

Flow of water below Hardinge Bridge unusually low

UNB, Kushlia

Pump House of the Ganges-Kobadak Project started operation on March 19 making some water available to farmers for irrigation.

As flow of water below the Hardinge Bridge is unusually low, farmers apprehend that the pump house is supplying groundwater instead of river water.

"We have heard that water is not coming from the river. Water is drawn from underground to feed the canal," said Ebadat Mollah standing beside his field in village Chourhas on Wednesday.

Corroborating him, Abed Ali of the same village told "We are doubtful about the availability of water during the peak time of requirement in Bengali months of Baishakh-Jaisthya when Aus flowers."

None of GK Project Director Hasan Zobayer and Executive Engineer Ali Akbar was available in their office

on March 20 to know the actual position.

Some low-ranking officials said, "Sahebs" do not attend office regularly. Nobody can say when they will come and what they will do when water do not come to the channel from the river.

Residents in the area said the flow of the Ganges and water level at Hardinge Bridge are far less than those of last year.

Ganges water sharing treaty between Bangladesh and India stipulated that a minimum 35,000 cusecs of water on an average would be available at Hardinge Bridge during March-May dry season.

"It is not even half of the quantum envisaged in the agreement," said an official requesting anonymity.

Officials of the Water Development Board said they were forbidden to disclose the quantum of water flowing in the Ganges below the Hardinge Bridge.

A charity programme ends in plundering of money!

UNB, Satkhira

What began as a charity programme for the flood victims of Satkhira district has ended in plundering of money by the organiser depriving the deserving people.

Chandpur RN Pragoti Sangha organised a cultural function on March 1 in its premises in Kolaroa frontier area with Indian artists participating in it and reportedly raised Tk 15 lakh for the flood victims.

But the organisers allegedly pocketed the money instead of distributing it among the flood-hit people.

There have been allegations that the organisers had brought over 30 Indian artists through illegal border points and organised the function without permission from Cultural Ministry.

Over 5,000 Indian viewers illegally had crossed the border to watch the programme and stayed overnight.

Although they violated the country's existing laws in arranging the programme, local administration had a lenient attitude towards the organisers. They were learnt to have sold 20,000 entry passes at Tk 150/Tk 100/Tk 40.

"Anyway, we would not have worried much had the organisers given the money to the flood victims, but they didn't," said a villager declining to be identified.

When contacted one of the organisers, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they had to give

Tk 5 lakh to some officials of local administration while Tk 5 lakh went on arranging the function, including the honorariums of the artists. "The rest of the money was distributed among the organisers," he said.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Police Super Aminul Islam told that they were informed only about the cultural function, not about the Indian artists.

BDR Commanding Officer of Satkhira 12 Battalion Lt Colonel Abidur Rahman said that his force was on alert in the border area, but they could not prevent the Indian artists from entering the country "as the function was held with the permission of officials concerned."

But he brushed aside the allegation that Indian viewers joined the programme.

Robbery in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A robbery was committed at Tootpara in Khulna city on Monday night.

A gang of masked robbers stormed the house of Mohammad Abdus Sattar, a teacher of Government Coronation Girls' High School, and confined the inmates of the house in a room at gunpoint before they made away with Tk 5,000 in cash, gold ornaments, electronic goods and other valuables.

Man chopped to death in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A man was chopped to death by unidentified hoodlums at Shalle under Sadar upazila in Satkhira district Monday night.

The victim was identified as Abdul Majed, 40, of village Matiadanga under Sadar upazila.

The body was sent to hospital for autopsy. A case was lodged.

In the first week of January, two members of an outlawed party were murdered in the same area.

25 hurt as Magura villagers clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 25 people including five policemen were injured when villagers of Nakol and Rainagar villages under Sreepur upazila of Magura district clashed on Monday night.

The cops were injured when they were hit by brickbats while trying to bring the situation under control.

Local people said the clash followed an altercation between the rival villagers in arbitration at Nakol union parishad office over eve teasing.

Both the villagers used sharp weapons, iron rods and sticks.

Police arrested twenty people of Rainagar and Nakol villages in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

Monshiganj farmers are in a quandary due to good harvest of potato this season. This is because of its poor price, which is far below the production cost.

Farmers expect bumper potato in Chuadanga, Faridpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Potato farmers in Chuadanga and Faridpur districts are expecting bumper production as they are harvesting the crop. Encouraged by the good price of the crop for the last couple of years, the growers are showing more interest for potato cultivation in the districts.

Our Chuadanga correspondent reports: Potato farmers are expecting bumper production in the current season.

