Low flow of Padma at Hardinge Bridge point raises concern

UNB, Pabna

The Ganges water sharing treaty with India has fallen flat as discharge of water down the Farakka Barrage during the current dry season is far lower than stipulated seriously affecting irrigation, navigation and ecology.

Expressing concern at the low flow of the Padma at Hardinge Bridge point, a senior official of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission told that the Indian side is not willing to discuss the situation arising out of violation of the 1997 Ganges Water Sharing

"The meeting was supposed to be held immediately after the violation was marked in March but it was not held. The meeting is unlikely even in April because of their intransigent attitude," said the official requesting

Sharing the worries and sufferings of the people of north-western region, the official said, "It is true that 55 rivers have almost dried up in absence of adequate flow in the downstream of the Ganges and the Teesta."

The agreement stipulated that flow of the Padma water at Hardinge Bridge would be a minimum of 29,688 cusecs during the last 10 days of March (21-31). But

according to official record, it was only 20,831 cusecs.

Official record showed that at no time of the current dry season water was available in accordance with the agreement. It said Bangladesh should get a minimum 46,323 cusecs of water during the first 10 days of February. But official figure of availability was 30,210

During February 11-20, the figure dropped down to 33,125 as against 42,859 cusecs stipulated in the treaty. During March 1-10, it was 27,915 cusecs as against 35,000 cusecs, during March 11-20, it was 22,315 cusecs as against 35,000 cusecs stipulated in the agreement.

Ferry operators and residents of the area suspect that actual quantum of water flowing down the Hardinge Bridge is much lower than the official figure.

Officials may be suppressing the actual situation under pressure from the high-ups, said a ferry operator.

The GK project designed to irrigate some 3.45 lakh acres of land is dependent on the Ganges water for irrigation. In absence of water in the feeder canal, the project is partially irrigating lands by drawing groundwater, informed sources said.



After harvesting a bumper production this season, the potato growers in Munshigaj district are facing crisis due to poor price of their produces. The farmers are now selling their produces at a throughaway price. As a result, the cultivators suffered huge financial losses, even some of them have to bring back their potatoes from the market without selling.

jatka fishing in S dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two special naval teams have been deployed in the southern districts to prevent unscrupulous fishermen from fishing hilsha fries, locally known as jatka.

The teams have already started operations in Barisal, Bhola, Noakhali, Hatia and Swandeep areas.

Despite repeated warning and raids in the rivers by the staff of Fisheries Departmental, the illegal practice of fishing jatka could not be stopped, said an official of Fisheries Department.

Still the illegal catching of jatka is going on almost unabated with the help of politically influential people of different areas, the official said.

He said some times we seize huge quantity of current nets and burn in front of villagers and fishermen, but it helps little to control the jatka catching.

Fishermen, on the other hand, said most occasions officials and extortionists took money from them as toll for undisturbed jatka catching.

The teams are using four speedboats with their ships during operations, officials said. The teams will give special attention to jatka fishing-prone areas in Hizla,

Mehendiganj and Muladi of Barisal; Ilishaghat of Bhola; Hazimara, Hymechar and Nilkamal of Noakhali; Hatia and Swandeep.

UNB from Chandpur adds: Though it is not the season of fishing hilsa, unscrupulous fishermen are indiscriminately fishing the hilsa fries with current nets.

Despite a government restriction on catching of fries in the rivers from November to April, a section of unscrupulous fishermen are indiscriminately fishing fries of different varieties by current nets.

After sunset, hundreds of fishermen rush to the Padma and the Meghna rivers and lay current nets to catch the fish fries. Local people said each current net is usually one to two miles long.

District Fisheries Officer said poor fishermen catch the fish being patronised by some influential people.

During raid on March 21, police arrested a number of fishermen and seized current nets worth Tk one lakh. Besides, 50 people have been arrested, 61 current nets and 400 kilograms of jhatka have been seized during

16 raids in last two and a half months. A total of 26 cases have been filed and the nets worth over Tk 14 lakh have been burnt

Two naval teams to check Three killed in Bogra, Pabna road accidents

UNB, Bogra

At least three people were killed and 50 others injured in three road accidents in Bogra and Pabna districts on Friday.

