

New trap of book traders

Buy note with textbooks or pay extra money

UNB, Satkhira

When the guardians are worried to get textbooks for their wards even after passing more than two months of the current academic year, book traders in Satkhira laid a new trap: take notebooks with textbooks or pay extra money for the single.

"What a trouble now we are confronting! It's just a crime," said annoyed Ruhul Amin, a guardian of this southern district.

He found the malpractice and experienced the bitterness when went to buy textbooks for his daughters from a bookshop in the local market recently.

It was learnt that generally local booksellers are taking Tk 5-7 more for a single textbook.

Arifa Begum, a middle aged housewife in the town,

said she locked into a hot exchange with a bookseller when the seller demanded Tk 15 more for a book than its actual price.

Taking the opportunity of textbook crisis, sources said, most of unscrupulous traders attached condition to buy notebooks with the textbooks.

As booksellers are united in running their windfall business, nobody dares to protest the malpractice.

"This malpractice aggravated the miseries of the guardians, mainly poor section of people," observed Ruhul Amin.

"We protested, but did not get benefit as all the book sellers in this southern district are united," said Amin.

Local people urged the authorities concerned to take stern action against the unscrupulous booksellers for ensuring selling of books at fixed price.

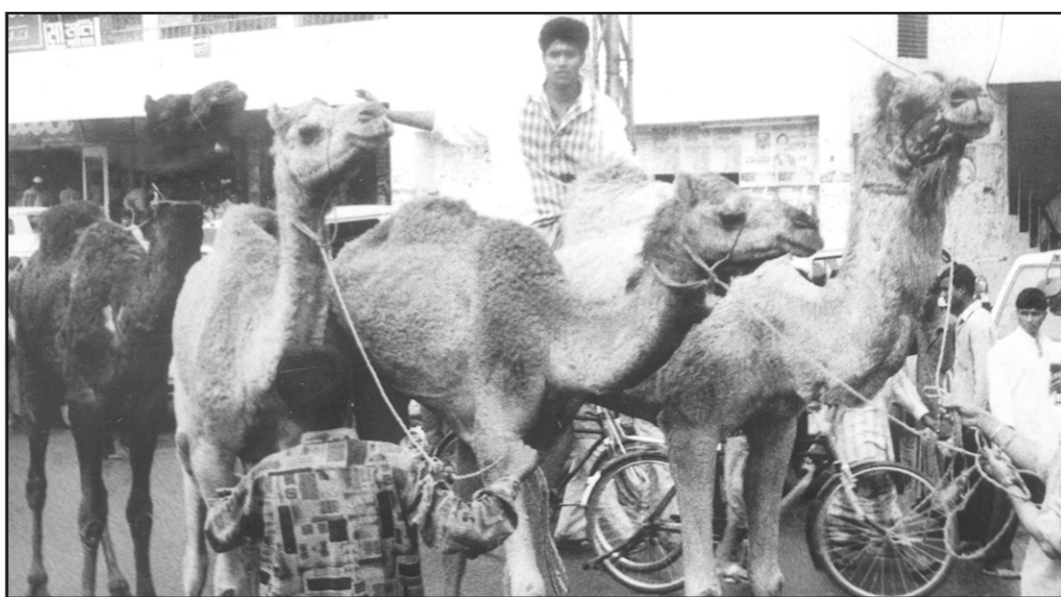


PHOTO: STAR

As Eid ul-Azha is knocking at the door, various types of sacrificial animals including camels have been brought to the cattle markets in Sylhet town for sale.

BAU launches integrated farm project

UNB, Mymensingh

In its another innovative venture, Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) has launched an integrated farm project aiming to ensure optimum use of the country's limited farmlands.

Under the project, "Integrated Farm Creation Research", BAU agronomists have invented new techniques of farming by which a farmer can simultaneously grow different crops on the same land and reap better output.

Meanwhile, farmers at Kamalbhog, a squalid village in Ina upazila of Kishoreganj district, have started reaping benefits of the project funded by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council.

Once the farmers of the village used to remain unemployed for 7-8 months a year, as they could not go for more than one crop a year. Now the situation has changed.

The BAU project has returned smile on the faces of these poor villagers. They are no longer jobless. They now grow various BINA-invented vegetables like mustard, pulse, bean, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, brinjal, sunflower, chili, potato and onion on the land around their homesteads.

Buribari Union Parishad chairman Rafiqul Islam told an agronomist of the university that they had to bring vegetables from their neighbouring districts until the successful implementation of the project. "Now we can meet our local demand by our own production."

The farmers appreciate the fieldworkers of the project for their extensive motivation work, who

encourage them to use 'Unnata Chula' (improved oven), create homestead gardens, prepare compost manure and preserve seeds scientifically.

Nurul Haq, a farmer of the village, said he has been planting 20 types of vegetable around his homestead for the last two years and earning over Tk 2 lakh a year.

He has also dug a mini pond near his cowshed, where he cultivates high breed magur. He earns over Tk 50,000 a year from this pond alone.