Potato has grown abundantly in Damurhuda and Alamdanga upazilas of the district. Farmers said in both the upazilas the target of the production of the crop per hectare has exceeded by more than 15 metric tonnes.

Meanwhile, the farmers have started selling potato from the field. The price of potato has abnormally come down due to abundant supply in the local markets.

Potato is now being sold at Taka 3.50 to Taka 4.00 per kg, much

below the production cost, the growers said.

Agriculture officials have attributed the bumper production to timely supply of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other inputs, besides favourable weather. They said Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) had ensured smooth supply of seeds in the district.

However, the growers are not in a position to store the crop in cold storage for selling in future at higher prices. They are now in need of money to repay their loans and other expenses. So the poor farmers are compelled to sell the crop at almost through-way prices.

Since there is no cold storage in Chuadanga district the farmers, who grow perishable crops, are being deprived of getting fair prices of the crops.

According to Chuadanga district Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), about 2000 hectares of land were brought under potato cultiva-

tion in Sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar upazilas of the district in the current season.

Our Faridpur correspondent adds: Smiling farmers said they have grown 180 to 200 maunds of potato on one acre of land this season.

The crop now sells at Tk 160 per maund.

According to local DAE, potato was cultivated on 617 hectares of land in nine upazilas of the district, exceeding the target, which was fixed at 200 hectares.

Potato cultivation is gaining popularity among the cultivators in view of growing demand of the crop and its higher yields. Potato was cultivated on 50 hectares of land in the district ten years ago. Last year potato was cultivated on 200 hectares of land.

When contacted, some potato growers in Char Madhabadia area under Sadar upazila told this correspondent that potato is more profitable than any other winter crop.

Delayed AC meeting RU academic, research activities face setback

RU CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Academic and research activities of Rajshahi University (RU) have been hampered due to the delay in holding the Academic Council (AC) meeting.

The last meeting of AC, which approves all academic and research relating programmes of the university, was held some eight months ago. Although the AC meeting usually takes place after every four to five months, no AC meeting has taken place since July 29 last year.

The university administration sources say a large number of academic and research-related agenda await the AC meeting for approval.

One of the important issues to be placed in the next meeting, date of which is yet to be announced, is the final decision regarding the examination system for the Commerce Faculty students.

Besides, issues relating to the courses, curriculum and other academic activities of the Institute of Environmental Sciences, Institute of Education and Research, Agriculture Faculty, and other departments will be decided in the ensuing meeting, the sources added.

Moreover, research works have been facing serious setback due to the same cause. Researchers, who are doing jobs with various organisations, are not getting education leave extension without their names get registered with the AC.

Some researchers, submitting their M Phil and Ph D theses, have been waiting eagerly for the AC meeting, which will formally confer the degrees.

13 killed in different incidents in 7 dists

UNB, Dhaka

Thirteen people were killed in different incidents in seven districts of the country in 11 days since March 8.

Of them, two died in Joypurhat, three in Pirojpur, five in Kishoreganj and one each in Chuadanga, Magura, Barisal and Chandpur.

In Joypurhat, Ayub Hossain, 14, a class VIII student was electrocuted on Sunday when he came in contact with a live electric wire while installing a tube-well in Karia bazaar of Panchbibbi upazila.

Earlier on Saturday, a 3-month-old daughter of Babu Mia at village Tajpur in the same upazila suffered burn injuries. She succumbed at the local hospital.

In Coastal district Barisal, Shaheed, 25, of village Kashipur Chahutpur area in the town was electrocuted when he was cutting a branch of a tree on Sunday.

On the same day, Tajul Islam, 50, of Faridganj upazila in Chandpur district was murdered over property-related dispute.

Dweller of village Santosh, Tajul suffered critical injuries when one Zafar attacked him over a family feud. He was rushed to the local hospital where he died.

Besides, housewife Aresa Begum, 60, of village Bhimrullah in Chuadanga district was burnt to death in a fire incident on Saturday night.

In Magura, Rebeya Begum, 30, in Sadar upazila allegedly committed suicide by hanging on March 12

following a quarrel with her husband.

A report from Pirojpur says: Unidentified criminals raped and killed a 14-year-old girl at village Balipara in Indurkani upazila on Thursday. She was alone at home during the incident.

The body was recovered from a nearby pond. Postmortem report confirmed the rape.

In the same upazila, body of schoolteacher Nazma Begum, 35, was recovered from a field at Char Boleswar on March 16.

The members of her in-laws beat the second wife of Humayun Kabir, Nazma, to death, the victim's family claimed.

Besides, Sikander Sikder and his supporters beat Mannan Hawlader, 45, of Umedpur in the same upazila to death on Saturday.