Hospital sources said a Dhakabound night coach collided headon with a truck at Amtali in Bogra on Bogra-Dhaka Highway at about 5.30 am leaving one person dead and 15

Bogra on Bogra-Rangpur Highway left one person killed and 35 others

The second accident occurred at about 11 am when a Bogra-bound bus coming from Joypurhat skidded off the road after hitting a roadside

Identity of the dead was not known immediately. Twenty-three

of the injured were admitted to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital.

In Pabna, a young man was run over by a tank-lorry at Kalikapur in Sadar upazila on Pabna-Iswardi Highway at about 6.30 am.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Ali Mohan, 32, of Shahapur village in Sadar upazila.

A case was filed with the local police in this connection.

Another accident at Aladipur in Narayanganj says: A pedestrian was killed and at least 20 people were injured in a traffic mishap on along with his supporters attacked Narayanganj-Demra road near Sonamia Market at Adamjee on Wednesday.

> Police said the mishap occurred at noon when a Demra-bound bus ran over the pedestrian, Moriam Bibi, 62, and fell into a roadside ditch leaving at least 20 passengers

onboardinjured.

Mariam of Shimul Para of Shiddhirganj upazila died on the

Police seized the bus, but its driver fled the scene after the accident. A case was filed.

In another incident in Khanpur Sarder Para area in the town, four people were injured when two groups clashed over boundary Another report from dispute of their houses on Wednesday.

Police said Alauddin of the area the house of his neighbourr Mannan although the dispute was solved in a village-arbitration on Tuesday.

The injured were identified as Mannan, Kabir, 18, Masum, 16, and Masuda, 15.

A case was filed.

BSS, Naogaon

The cultivation of Boro paddy and other Rabi crops has been affected seriously due to a prolonged drought throughout Naogaon dis-

Most of the canals and the rivers of Chhoto Jamuna and Atrai have dried up partially while the ground water level had also gone down disrupting the irrigation system.

According to local people, the crop cultivation will suffer seriously this season if the drought continues further.

Many deep tubewells remain inoperative as ground water level has gone down at many places. Boro and Rabi crops like onion year. have already dried up in the fields, as the irrigation system is not working

regularly due to frequent failure of electricity. Crisis of pure drinking water is also prevailing as the tube wells fail to supply water due to fall in ground water level in the villages and in the

town too. Another report from Barisal says:

PHOTO FEATURE HOSSAIN SERAJ

Acute water crisis has been prevailing over the Barisal Municipal Corporation areas with the advent of summer season causing immense suffering to the city dwellers.

According to official sources, the municipality authorities are supplying as much as 40 lakh gallons of safe water among the city dwellers as against the total demand of about one crore gallons per day depriving the majority of the people safe drinking water.

As a result a good number of people, mainly the poorer ones, are using polluted water of rivers, ponds, canals and other water bodies and attacked by various waterborne diseases throughout the

The municipality provides only 24 pumps for lifting water for over five lakh people, the sources said adding that eight of them remained inoperative for a long time. In addition, nearly all of the 12 pumps, installed under Fifth-districts Water Supply project, now remained inoperative due to failure of the project, the sources added.

The pumps, which remain operative, can not life water as per capacity due to lack of regeneration, refilling and over hauling of those

pumps on average, these pumps are now lifting 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water per hour because of fall in waterlevel. Besides, one-third of the 150-km water pipe line in the town became

unusable and 210 taps out of 970 remained out of order for a long time, the source added. On the other hand, Taka 84 lakh remains outstanding with 8,399 subscribers till now local people alleged that the authorities now and then assured the city dwellers of

not implement any project in this regard in the past eight years as per commitment. They urged upon the authorities concerned for taking necessary steps to ensure supply of safe drinking water among the city dwellers immediately.

solving the water crisis, but they did

Meanwhile, the authorities of the municipal corporation have taken up a project to install three deep tubewells for supplying safe drinking water in the city areas.

Prolonged drought in Naogaon Lack of irrigation facilities to hamper crop cultivation

UNB, Comilla

irrigation facilities following unusual fall of groundwater level.