The village wore a festive look when a team of the Agricultural University, led by its Vice Chancellor Dr Monwarul Islam, paid a visit to it on January 15 to see for himself the activities of the farmers under the project.

Scientific officers of different research projects of the university and a group of journalists accompanied the VC.

Death sentence executed in Jessore jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Death sentence of Abdul Motleb Howladar, 43, of Mirzapur in Patuakhali was executed by hanging in Jessore Central Jail Wednesday night.

He was sentenced to death for killing his wife Niralga Begum.

According to prosecution story, the wife was beaten to death on December 28, 1995.

Jailer, police super, civil surgeon two magistrates were present during the execution.

The body was handed over to the family members.

AL leaders boycott state minister's meet in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A meeting, where State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir was present, held on Wednesday at Chowgachha upazila was boycotted by local upazila Awami League leaders.

Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir arrived at Marua Hat under Jagadishpur union to formally open the construction work of a road.

When contacted, a senior upazila leader said they neither they were invited nor they got any information about the meeting.

But the party insiders said State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Professor Rafiqul Islam, who is also MP from the constituency, asked the local leaders not to attend the meeting as he was not consulted while making the tour programme.

When contacted, local UNO Serajul Huq Khan said he issued letters to all the local leaders and the UP chairmen about the tour programme, requesting them to attend the meeting.

This act of local party leaders has irked the grass-roots level party activists, some party leaders said.

Woman commits suicide in N'ganj

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A housewife committed suicide on Thursday in Kurial area under Ruppaganj upazila in Narayanganj on Thursday.

The housewife was identified as Fatema Begum, 22. Details could not be known.

Extortionists active in two Jhalakati unions

UNB, Jhalakati

Several groups are allegedly extorting money from well to do people in Binyokathi and Ramchandrapur unions of Jhalakati district, issuing letters asking them to pay at night or face dire consequences.

"We've become hostage to the terrorists when police are playing the role of silent spectators," a member of Union Parishad told lamenting the law and order situation.

The area was once a soft ground of outlawed Sarbahara parties. The present government has successfully suppressed them, but a new generation of extortionists has emerged recently.

Informed sources said that at Ramchandrapur village, terrorists extorted Tk 5,000 from Sirajuddin Hawlader, Tk 10,000 from Abdul Kader Sikder, Tk 7,000 from Hafizuddin, Tk 5,000 from Hanif Raj and Tk 3,000 from Basudev.

Similarly, at Ralighona village, Abdul Kader was forced to pay Tk 5,000 and Ranjit Shil Tk 2,000. Gafur and Mansur in Hossainpur village and Atul Master in Satrakathi village were also the victims of extortionists.

Villagers in Ramchandrapur union told that 'Raitta (night) Bahini (force) of 40' is active in the area. Members of the bahini deliver letters to moneyed men in the villages, raid their houses at night and extort money

at gunpoint.

In Binyokathi union, two groups known as Bahini 81 and Bahini 82 are active in extorting money in a similar way.

These groups are also extorting money from contractors engaged in development work in the area. The work is stopped in case the contractors refuse to pay.

Syed Jahangir Hossain, chairman of Ramchandrapur union parishad, admitted extortion of money by terrorists. He said the terrorists used to come to his area from Babuganj, Banaripara, Ujirpur and Atghar Kuriana. After carrying out their operation at night, the terrorists flee to their hideouts in other upazilas.

District Awami League president advocate Shajahan Ashraf, who hails from Binyokathi, said he heard about the activities of 81 and 82 Bahinis in his area. They often demand money from contractors.

He further said he had discussed the matter with village leaders. Activists of Sarbahara Party are now inactive. Some youths have emerged recently to occupy their place, added the ruling party leader.

Some other sources said sons of certain political leaders are also in the group of extortionists.

Police said they were aware of allegations of extortion and investigating into such complaints.

President, registrar of private university held in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Founder president and registrar of a private university were arrested on Thursday in Rajshahi city on charges of misappropriation of university fund.

Police arrested Professor Sirajul Islam and his son Towfique Ahsan Titu, president and registrar respectively of Memorial

International University (MIU), from the university compound in Kazihata area in the city.

Police said the university authorities collected about Taka one crore from 120 students and admitted them into the university. But recently the authorities declared the university closed for an indefinite period and went into hiding.

Sufi Abdur Rahim, a guardian, filed a case with Rajpara police station. Police after investigation submitted a charge sheet against the president and the registrar. Examining the documents of the case Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court on February 18 asked the OC of Rajpara police station to arrest them and attach their property.

The arrested were sent to court.

12,219 get BKB loan amounting to Tk 40.61cr in 4 years

UNB, Bandarban

Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), which has been playing an important role in the socio-economic development of the rural people alongside its banking service, has provided loan amounting to Tk 40.61 crore to 12,219 people in last four years.

Nine branches of BKB disbursed the amount among the people of seven upazilas in Bandarban district aiming to alleviate poverty.

The loan was provided for the purposes of beef fattening, poultry farming, pisciculture, livestock farming and other purposes.

Besides, BKB sources said, rural marginal farmers were given loan on soft-term.

