

Forest disappearing

Unabated logging continues in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Jan 15: Forest under Moulvibazar Range of the Forest Department is disappearing due to illegal felling of trees. Sources with local Forest Department said a section of forest officials are also involved in the pilferage of forest trees. Environment in the region is also being threatened, as the forest is disappearing. Besides the government is deprived of revenue from the forest resources. Kalachhera, Lauachhera, Chautali, Satgaon, Patharia, Magurchhera, Barshijura and Bhangrachha are the main forest areas in the district. Of these, Magurchhera and a portion of Lauachhera were severely damaged after the gas field explosion in Magurchhera in 1997. Many saw mills and furniture shops have been set up at different places in the district. Main sources of timber of these furniture shops and saw mills are trees

of the forest logged illegally. According to an unofficial estimate, trees on about 20 lakh acres of forestlands were cut down during last three decades. During the period, total forestlands in the district have reduced to 35.50 lakh acres from 55.44 lakh acres. Official sources said the forest stretch 16.85 per cent of the total land in the district. But according to unofficial sources the figure is only ten per cent. According to an unofficial assessment, the ratio of afforestation and deforestation is 1:3 meaning one plant is being planted while three are being cut down. Experts said there must be at least 25 per cent forestlands in any area for healthy environment. Trees like Segun Gamari, and Mehogini are in great demand. After being processed at different sawmills in rural areas these are supplied to other parts of the country. Consignments of timber

are being made through railway. Railway stations of Rashidpur, Satchhar, Satgaon, Bhangachh, Tilgaon, Monu, and Longla are used as transit points. On the other hand, bamboo has also been pilfered from the reserve forest. Bamboo is popular item for building thatched houses. The item is openly sold at different places, including Srimangal. An official of the Forest Department at Kamalganj admitted that forest resources are being pilfered. But he said they cannot check the pilferage due to inadequate manpower. According to him it is difficult for one assistant conservator of forest (ACF) to look after 60 thousand acres of forest. He, however, denied the allegation that forest officials are involved in pilferage. He said some dishonest and politically influential people have been taking the advantage of man-



As a bone-chilling cold wave sweeps across the country, workers are busy making quilts in Atharabari Building Road area in Mymensingh as elsewhere. Traders say a standard size quilt costs Tk 500 to Tk 650. -- Star photo

News snaps

Old man killed in road mishap

JESSORE, Jan 15: A 70-year-old man was killed in a road mishap at Sutigata on Jessore-Keshabpur road on Saturday, reports UNB. The dead was identified as Abdul Mazid Tarafder of Sutigata Kamalpur village in Sadar upazila. Police said the accident took place when a pickup van ran over the old man. He died on the spot. Later police recovered the body and sent it to Jessore General Hospital for autopsy.

Road development programme

FENI, Jan 15: A total of Taka 1.67 crore has been sanctioned for the repair and reconstruction of 44 roads in rural areas of the district during the current financial year, reports BSS. The local Government Engineering Department has under taken these projects in 5 upazilas of the district. The nature of work are filling up of hole, macadam, carpeting and seal coating. The work will be completed within June. After completion of these works the communication system in the rural areas will be improved.

Flood victims get crop seed

CHUADANGA, Jan 15: The government has distributed 606 tons of wheat seed, 06 tons of Boro seeds 02 tons of mustard seed, 06 tons of pulse seeds, 08 tons of maize seeds and 900 kgs of vegetable seeds free of cost among 42,840 flood-affected small and marginal farmers of four upazilas under the Post-flood Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme, reports BSS. According to an official source, with the said quantities of seeds a total of 14,110 acres will be brought under wheat, Boro, mustard, pulse, maize and vegetable cultivation in all the four upazilas.

Massive Rabi farming schemes in Faridpur, Panchagarh

By Staff Correspondent

Massive Rabi crop cultivation programmes have been taken up by Agriculture Extension Department (AED) in Faridpur and Panchagarh districts. Our Faridpur correspondent reports: During the season,

Boro-paddy will be cultivated on 35,500 hectares of land in the district. Of this HYV will be cultivated on 33,600 hectares while the local variety of the paddy will be cultivated on 1900 hectares of land.

Under the cultivation programme, wheat will be cultivated on 25000 hectares, gram (dholka) on 15000 hectares, lentil (mushur) on 18,400 hectares, moog pulse on 1700 hectares, motor pulse on 1700 hectares, kheshari pulse on 1000 hectares, ground nuts on 2500 hectares, onion on 3000 hectares mustard on 9000 hectares, garlic on 2100 hectares, chilli on 800 hectares, potato on 200 hectares, sweet potato on 350 hectares, maize on 200 hectares, vegetables on 4000 hectares, turmeric on 50 hectares, and dhaniam on 20 hectares of land.

AFD source said that 225 field supervisors have been working in the district to make the programme a success.