Another report from Kishoreganj says: Five people were killed in separate incidents in the district on March 8 and 9.

Of them, Sentu, 10, son of Sirajuddin in Nandail upazila, Mymensingh was killed in a road accident in Sadar upazila and housewife Nargis, 20, of Hossainpur upazila and Susanta Kumar Dev, 19, in the town allegedly committed suicide on March 9.

On the previous day (March 8), Noor Mohammad, 5 of Nikli upazila was killed when a stone-laden trolley hit him.

On the same day, Farzana Begum was killed in a head-on collision between a maxi and baby-taxi on Dhaka-Kishoreganj

NEWS SNAPS

Man killed in Mymensingh road mishap

UNB, Mymensingh

A man was killed and 20 others were injured, four critically, when a bus tumbled into a roadside ditch at Trishal on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway on March 18.

Police said the Dhaka-bound bus fell into a ditch after its driver lost control over steering at about 7 am killing its passenger Mukta Mia, 50, on the spot. Four of the injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Man stabbed to death

UNB, Pabna

Failing to realise the demanded tolls the miscreants killed a man in Pabna who recently returned from abroad and looted valuables worth Tk 3 lakh from his house in the early hours of Tuesday. Police and family sources said the terrorists demanded Tk 5 lakh from Swapan Kumar Shaha, 32, who returned a month ago to his village Ujarpara in Sujannagar upazila which he refused to oblige.

On the fateful night the gang numbering 10/12 stormed into his house, took all the inmates' hostage and looted the cash and valuables. At one stage when Swapan caught one of the muggers, others stabbed him to death. A case was filed.

Cases continue to heap up

UNB, Sherpur

Cases in the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Court in Sherpur are continuing to heap up, as the ADM reportedly could not attend the court for about a year due to illness. According to competent sources, the number of pending cases in the court now stands at 625.

As he remained almost bed-ridden caused by hypertension and diabetes, ADM Promod Bhushan Roy was learnt to have applied to the higher authorities to withdraw him from the district. The district administration has also written to the Establishment Ministry for the appointment of a new ADM withdrawing PB Roy, but its request went unanswered.

Acute shortage of judges

BSS, Dinajpur

Dispensation of justice has seriously been hampered in Dinajpur district over the years due to acute shortage of judges and ejlas, concerned sources said.

District Magistrate Muhammad Azizur Rahman said only two class one magistrates are posted here against 13 allocated posts to run judicial affairs of the district comprising 13 upazilas.

He said the district authorities informed the concerned ministry several times about the shortage of judges. The judges had to run their daily activities at the 200-year old court building, which needs immediate renovation. The Public Works Department has also identified the building as vulnerable.

Tender quotations snatched away

UNB, Pabna

Armed terrorists snatched tender quotations of the contractors of Pabna Sugar Mill. Police said the mill authorities invited tender quotation for selling its 1000 metric tons of chita gur (product of sugar) and March 14 was the last date for dropping tender quotation.

But the terrorists took away the tender quotations and other documents of Shamsul Alam and his fellow contractors from the mill gate on the day.

New thana in Chandpur

UNB, Chandpur

A new thana has been opened in Chandpur district. State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya inaugurated the thana at Hosnabad in Matlab (North) upazila on Friday.

With this, the number of thanas in the district rose to eight. Officials of local district and police administrations were present.

DC's transfer delights terrorists

UNB, Tangail

Terrorists and extortionists in Tangail town have distributed sweets at the report of transfer of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mollah Wahiduzzaman. The report on Wednesday has, however, caused worries among businessmen, contractors, teachers and the people in general who are saying that Wahiduzzaman had dealt the terrorists and extortionists with iron hands since his posting here.

Most culprits went into hiding in the face of drastic action. Supply of copies to examination halls also declined sharply. Certain circles, however, felt that Mollah Wahiduzzaman has been transferred to Bogra, a stronghold of BNP, to size up the party before the forthcoming general election.

Book fair ends

BSS, Bandarban

The week-long book fair that began in Bandarban on March 17 in observance of the 81st birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children Day ended on Friday.

The fair, held under the auspices of local Islamic Foundation in its premises, was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner of Bandarban Mohsin Ali Sardar, Bir Pratick, as the chief guest.



Sister Martinette Rivers, Chairperson of Martinette Rivers Social Welfare Foundation of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Representative of Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, an NGO based in Italy, distributing school dress and books free of cost among the poor students of Mother Martinette Rivers Elementary School and College in the school premises in Manikganj recently. British citizens Kean Wrethma, Alma Kean Wrethma and Bangladesh Mission chief of Partners of Street Children Programme, an NGO based in France, Isabelle Raffard, are also seen.