Official sources said, of the total amount, Tk 6.56 crore was dis-

bursed for crop farming and other sectors till January of the current fiscal.

The bank has a plan to distribute Tk three crore during the remaining period of the financial year.

BKB Regional Manager Mohammad Hossain Ali told that to improve the living standard of landless, poor and distressed masses, BKB has introduced soft-loan programme by forming small professional groups (samity).

Under the programme, Tk 32.5 lakh has been disbursed among 52 samities. Gradually this programme will be expanded among different professional groups.

Officials said, in past few years they have witnessed 100 per cent loan recovery.

As the interest rate is very low under the poverty alleviation

scheme, people are keen to take loan in massive scale.

In a bid to reach benefits to the doorsteps of poor people, BKB has opened six more booths at Rajbila of Sadar, Fhasiakhal and Aziznagar in Lama, Ghumdhum in Naikhangchhari, Noapatang of Roangchhari and Balipata in Thanchi upazilas.

Following the directives of Bangladesh Bank, Rajbila area has been alienated from the jurisdiction of Janata Bank and taken under the jurisdiction the BKB. Tk 30.00 lakh was disbursed among 300 people in last two years.

Officials said they are planning to open four more branches in this hill district, as BKB's programme is gradually attaining popularity and contributing in economic development.

NEWS SNAPS

Worst loadshedding in 21 dists

UNB, Khulna

Domestic electricity consumers of the western power zone comprising 21 districts are experiencing load-shedding for more than six hours every day. The situation is likely to worsen in the coming months of summer, hinted the power officials to the worries of city dwellers.

Water supply in Khulna city and other district towns under the zone has dropped in absence of power causing scarcity of safe water. PDB officials said they are now supplying 300mwt as against the demand for 400mwt during the peak hour. They said on Wednesday, 7 power units of PDB generated 155mwt, private run units generated 110mwt and a maximum of 60 mwt was available from the national grid as on Wednesday. Keeping a provision of 25 per cent system loss, 300mwt are available to domestic and industrial consumers in the entire zone.

Lawyer loses bar membership

UNB, Barguna

A lawyer in Barguna has lost his bar membership after his LLB certificate was found fake. Sources at District Bar Association said Mujibul Haq Kichlu, the 98th member of the district bar, had been practicing law with a fake LLB certificate for long seven years.

Upon a complaint by Abdur Rahim, the Bar Association investigated into the matter and found his LLB certificate fake. It has filed a case against him.

Arms smuggling up

UNB, Sunamganj

Arms smuggling through all border points of Sunamganj district has marked an alarming upswing due to inaction of the border guards.

According to a competent source, various sophisticated arms including foreign-made 3.3 rifles, revolvers, pistols and pipe guns are being smuggled into the country through the border points by an organised gang of gunrunners. They said the syndicate has been active in frontier areas, including Tahirpur, Biswambharpur and Chhatak, since 1995.

Alleged terrorist arrested

UNB, Kushtia

Police in a special drive in Kushtia town arrested Asgar Ali alias Kalu, the gang leader of 'Kalu Bahini'. Being informed by locals, police laid siege the house of Fati at Millpara in the town on Feb 20 and arrested Kalu.

Acting on his confessional statement, they later took him to his village Kursa in Mirpur upazila and arrested his accomplice Mariam, wife of Mohiuddin Master and recovered two double-barrel guns and 40 bullets. Police said Kalu, son of Mulluk Chand of Kursa village, was wanted in a number of murder, abduction, robbery and other criminal cases.

Supply of fertiliser from mills demanded

UNB, Pabna

Local dealers in Pabna have decided to stop receiving fertiliser from buffer godowns from the current month and demanded direct supply from the mills. The decision was taken by district unit of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) in an emergency general meeting on Thursday. Dealers alleged that the fertilisers supplied from the government buffer-godowns are costly and below standard which cause financial loss to them. They urged the authorities to supply fertiliser from buffer godowns only at the time of emergency.

Arms deposited

UNB, Khulna

Seven arms recovered from the possession of dacoits in the Sundarbans on February 24 were deposited to Bagerhat police on Thursday.

Coast Guard handed over the arms to police at a function. Presided over by Coast Guard Zonal Commander MA Rouf, the function was attended, among others, by local SP Abdus Salam and Divisional Forest Officer Tapan Kumar day. Coast Guard seized these arms one gun and six rifles in an operation at Charputia under Chandpai forest range and arrested five pirates.

Drug addicts up



PHOTO: STAR

Drug addicts have increased alarmingly in Sirajganj town in recent days. Generally young people are being spoiled due to this bad practice. This is because of frustration out of continued joblessness, failure in examination, poverty, lack of healthy recreational facilities including other reasons. Sociologists and town fathers should come forward to combat this menace before it is too late, otherwise the younger generation will be spoiled forever. Even many unwanted situations arise in public places due to presence of drug addicts as seen in this picture (left) where an addict is enjoying hemp inside a bus in the guise of smoking and (right) two other youngsters taking drug at a silent corner of the district town.