

Rajshahi auto vehicle test centre in disarray

Equipment lying inoperative

ABDUL WADOOD, Rajshahi

The Automatic Vehicle Test Centre, established about one and a half years back in Rajshahi, has been lying inoperative mainly due to lack of skilled manpower and mechanical faults.

The equipment in the centre was supplied and installed by Van Leenwen Test System (VLTS), a renowned Dutch company. Sources with the centre said when the VLTS experts left the country the machines were not in operation. Bangladeshi experts tried to operate the machines, but could not do it properly.

Assistant Director of the centre, SS Biswas said the machines, when operated by Bangladeshi experts, were showing wrong results.

"The machines are showing different results of

the same vehicle at different attempts," he said. The VLTS experts should be called in and they should remain here for several weeks to make the machines operative and impart training to local staff, he added.

Sources said the VLTS authorities had repeatedly been asked for coming and seeing the matter, but all had gone in vain.

The centre was set up to help ease the pressure of Road Transport Authority (RTA) of testing the fitness of a large number of motor vehicles.

According to official sources, more than 4,000 commercial motor vehicles are in operation under the jurisdiction of the centre, besides several thousands of motor cycles, private cars and government vehicles.

Meanwhile, the centre has also been facing acute shortage of manpower. The centre has an electric generator and a water pump, but not a

single man was employed for operating these. The only vehicle meant for staff of the centre is lying inoperative for want of a driver.

The post of electrician is also lying vacant. There are no guards or security people in the centre.

Only one assistant director and one inspector are working in the office for three districts Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Natore.

The centre was established at Naodapara Bypass Road intersection in the city in June 1999 on about three acres of land. Four other centres—two in Dhaka, and one each in Chittagong and Khulna, were also set up during the same period with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

IPM Field Day at Gazipur

A season-long Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Training of Trainers course in vegetables and rice has been started from November 18 last year at ATI, farm on Integrated Farm Management (IFM) was established with new technologies at the TOT campus. The trainees of TOT course briefed their experience and



M Enamul Hoque, Director General of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Md Abdul Bari, Project Director of DAE-Danida Strengthening Plant Protection Services (SPPS) Project along with other officials attended the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) ToT (Training of Trainers) Field Day at ATI, Gazipur on Saturday.

Gazipur, says a press release.

A field day was organised on January 27, 2001. A total of 170 female and 30 male farmers of 8 different Farmers Field School of Gazipur Sadar Upazila participated in the Field Day. An IPM village was established with various technologies on IPM and displayed in a befitting manner through eight different booths.

The IPM technologies were: Seed selection, sapling production technologies, soil fertility management, different field trials, pest management, pest and defenders and their augmentation and conservation, bad effect of pesticides, organic farming, post-harvest and seed storage techniques.

The component of IPM was also discussed in one booth. An ideal

ideas to the participating farmers which they learnt from this training.

M Enamul Hoque, Director General of DAE was present as chief guest in this occasion. He also visited different IPM booths, different field trials of vegetables. A Matin Talukder, Director, Training Wing, DAE was present as special guest.

Kazi Shafiq Uddin, Local Training Consultant, SPPS Project, Sachindra Chandra Debnath, Executive Director, CERDI, Dr Sayeed Ahmed, Principal, ATI, Gazipur, Md Matiur Rahman, DD (IPM) were also present in this field day programme. Md Abdul Bari, Project Director, DAE-DANIDA SPPS Project presided over the discussion session of the Field Day.

Prices of vegetables rise

Manikganj farmers fail to achieve cultivation target

UNB, Manikganj

Price of vegetables have shot up in all the markets of seven upazilas due to less production and consequent shortage of supply.

Locals said local traders are buying vegetables from different parts of the country and even from India at exorbitant prices. "Now fresh vegetables are not available at the local markets," a customer told this correspondent.

The farmers said they could not achieve the vegetable cultivation target this season due to various

reasons, including non-availability of hybrid seeds, shortage of pesticides and lack of proper care by bloc supervisors.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said vegetables on over 7,500 hectares of land were cultivated this season to meet the local demand. The production was seriously hampered, as the farmers have no idea about modern cultivation system, said an official.

But the farmers alleged that cultivation of various crops, including vegetables, is being hampered,

as the bloc supervisors do not perform their duties properly and acquaint them with the modern methods of cultivation.

However, officials dismissed allegation saying that some 182 bloc-supervisors have been giving advice to the farmers in 1,688 villages in seven upazilas here.

"We couldn't yet launch vegetable cultivation programme on commercial basis in full swing due to lack of necessary loans," the farmers said adding that there are a few farms in the district to grow vegetables on commercial basis.