UNB from Panchagarh says: Some 61,520 hectares of land will be brought under the farming. Of the total land, Boro paddy will be cultivated on 16,050 hectares, including HYV paddy on 16,000 hectares and local variety on 50 hectares, according to officials. Besides, wheat will be cultivated on 24,500 hectares, potato on 3,000 on hectares, mustard on 4,000 hectares, sweet potato on 850 hectares, maize on 600 hectares, nut on 200 hectares, vegetables on 4,300 hectares, pepper on 3,300 hectares, onion on 600 hectares, turmeric on 700 hectares, pulses on 3,220 hectares and garlic on 200 hectares. Meanwhile, BADC has distributed seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other agri-inputs among the growers for better output.

It has also set up demonstration plots, nurseries and IPM schools in addition to making arrangements to impart training to the farmers and its staff to boost production.



A woman takes care of plants at a nursery in Jhenidah district. Nursery business has gained popularity in recent days in the country. -- Star

Housewife allegedly tortured to death in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 15: A housewife was allegedly tortured to death by her husband and in-laws in Mujib Sarak area in the town Friday night.

The woman was identified as Sumi Roy, 20, a 2nd-year HSC student of Sirajganj Roshiduzzaha Government Women College.

However, the husband, Subir Roy and his relatives said Sumi committed suicide.

The body was found hanging from ceiling of her bedroom. But local people said in-laws of the dead are trying to hush up the murder as suicide. Neighbours said Subir, owner of a jewellery shop in the town, has extramarital affairs with other women.

The body was sent to Sirajganj General Hospital where on duty doctor told waiting newsmen that the body bore several cut marks.

Neighbours said Subir married Sumi for the second time after his first wife died two years back.

Disabled Salma firm to continue study

From Our Correspondent



Salma

MAGURA, Jan 15: Thirteen-year-old Salma is determined to continue her study to make herself self-reliant, despite her physical disability.

Salma, who attends school on a wheelchair, became disabled at the age of one and a half years. Student of class VII at Amolsar High School, Salma said she wants to be self-reliant after completing education. Sohrab Hossain of village Amolsar in Sreepur upazila in the district, father of the girl, said she is very much sincere in her study. As she comes of a poor family, her father was unable to manage a wheelchair till she was in class five. She used to attend school riding on father's shoulder. However, his father bought her a wheelchair a year back.

Constable stabbed in Munshiganj

MUNSHIGANJ, Jan 15: Unidentified miscreants stabbed a police constable at Sreepalli Police Quarters in the town early Sunday, reports UNB. Police said constable Ashraf Talukder, 25, was stabbed indiscriminately as he opened the door of his house hearing knock at the door.

He was admitted to Sadar Hospital.

Sources said Ashraf had protested the harassment of his female colleagues living in the police quarters by a section of local youths.

Seed scarcity poised to hit Boro farming

Acute seed scarcity is posing threat to Boro paddy cultivation in Sunamganj and Jessore districts, reports UNB. In Sunamganj, the scarcity is poised to hamper Boro cultivation on vast tracts of land in Tahirpur upazila in the current season. Farmers of the upazila apprehend that some 50,000 hectares of land out of the targeted 1.65 lakh hectares will remain fallow due to the seed scarcity.

Farmers said last year's devastating flood caused havoc to 90 per cent standing Boro crops in haor areas of the upazila. As a result, they failed to sow seeds. As the farmers could not harvest their paddy last year, most of them had been leading inhuman life. They were forced to sell their households and bullocks. Although now is the proper time to cultivate Boro crops, many farmers could not even prepare their seedbeds due to the seed scarcity.

Agriculture Extension Depart-

ment sources said they have set a target to bring some 1.65 lakh hectares of land under Boro farming.

In Jessore, it is reported that a large number of growers could not cultivate Boro paddy this season. The growers alleged that BADC supplied only 460 mt of seeds in Jessore against the requirement of 2,000 mt.

The recent severe flood caused a colossal loss to the farmers. Subsequent incessant rain and storm damaged Aman paddy and vegetables in Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jessore, Jhenidah, Narail and Satkhira districts. Meanwhile, BADC completed its seed supply on December 6 last year. In this situation, production target won't be achieved, apprehended the farmers. Agriculture officials said the seed scarcity has been prevailing across the country this season as the long lasted flood damaged seeds

Kutchra latrines posing threat to public health

From A Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Jan 15: Kutchra latrines, which are in use in large scale in this district town, pose serious health hazard to the residents. The latrines, that are not sanitary, are called kutchra latrines.

The house owners in the densely populated areas of the town, in most cases, have constructed kutchra latrines beside their dwelling houses creating problems to the maintenance of health and sanitation system in the town.

Besides, there are innumerable kutchra latrines by the side of the public thoroughfares in different areas of the town and that makes problems to the pedestrians.

These open latrines by the side of the roads create obnoxious situation, especially during the rainy season polluting the atmosphere of the surrounding areas.

It is learnt that Kurigram Public Health Engineering Department and Kurigram Municipalities took up a plan to distribute low-cost sanitary latrines to the town dwellers a few years back. But the plans are yet to be fully implemented due to lack of proper initiatives.

Town dwellers have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate as soon as possible to ensure health care and sanitation facilities for the residents of the town.

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