

NEWS SNAPS

Three children drown in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat
Three children drowned in separate incidents in Bagerhat on Saturday. Minoti, 2, and Unnati, 1, daughters of Jibon Biswas of village Jatrapur Laopal in Sadar upazila, drowned as they slipped into a pond nearby their house while playing on its bank in the morning. In another incident, Sajjad, 1, son of SI Ziarot Hossain, drowned in a pond on the Chitalmari thana compound in the evening.

Prisoner dies at Mymensingh Jail

UNB, Mymensingh
A prisoner died of cardiac arrest at Mymensingh Central Jail Tuesday night. Jail sources said Jashimuddin, 40, was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital after he became unconscious at 2:20 am. He was declared dead by the on-duty doctors. Jashimuddin, hailed from Jafarabad village in Karimganj upazila of Kishoreganj, had been serving imprisonment since 1997 in a murder case.

Shibganj Municipality faces fund shortage

UNB, Chapainawabganj
The officials and employees of Shibganj Municipality have been deprived of their salaries for four months. The municipality has been facing deficit of fund since August due to increase of revenue expenditure than the earning. As a result, 78 officials and employees including the chairman and the ward commissioners were not getting their salary.

Law and order in Sirajganj reviewed

BSS, Sirajganj
A meeting of Sirajganj district law and order committee was held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room in Sirajganj on Friday. The meeting was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Md Tariqul Islam. Superintendent of Police Md Nazibur Rahman district level officers, district AL, BNP, JP leaders, municipality chairman Abu Mohammad Golam Kibria and representatives of different organisations attended the meeting. Upazila nirbahi officers of nine upazilas of Sirajganj were also present. The meeting reviewed the law and order situation of Sirajganj and instructed the law enforcing agencies to take stern action against the criminals.

Problems grip orphanage in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet
Rainagar Government Child Centre, the lone asylum for orphans in Sylhet, has been grappling with numerous problems. The Deputy Supervisor of the centre said water crisis, accommodation problem of its employees, inadequate security measures, classroom problem and shortage of reading materials have brought the centre to its knees. Social Welfare Department set up the 100-seat child centre in 1972 at a rented house in the town. It was later shifted to an abandoned house at Rainagar in 1973. Initially, boys and girls were accommodated in one house but in 1998 another home was constructed exclusively for boys. The centre has now 65 girls. Although the government had allocated 2 acres of land for the centre, only 77 decimals of land is now under its possession.

Cane crushing at Madhukhali Sugar Mill

UNB, Faridpur
Madhukhali Sugar Mill in Faridpur has begun its sugarcane-crushing of the season 2001-2002. Disaster Management and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf inaugurated the crushing programme on Friday. Mill authority brought 129 acres of land under sugarcane cultivation this season with a target to produce 12,200 mts sugar by crushing 1.50 lakh tons sugarcane. The annual production capacity of Madhukhali Sugar Mill is 10,060 mts.



PHOTO: STAR
An unhealthy competition of overtaking goes on between the drivers of a truck and a bus on Tangail-Dhaka road where road accident is a regular feature. Hundreds of valuable lives are lost every year due to road accidents along this route. But the authorities concerned are indifferent to check the trend.

Seminar on education for disabled

UNB, Jhenidah
A seminar on education for the development of disabled was held in Jhenidah at Sadar upazila auditorium on Tuesday. Prof A B M Sattar, Principal of Jhenidah Government KC College attended the seminar as the chief guest while M Modasser Hossain, district education officer and Nadir Hossain Biswas, deputy director, social welfare department as special guest. Khandakar Zahurul Alam, Chairman, National Forum of Organisations Working with Disabled (NFOWD) and Mansur Ahmad Chowdhury, executive director, Impact Production Bangladesh were the guest speakers. Arranged by the NFOWD, the seminar was assisted by Action Aid Bangladesh while a large number of participants including the mentally and physically retarded were present.

Soil test programme of farmland

UNB, Chapainawabganj
Soil test programme of farmland is going on in full swing in Chapainawabganj aiming at increasing the productivity of soil by applying balanced fertiliser. Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has so far examined the soil samples of 170 farmers and given advice of fertiliser doses. The soil test programme taken under Soil Test and Fertiliser Management project began in August this year and will be continued till June 2002, official sources said. Soil scientist Sheikh Mohammad Lokman said balanced fertiliser can increase productivity of a land several times.

Unplanned growth of mills, factories

UNB, Kishoreganj
A number of owners of mills and factories have been violating relevant laws by establishing their enterprises besides the roads and in residential areas. Locals said a large number of factories, including engineering workshops, welding shops, steel factories, flourmills and spice crushing mills, have been set up in awkward places in upazilas and district town threatening public health. They said unplanned growth of these factories and mills beside the main roads near the schools, hospitals and in the residential areas was possible mainly due to indifference of the district administration. They also alleged that a section of owners of these factories even established their enterprises without obtaining proper permission from the authorities concerned.