Indian camel meat on sale in 2 dists

UNB, Nilphamari

The meat of Indian camel is being sold in the local markets of all the six upazilas here at an exorbitant price.

Market sources said a section of butchers with the help of an organised gang of smugglers are cheating the local buyers by selling the meat of sick camel between Tk 200 and Tk 250 per kilogram.

Competent sources said the smugglers first bring the camels to the enclaves from India at the rate between Tk. 30,000 and Tk. 35,000 per camel. Then they bring them into the country in a subtle way. They slaughter these in most unhygienic manner and sell the meat to the buyers before the very nose of health and sanitation officials.

The ignorant rural people after eating the meat of sick camel have been suffering from various intestinal diseases.

When contacted the Health Inspector of Sadar upazila said the selling of meat of sick camel without any test is a punishable offence.

Another report adds from Dinajpur that the smugglers are bringing sick Indian camels with cows and buffaloes to the local markets through different border areas.

The meat of camel is available in the local market and the rural people are now getting camel meat easily.

Besides, the smugglers send the truck loaded Indian camels to different areas of the country managing the law enforcers.

But the meat is being sold at comparatively lower prices in the local markets.

Rock museum in Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

Setting a rare example, Panchagarh Government Women's College has set up a 'Rock Museum' on its campus with a rich collection of rocks.

Established virtually in 1997, the Rock Museum was formally opened in October 2000.

Principal of the college Nazmul Haq set up the exceptional museum inspired by the availability of various precious rocks and stones in the district.

He has collected various old stones from different parts of the district for the museum.

Deputy Commissioner of the district and his office colleagues also deserve credit as they extended all possible help for setting up the museum.

Principal Nazmul Haq said rock collection of the museum now stands at 200 pieces and some of them have the historic symbols of anthropology and geology.

"There are some stones which have ancient writings and it may help lead to interesting discovery. Two important rocks are there which have been transformed from wood and mud.

Though it's a museum of rocks, there are over 100 other items too in it, he said.

Ten injured in Satkhira clash

UNB, Satkhira

A clash between van and rickshawpullers in Satkhira town Sunday left at least 10 people injured. Four of the injured Zohar Ali, 50, of Jugarajpur village, Babar Ali, 26, of Magura village, Munirul Islam, 20, of Kashempur village and Shamsur Rahman, 25, of Bhabanipur village were admitted to sadar hospital.

Witnesses said the clash between the two groups took place over plying van in the town. Five rickshaws and 10 vans were damaged during the clash. Separate cases were filed.

Shortage of English teachers in edn instts

UNB, Kushtia

Teaching of English is being hampered in secondary schools, colleges and madrasahs due to acute shortage of teachers.

Over 75 per cent non-government high schools, colleges and 85 per cent senior madrasahs do not have adequate number of English teachers.

According to existing rules each senior madrasah requires at least one lecturer in English, two in intermediate college and three or more in a degree level college.

But 85 per cent senior madrasahs and over 75 per cent non-government colleges of the district do not abide by the rules owing to non-availability of qualified teachers.

Besides, the educational institutions, which are not financially sound, cannot afford teachers with required qualification.

In most cases, the madrasah authorities have to appoint part time lecturer in English depriving the

students of full time teaching facility. There are many colleges and madrasahs, which do not receive a single application even after advertisement in the national dailies.

In some cases applicants do not face the interview board even after submitting applications and receiving interview cards for the post of Lecturer in English.

Students are being forced to depend on private English coaching which is too expensive and cannot be afforded by the poor guardians.

Hemp recovered

UNB, Khagrachhari

Army personnel recovered over one metric ton of hemp during their three-day drive in Mahaichhari upazila last week.

The army jawans of Matiranga, Guimara and Dighinala zones launched the operation at Kalapahar of Guimara area and recovered 1056 kg of drug.



Samata, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), recently distributed 80,000 kilograms of pulse, 8,000 kilograms of salt, 8,000 kilograms of soybean oil and 40,000 packets of ORS among 8,000 flood affected people of Chuadanga and Meherpur districts.

Samata stands by flood, cold victims

Samata, a non-governmental development organisation with the financial assistance from DFID Bangladesh has been implementing a post-flood rehabilitation programme in Chuadanga and Meherpur districts, says a press release.

Samata has distributed 15,000 pieces of blankets among the cold wave affected people of that particular area. Apart from that, Samata distributed fertilisers for crop cultivation among 12,000 families and paddy seeds to 4,000 families under the rehabilitation programme. Besides.