Department of Public Health Engineers (DPHE) sources said water cannot be pumped out by tubewells as the level of groundwater fell down abnormally. According to the underground

water observation centre of the Water Development Board, the layer of water now stands in the lowest level in 25 years due to prolonged drought. According to the DPHE report for

the month of March, the lowest water level was found at village Nandanpur in Sadar upazila while the highest at Dishaband in Burichang.

Experts said pumping out of water by a tubewell cannot be possible when water level falls down below 20 feet.

There are 42,298 tubewells in 12 upazilas of Comilla district of which, Crop cultivation in Comilla district 2,256 remained inoperative for long is being hampered due to lack of while 20,000 cannot pump out water wheat is likely to be produced durdue to fall of water level:

Meanwhile, water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery and jaundice are spreading alarmingly as people have started taking dirty water from ponds.

A report from Magura says: Wheat cultivation has surpassed its target this year in Magura district by 1,760 hectares. Official sources said the growers

expect a bumper wheat production following favourable climatic condi-Inspired by timely supply of

seeds and other appliances by Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) enthusiastic farmers cultivated wheat on 8,760 hectares of land against the target of 7,000 hectares.

DAE arranged distribution of quality seeds, fertilisers, insecticides ares.

and soft loan among the farmers to make the programme a success.

Some 20,400 metric tons of ing the current season as against its target of 16,100 mts. Another report from

Chapainawabganj says: Farmers in Chapainawabganj are optimistic about getting a good harvest of their Boro crops if favourable weather condition persists. According to DAE this season,

some 43,510 hectares of land have been brought under Boro farming in Chapainawabganj district, exceeding the target.

But, at first, 41,200 hectares of land have been earmarked for cultivation with a production target of 1.23 lakh mts of paddy.

Upazila-wise break up of lands: Sadar-10,150 hectares, Shibganj-10.180 hectares, Gomostapur-11,320 hectares, Nachole-5,000 hectares and Bholahat-4,550 hect-

NEWS SNAPS

2 BCP outlaws on police remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

BCP outlaws Monirul and Masud have been placed on police remand for five days for interrogation. Khulna police arrested them on Tuesday night from near the residence of city Jubo League Convenor Mizanur Rahman Mizan. Two firearms, 10 live cartridges and five bullets were recovered from their possession, police said.

Police said Monirul is an accused in several murder cases. He surrendered with arms under general amnesty in 1999. He formed a separate squad of armed cadres at Daulatpur after being released on bail in January this year. Manir also prepared a 'hit list' targeting some political leaders of the ruling party on the eve of general elections. police said. Police also recovered the hit-list from him. Police said Masud is also involved in murders, extortion and robbery. He is one of the members of the squad formed by Monir, police added. Police said that the arrested outlaws came to Islampur Road with a killing mission. But police did not disclose who was the target.

Biman Murder Case revived after 10 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The sensational Biman Murder Case has been revived after ten years.

Shibir leader Aminul Islam Biman was killed at Shantidam Square on March 25, 1992, allegedly by the CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh) workers during a procession. A case was lodged with Khulna police station in this connection accusing 20 CPB activists and leaders on March 26 this year. The IO submitted charge-sheet against the accused. The case could not be put on trial due to a move by a section of CPB leaders who stood in favour of the accused. But complainant opposed withdrawal of the case from the court as proposed by the Home Ministry. The district and sessions judge's court Khulna, however, rejected the prayer on March 28 last year for withdrawal of the case. He ordered the additional district and sessions judge to start trial of the case on April 8 this year.

58 opposition men sued under PSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Fifty-eight opposition leaders and activists were sued under the Public Safety Act (PSA) for 'ransacking' a house of local Awami League leader at Malshapara in Sirajganj town during hartal hours on Monday.

Awami League leader Abdul Aziz filed a case with Sirajganj Sadar thana on Tuesday. He said in the FIR that the opposition leaders and activists attacked and ransacked his house during hartal hours at 9.30am on Monday. The opposition alliance held a press conference at district BNP office on Tuesday evening protesting filing of what they said false case against their leaders and activists. The alliance leaders threatened to launch a greater movement in the district if the case was not withdrawn immediately. The press conference was presided over by Azizur Rahman Dulal, President of Sirajganj BNP, TM A Mannan MP, was present there.

