

NEWS SNAPS

Body of unidentified man recoveredUNB, *Gazipur*

The body of an unidentified man was recovered from the National Park in Gazipur on Thursday.

Army personnel during their winter exercise found the body hanging from a tree in the park and informed the police. The body could not be identified as it dried up. Police suspect that miscreants killed him and hanged the body about a month back. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Newly-wed housewife commits suicideUNB, *Narayanganj*

A newly-wed housewife allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself in Kashipur Goalbondha area in Fatulla of Narayanganj Friday morning.

Police said Noorjahan, 18, committed suicide over dowry related dispute with her husband Jahangir. The body was sent to General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police arrested Jahangir. A case was filed with local police station.

Milk production declines alarminglyUNB, *Moulvibazar*

Milk production has declined alarmingly in Moulvibazar due to decrease of milch cows.

Farmers said the number of milch cows has decreased due to large-scale slaughtering of cows by the butchers taking advantage of acute shortage and high prices of meat in the local markets. They said that at present fodder for the milk giving cows is hardly available which is one of the main causes for low production of milk. Moreover, the mechanised method of cultivation has been identified as one of the causes of fodder crisis. The massive cultivation of boro paddy with the increase of population has already reduced the grazing fields. Besides, the traditional grazing fields have been brought under cultivation of different crops.

Schoolgirl allegedly raped by youthUNB, *Rajshahi*

A schoolgirl was allegedly raped at Tauripara village in Bhaga upazila of Rajshahi on Wednesday.

Victim's relatives said Alif Hossain, 20, son of Joyenuddin of the village forcibly took the girl to a nearby sugarcane field and raped her. Hearing the screaming of the girl, local people rushed to the spot and caught the rapist red-handed. Later, he was handed over to police.

'Aman' production exceeds targetUNB, *Jessore*

Production of aman paddy in the country's 10 southwestern districts has exceeded the target in the current season.

These districts are: Jhenidah, Narail, Magura, Kushtia, Jessore, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Satkhira, Bagerhat and Khulna. Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) had set a target to bring 6.8 lakh hectares of under aman cultivation in these 10 districts. But more than 7 lakh hectares of land were brought under aman cultivation. Some 26 lakh mts of paddy was produced against the target of 23.80 lakh mts.

107 certificate cases against 100 peopleUNB, *Moulvibazar*

Kamalganj branch of Sonali Bank in Moulvibazar has filed 107 certificate cases to recover loans totalling Tk 30 lakh from its defaulting borrowers.

Over 100 people of Ali Nagar and Shamsheer Nagar unions of Kamalganj upazila did not repay their loans despite serving notices by the bank during the 1998-2001 period. Non-cooperation by the bank subscribers has forced the bank authorities to take legal step against them. Bank sources said Tk 20.69 lakh has been lying outstanding with 65 subscribers in Ali Nagar union while Tk 10 lakh with 42 subscribers in Shamsheer Nagar union. A number of people accused in the case preferring anonymity told that they did not pay their loan as an influential AL leader told them that the government would exempt the loan as the money belongs to government.

521 criminal cases recorded in MaguraUNB, *Magura*

Police recorded 521 criminal cases including 26 murder cases in four upazilas of Magura during the last year.

Of these cases, two were recorded for robbery, five arson, 13 terrorism, 32 riot, 15 rape, six acid throwing, 42 repression on women, 10 abduction, 47 theft, eight armed attack, three attacks on police, 21 drug abuse, 22 smuggling and others 269. Police said the number however decreased compare to 2000 when 657 criminal cases were filed. Thanawise cases recorded last year were 281 in Sadar, 95 in Stripur, 71 in Mohammadpur and 74 in Shalikhha upazilas.

Jute godown damaged by fireBSS, *Narayanganj*

A jute godown at Kumudini Welfare Trust premises in Narayanganj was damaged by a fire on Friday morning.

Fire Brigade and local people said fire fighting units from Narayanganj, Hajiganj and Mondalpara rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after two hours of efforts. Fire Brigade official said the fire damaged huge jute. The godown owner claimed that the fire was originated from an electric short circuit but the manager of the trust said there was no electric line in the jute godown.