Samata has been implementing earth-work activities with 6,500 families to reconstruct their houses and elevate common land to use as

a flood shelter for further floods. Because of the recent intense cold and rough weather of these two districts, Samata has taken initiative to distribute 2,265 more pieces of blankets in Chuadanga and Meherpur district.

On Wednesday, Diruba Haider, Senior Programme Officer of DFID Bangladesh along with 14 local NGO leaders visited the flood-affected areas of Chuadanga and Meherpur districts to observe rehabilitation activities and accelerate the rehabilitation programmes.

Samata already distributed 80,000 kg rice, 8,000 kg pulses, 8,000 kg salt, 8,000 kg soybean oil and 40,000 packets ORS among 8,000 flood affected people of the above mentioned districts.

NEWS SNAPS

Schoolteacher strangled

UNB, BAGERHAT

A gang of miscreants strangled a schoolteacher to death at Khegraghat village in Sadar upazila under Bagerhat district on Monday night. Police said the miscreants entered into the house of Monoranjan Mondal, 50, a teacher of a local school at dead of night and murdered him while he was sleeping in his room.

Police suspect that the incident occurred as a sequel to previous enmity. Police sent the body to hospital morgue for autopsy on Tuesday morning. A case was filed.

5,452 crimes registered in 2 years

UNB, COMILLA

Some 5,452 crimes including 170 murders were registered in Comilla district in 1999 and 2000. Police recovered a huge number of arms and ammunition and arrested some 196 people under Arms Act during the period.

Police also seized 227 firearms including foreign revolvers, country made guns, cut rifles, LG and pipe guns. Police recorded a total of 2,627 criminal cases in 2,000 and 2,825 cases in 1999. The crimes include, murder, snatching, robbery, piracy, clash and women repression. Besides, police seized smuggled contraband goods worth over Tk 10.13 crore in 2000, which is over Tk 4.11 crore higher than that of the previous year.

Female UP member sustains acid injury

UNB, KURIGRAM

A female member of Gunaigas Union Parishad (UP) in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram district sustained serious acid burn injuries on Sunday. The victim Marjina Begum, 30, who is also an employee of local Nandu Nefra Ideal Girls' School said the clerk of the school Amjad hurled acid on her as she refused his illicit proposal.

A member of the reserved seat No 2 of the union parishad, Morjina, earlier filed a written complaint against Amjad with the school managing committee on November 21 in this regard. At this Amjad became furious and on the fateful day when Morjina, wife of Saiful Islam of village Nagarakura in same upazila, was alone in the school he threw acid on her. The victim was first rushed to the local health complex and then shifted to sadar hospital following deterioration of her condition. After the incident Amjad went into hiding. A case was filed.

Dispute over gambling: 100 hurt

UNB, KISHOREGANJ

A dispute over gambling ended in a fierce clash leaving 100 people wounded and 60 houses ransacked in Katiadi upazila in Kishoreganj recently. According to a delayed report, over 200 people equipped with sharp weapons from Raikhola village attacked the houses of fishermen in neighboring Kultiapur village after the gambling dispute.

They also set fire to a number of houses and looted valuables. Ten people, including a six-year-old boy, were admitted to the upazila health complex with serious injuries. A case was filed with local police station and police arrested one Matu Mia of Raikhola village in this connection.

Cattle disease breaks out

UNB, RANGAMATI

Viral disease that broke out in the district claimed 500 cattle in last one month. Most of these cattle are calves, local farmers said adding that the animals died of the disease due to lack of proper treatment.

Veterinary surgeons in the upazila and district hospitals only prescribe drugs, but do not provide medicines, said the farmers. However, most of the farmers are not in a position to buy medicines as per prescription. They also alleged that the field workers of Live Stock Department do not work properly and allegedly sell the drugs in the black markets. The officials under the Animal Husbandry Department are yet to visit the affected areas, the farmers alleged.

200 bottles of phensidyl seized

UNB, Comilla

Police have seized 210 bottles of Indian phensidyl in a raid at Bagur bus stand in Chandina upazila under Comilla district on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway. Acting on a tip, police raided a taxicab at the stand and recovered the contraband on January 25. They also arrested the driver Abu Zafar and passengers Saiful Islam and Zayed of the cab in this connection.

Another report from Kishoreganj says that a taskforce of the Narcotics Control Department raided a shop at Rashidabad Jamtala crossing in Sadar on January 17 and arrested the shop owner Ranajit Sarkar with 250 grams of hemp. In another raid at a house at Katiarchar village in the same upazila the team recovered 100 grams of hemp on the same day. Sensing the arrival of the team house owner fled the scene. Separate cases were filed with the police.