Seven arrested from different buses

UNB, Rajbari

Police, in a drive, arrested seven persons from different buses on Goalundo-Daulatdia road in Rajbari district on charge of selling phensidyl syrup.

On information, police conducted the raid in different vehicles and caught them along with 162 bottles of phensidyl. The arrested are Tahajul Hossain Prakash, Anisur Rahman, Dabiruddin Ahmed, Raqibul, Ejaj Ahmed, Abdul Quddus and Rana. A case

Top terror arrested

UNB, Shariatpur

Police arrested a local top terror, Boga Razzak, along with arms from his house at Char Bhojeshwar village in Naria upazila of Shariatpur district Sunday night.

Police said they raided the house and arrested Razzak along with a revolver and a pipe gun after receiving information from local people who cordoned the house. The terror, wanted in seven cases, fired about 100 blank shots during the raid. He was engaged in extortion and other crimes since long, police said. He is a worker of Awami

AL leader assaulted

UNB, Luxmipur

A hides and skin trader and local Awami League leader alleged that BNP terrorists assaulted him and snatched away Tk 9.80 lakh from him on his way to Chatkhil in Luxmipur district at 8 am on Monday.

Abdus Sattar, secretary of Ramganj Awami League, said he was going to Chatkhill with the cash when Bellal group of terrorists waylaid near Kachua Bazar, assaulted him, damaged his motor cycle and snatched away the money. To protest the incident, a rally was held in front of Dak Bunglow at Ramganj Monday afternoon when ruling party leaders demanded immediate arrest of the snatchers

Roadblock programme announced

UNB, Chittagong

Workers and employees of Chittagong Jute Manufacturing Ltd Tuesday announced a dawn to dusk roadblock programme on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway on April 16 demanding the reopening of the mill.

Over 1,000 employees and workers of the mill organised a rally on the mill premises demanding immediate payment of their arrears and reopening of the mill by April 15. The mill remains closed for the last 85 days. Leaders of the ruling party backed Sramik League gave the ultimatum at the rally.

Three trawlers with grains seized

UNB, Patuakhali

Three trawlers along with 329 sacks of grains worth about Tk 2.5 lakh were seized from Puran Bazar Trawler ghat in Patuakhali on Thursday.

Being tipped off by locals, police raided the area and seized the trawlers while the grains were being unloaded to store in a godown of Bimal Chandra Kunda, a businessman of the bazaar. Police later arrested Bimal, A Malek Khan, Shibulal Das and Harunur Rashid for their alleged involvement in smuggling the grains. A case was

Heroin seized

UNB, Patuakhali

Police seized 500 grams of heroin and arrested a rickshaw van driver from Alipur in

Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali on Monday night. Acting on a tip, police raided the van coming from Kuakata and arrested its driver Ismail Hossain with the drug. Ismail said a man in Kuakata gave the packet to hand over to Chalafru Madbar of Rakhain tribe in Alipur. A case was filed in this connection.

Cops embezzle seized drug

UNB, Kurigram

Three policemen allegedly embezzled 66 kilogram of ganja, which they recovered from

a Naogaon-bound microbus Sunday. Witnesses said patrol police Nuru, Amjad and Akbar intercepted the microbus and freed the bus and its passengers after the seizure of the three bags of a ganja (hemp) in the evening. The cops sold out the ganja instead of depositing it to their police station. they alleged. Driver Aminul Islam of the microbus filed a written complaint with the Police Super in this connection. When contacted, acting SP Narayan Chandra Sharma told the news agency that on receipt of the complaint he had directed the OC of Sadar thana to investigate into the matter.