1,000 landless families rehabilitated

UNB, Khagrachhari
The 'Highland Settlement Project' (2nd Phase) of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board has changed the socio-economic condition of the people of two hill districts. Under the project some 1,000 landless families were rehabilitated in Matiranga upazila of Khagrachhari district and Sadar upazila of Bandarban district. Lands were allocated to each of the landless families for cultivating rubber on partnership basis and farming various crops on their courtyards. In addition to social security, the hill people rehabilitated under the project were given various facilities like access to pure drinking water, primary education, community center and place of worship.

Baby boom still high in Sylhet, Ctg divisions

UNB, Comilla
Baby boom is still high and family planning adoption rate is very low in Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in comparison to country's other divisions. Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Sylhet division is 4.4 per thousand followed by Chittagong division 4.1 against the country's average TFR 3.3. TFR in Khulna division is 2.9, Rajshahi 3.0, Dhaka 3.2 and Barisal 3.4, according to the report of the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS), 1999-2000. The report was presented at a three-day workshop of Inter-sectoral Population Projects (IPP) concluded at the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) in Comilla on Friday. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) unit of the Family Planning Directorate organised the workshop which reviewed annual progress of the IPP projects, totally funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Eleven ministries of the government and Dhaka University, ICDDR'B and BGMEA are implementing the IPP programmes. Assistant representative of UNFPA Md Nurul Ameen, Line Director of BCC Akhtaruzzaman, Line Director (Acting), Farida Begum, Chittagong and Sylhet division Family Planning Director Sharodendu Dey, Research

Director of NIPORT Ahmed Al-Sabbir and project directors and representatives from concerned ministries, civil societies and private organisations attended the workshop. The topics came up for discussion in the workshop included safe motherhood, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender and International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD) plus 5, and demographic scenario in Bangladesh. The workshop was told that although the average desired children number of each woman in the country is 2.2 per thousand, but the actual number is very high at 3.3. The ratio is high in Sylhet division the desired number of child is 2.9 while birth is 4.1 and lowest in Khulna division the desired number is 1.9 and the birth is 2.7. Speaking at the function, UNFPA Assistant Representative Md Nurul Ameen termed the reproductive health and family planning as an emerging challenge in population and development sector. The workshop was informed that experience of Khulna and other divisions would be applied in Sylhet and Chittagong divisions to bring down TFR and increase the family planning adoption rate in these two divisions.



PHOTO: A K M MOHSIN
Abandoned Balukhali Union Parishad Bhaban in Sadar thana of Rangamati hill district. Members of former Shanti Bahini blasted bombs and damaged this building situated on a hillock in 1984. After three years of signing of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord this union parishad building under local government still remains the same.

Aman output may fall short of target in eight districts

UNB, Rangpur
Production target of aman paddy may not be achieved in eight districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur zones as farmers could not bring the targeted land under cultivation in the current season due to drought like situation. Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) set a target to bring 10.11 lakh hectares of land under aman cultivation with an output target of 50 lakh mts of paddy. But due to long absence of rain in Rangpur and Dinajpur area during the peak period of cultivation, the farmers could cultivate aman on only 9.77 lakh hectares of land, some 33,900 hectares less than the target.

District wise breakup of cultivation: 1.36 lakh hectares in Rangpur, 1.12 lakh hectares in Gaibandha, 1.14 lakh hectares in Kurigram, 82,400 hectares in Lalmonirhat, 1.10 lakh hectares in Nilphamari, 2.38 lakh hectares in Dinajpur, 1.01 lakh hectares in Thakurgaon and 84,500 hectares in Panchagarh district. Moreover, standing crops on about one lakh hectares of land of Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari were damaged when a severe tornado lashed the districts last month. A report from Joypurhat says: Despite a drought-like situation in Joypurhat in the peak hours of aman cultivation, farmers are expecting a bumper harvest in the current

season. DAE said farmers cultivated transplanted Aman on 68,500 hectares of land in five upazilas exceeding the target of 68,000 hectares. The production target is 1.67 lakh metric tons of rice. Most of the farmers said they didn't wait for rain during the peak hours of aman plantation and cultivated their lands irrigating water on their own initiatives. The paddy has already become mature and healthy due to proper care, favourable weather and in absence of pest attack. A message from Sherpur reports: Farmers in Sherpur have been expecting bumper production of aman paddy if favour-

able climate persists for some more days. The farmers said they would start harvesting the paddy in full swing within the next week though some varieties are being harvested which were transplanted earlier. According to DAE aman was cultivated on 84,700 hectares of land this season. The farming was delayed due to the prevailing drought in the beginning of the season. Of the total, high yielding 'Ufsi' variety was cultivated on 41,900 hectares of land against the target of 45,400 hectares while local variety on 42,800 hectares exceeding the target of 39,200 hectares. The production target has been fixed at 170,700 metric tons of rice. A dispatch from Kishoreganj says:

Farmers cultivated transplanted aman on 72,525 hectares of land in the current season in Kishoreganj exceeding the target of 68,900 hectares. Local DAE sources said of the total land, 45,280 hectares have been brought under high yielding variety and the rest 27,245 hectares under local variety. DAE also said some 3,952 hectares of land have been brought under aman seed-bed farming. Of them, 2,520 hectares were brought under high yielding 'Ufsi' variety and the rest 1,432 hectares under local variety.