motorbike fell into a roadside ditch after being hit by a rickshaw van.

Both of them were rushed to the Jajora General Hospital where Abdul Mannaf, 45, identified as Superintendent of Khulna Divisional Commercial Audit office succumbed to his injuries.

Condition of Mannaf's relative Shahid was said to be critical. A case was filed with the police.

Police said the accident occurred when the bus hit the sugarcane loaded cart and fell into the roadside ditch. The unfortunate victims died on the spot. Five critically injured have been admitted to the Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Rangpur district on Wednesday.

Of the injured, Wahab, 35, Mokaddar, 27, Ambia Begum, 40, Abdul Latif, 50, and Pervin, 25, were admitted to a local hospital.

The injured were admitted to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Marzina, 9, who was critically injured in a road accident earlier, died on December 26 at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

The girl was run over by a bus on December 22 at Sadhpura of

Netrakona border road needs to be developed

From Jahangir Alam

NETRAKONA, Jan 5: The 40-km border road is in bad shape.

The road starts from Charuapara in Durgapur upazila and ends at Ramnathpur in Kalmakanda upazila. This road runs through the border belt of the district and is kutchha. The repression of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in this area is very frequent. So this road is very important to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the country by resisting the repression of Indian BSF on the people.

But this road is quite unfit for plying of vehicles, even unfit for movement of pedestrians in the rainy season. The road is full of ditches. The road remains covered with knee-deep mud.

Smuggling has been increasing day by day along the road. BDR personnel can not move freely, especially in the rainy season.

The road is also important for the people of the border area. This is the only road for the people of the border area to go to Langura bazaar, Kalikapur

bazaar, Hat-Gobindapur bazaar, Baruakona bazaar, Panchgang, Moheshkhola bazaar and Durgapur upazila headquarters. These bazaars are very important for the people along this area.

Several lakhs of tons of paddy and other foodgrains are produced in the area every season.

This border road is the only means to carry these crops to elsewhere. There are a good number of ponds and water bodies on both sides of the road. Moreover, abundant fish is produced in these water bodies. This border road is the only road for transportation of fish.

Wholesalers cannot reach the farmers with their vehicles for miserable condition of the road.

Fishermen are forced to sale their produce to the middlemen. So they do not get profitable price of their produce.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to develop the border road for the greater interest of the country.

News snaps

Arsenic prevention project formed

KURIGRAM, Jan 5: As arsenic continues to contaminate groundwater, the government has taken up a project to protect the people of Rajapur upazila from arsenic-linked diseases, reports UNB.

Under the programme, arsenic prevention committees have been formed in each ward of the upazila in addition to supplying adequate kits. To detect arsenic, tubewells are also being tested in the upazila under the programme taken up under Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project of Local Government Engineering Department. Under the project, workshops and advocacy meetings are being arranged in the area to make the people aware about the adverse effects of arsenic. Officials said members of the arsenic prevention committees at ward level and field survey teams would be imparted training to tackle the arsenic menace. Meanwhile, nine such meetings and workshops were held in the upazila.

Loan for NGO members

SHARIATPUR, Jan 5: A Non-government Organisation (NGO) has taken up a scheme to disburse Tk 2 crore loans among its association members here under its poverty alleviation programme, reports UNB.

Apart from the credit program, the organization "RISDA Bangladesh" has a plan to set up more associations, enrolling members, purchasing shares and enhancing savings. In last fiscal year its local unit disbursed Tk 1.58 crore loans against its target of Tk 1.77 crore. The rate of disbursement was 89 per cent while the recovery rate was 69 per cent. During the period it achieved 74 per cent success in organizing associations and 83 per cent in enrolling members, the NGO officials said.

Bomb recovered

TANGAIL, Jan 5: A live bomb was recovered from Ashekpur areas in the town on Saturday, reports UNB.

A watch was fixed with the 250gm bomb, which is looking like a coconut. Police suspect that it might be a time bomb. Police recovered the bomb from Atupurupur areas following a telephone call by an unidentified man in the morning. Police super visited the spot.

Clothes distributed

MANIKGANJ, Jan 5: Bangladesh-Thai Aluminium Company chairman distributed some 10,000 clothes among the destitute people in four upazilas of the district on Saturday, reports UNB.

Besides, Tk one lakh was also distributed among the distressed people of Ghior, Doulapur, Saturia and Sadar upazilas. Jahid Saleq Swapani, a prominent businessman and chairman of the company distributed saree, lungi, winter clothes and money like previous other years.

UP chairman sued

SHERPUR, Jan 5: A case was filed against a Union Parishad (UP) chairman and a member in Sadar upazila for violating a teenage girl rights.

Police said in collusion with member Shahajahan Ali of Andharipara and one Hazrat Ali of Raghunathpur Chogharhia village the chairman Bokul Mia of Kamaria UP took the 18-year-old girl at his residence in Nakla promising her a good job in a local hospital.

The chairman confined the girl at his residence and violated her for two days and the girl was taken to Shahajahan member's house who also raped her for another two days. Fortunately, the victim managed to flee from their hands after four days and disclosed the matter to her family members. The victim's father filed a case against the criminals on December 15 under the Women and Children Repression Act. Investigation officer of the case, Masud, said that in primary investigation he found the veracity of the criminal act. He said the incident would be confirmed after getting the medical report. Sadar OC Mirza Mobaibul Huq told UNB that they were trying to arrest the criminals who went into hiding.

New bank branch opens+

RAJBARI, Jan 5: Another branch of Employment Bank was opened here on Thursday, aiming to provide soft loans to unemployed youths so that they could undertake income-generating projects, reports UNB.

Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury inaugurated the bank. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said the government has taken up various programmes for poverty alleviation and created self-employment opportunities. Later, the minister inaugurated the newly introduced allowance programme for the distressed freedom fighters and distributed allowances among 261 freedom fighters.

Loadshedding hampers mill production

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 5: Erratic power supply in Kuliarchar upazila including the municipality areas has been hampering production in mills, factories and irrigation on crop fields, reports UNB.

Locals said power goes off five to six times a day incurring huge losses to mills and factories. The situation worsens after sundown when the supply of electricity is essential. Students, patients and traders are the worst sufferers. Town and its suburbs plunge into darkness for hours together at night giving rise to theft, burglary and other anti-social activities. The TV viewers are being deprived of enjoying programme. Fluctuation of voltage cause extensive damage to electronic goods like refrigerator, washing machine, camera, TV and VCP set. During the holy month of Ramadan, the fasting people suffered most due to loadshedding and erratic power supply.

According to the officials, an extensive programme was taken up to bring some 3,010 hectares of land in Panchagarh under potato farming this season, fixing the production target at 3,15 lakh hectares of land.

They said a programme was taken up to bring some 3,010 hectares of land in Panchagarh under potato farming this season, fixing the production target at 3,15 lakh hectares of land.

These days, farmers of the district prefer potato farming as they found the soil and weather here favourable for its cultivation.

According to the officials, an extensive programme was taken up to bring some 1,62 hectares of land in the 16 districts under potato cultivation this season, fixing the production target at 17.80 mt. But the chance is little for the farmers to achieve the target.

Market sources said the Diamond variety of potato seed is now selling at Tk 16 per kg. But most of the farmers could not collect it due to limited supply.

Sources at the Agriculture