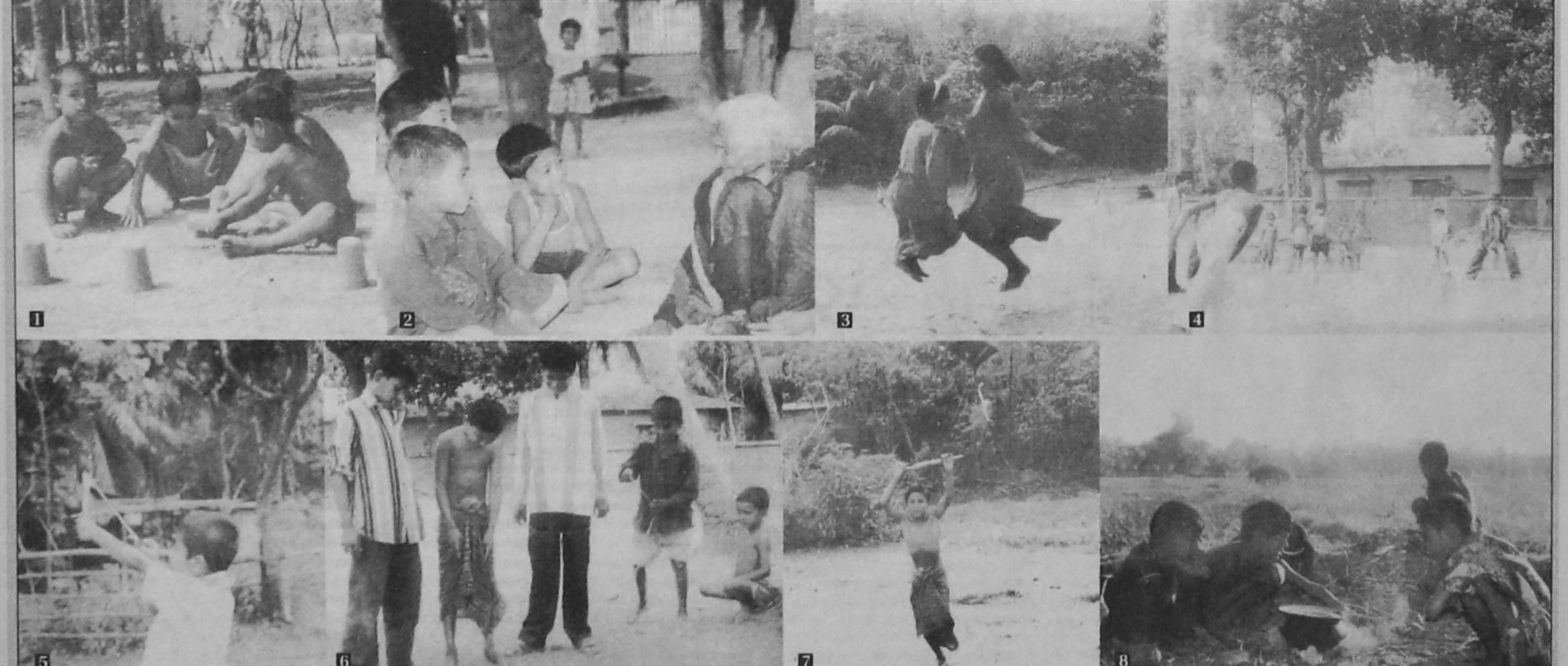
Training for women

UNB, Bandarban

With a view to making the distressed women self-reliant, a non-governmental

organisation, has been imparting training in the district on various vocations. Area manager of the organisation, BRAC, Chy May Pru said some 995 poor women of four upazilas are being imparted training on poultry farming, healthcare, education and sewerage and each of them is getting 30 kg rice per month since July last year. Of them, 665 women are in Sadar, 200 in Alikadam, 52 in Naikhangchari and 78 in Lama upazilas. Women Training Centre of World Food Organisation is supplying the food grains through Women Affairs Department, he added. Besides, the NGO is continuin various philanthropic activities including tree plantation and elementary education in Sadar upazila through its 10 centres. Meanwhile, it sold high yielding variety paddy seeds among the growers to boost production.

Recreation of poor rural children



Children are our best assets. But in our country rural children are always discriminated. They lack recreational facilities. So, they play with nature. (Pictures on top left to right) (1) Some children are seen playing with sand, (2) some others listening to stories with great attention from their grandmother, (3) two little girls are skipping, (4) some children are playing the game of "Satchara." (Bottom pictures from left to right) (5) a rural boy is hunting birds with a

catapult, locally called 'Gulti,' (6) some children with 'lattu' are enjoying themselves, (7) a boy is flying a kite and (8) some tiny tots have assembled in a picnic party.