Arsenic detected in water of BheramaraBSS, *Bheramara*

Arsenic beyond permissible limit was detected in water of over one thousand tubewells in six unions of Bheramara upazila.

The unions are Junidah, Mokarimpur Balirchar, Candgram, Dharampur, Bahdurpur and Bheramara municipality.

Three hundred arsenic patients were identified so far in the upazila. Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) sources said arsenic was first detected in the water of tubewells in 1998 at village Junidah. The department set up a good number of arsenic free tubewells in seven villages of the seven unions. A local NGO named Uddipon tested waters of 2,000 tubewells of the upazila and arsenic was detected in water of about 1,000 tubewells which were sealed off.

Winter clothes distributed among poorUNB, *Comilla*

A philanthropic organisation distributed winter clothes among poor people of Gobindapur and its adjoining Shaktola area in Comilla town on December 31.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Amanullah Aman distributed the clothes of the Haque Foundation. Chairman of the Foundation and Sadar UNO Md Nuruzzamann were present on the occasion.

'Boro' cultivation on 69,900 hectaresUNB, *Jhenidah*

A programme has been taken up to bring 69,900 hectares of land under Boro paddy cultivation with a production target of 2.40 lakh mts in Jhenidah this season.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said of the total land, 69,800 hectares will be brought under high yielding variety while the rest 100 hectares under local variety. DAE said of the land, 18,300 hectares would be cultivated in Sadar, 14,700 hectares in Kaliganj, 4,100 hectares in Kotchandpur, 19,600 hectares in Moheshpur, 6,000 hectares in Shalikhupa and 7,200 hectares in Harinakunda upazilas. The farmers of Jhenidah produced 2.80 lakh mts of rice cultivating 71,200 hectares of land last year.

Female students in Moulvibazar face accommodation problem**Enrolment of rural girls in schools up in Satkhira**

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Moulvibazar

Female students of almost all the educational institutions in Moulvibazar face an acute accommodation problem.

As a result female education is being hampered seriously in Moulvibazar town. Girl student in this town are in need of hostel facilities.

The district town has three colleges, one is for females and in two other colleges co-education exists. There are two girls high schools and one high school where coeducation prevails with about 1,500 girl students.

There is one hostel for female student of local Primary Training Institute (PTI), but there is no residential facility for female students of schools or college. There was a girls' hostel attached to Ali Amzad Government Girls' High School which is now being used as class rooms. This is because the old school building has become unfit for use. It has been abandoned for quite a long time.

The Facilities Department constructed a hostel building for Moulvibazar Womens' College with an expenditure of more than Tk 50 lakh five years back. But acting principal of the college, who is in charge of the college since 1991 is not interested to build hostel for female students due to unknown reason.

When contacted, the acting principal said due to security reason, he is not in favour of building female hostels.

Meanwhile, enrolment of rural girls in both primary and high schools increased remarkably in Satkhira in recent time due to creation of social awareness about female education among the rural people including the marginal farmers and the landless people.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: Only a few years back, girls from poor families in remote villages in Shyamnagar, Kaliganj, Debhata, Assassuni, Tala, Kalaroa and sadar upazilas could not even think of going to schools like the boys in their families.

The government as well as non-

government organisations (NGOs) like BRAC, UTTARAN, and ASA have established educational institutions in remote villages of Satkhira.

Abdur Rashid, a day labourer of Boalia, a remote village in Kalaroa upazila told this correspondent that girls in his family could only dream of participating in the SSC examinations a decade back. In 1001 his daughter Rawshan Ara passed the SSC examination in first division from Boalia High School. Inspired by Rawshan Ara's success her friends are now more serious about schooling, he added.

According to sources in BRAC's non formal primary education (NFPE) wing in Satkhira, several schools have been established in the remote villages to educate children of poor families, especially the girls.

A large number of girls have already been enrolled in secondary schools after completion of primary education from these schools. Several hundred female teachers in NFPE schools are also a source of inspiration to the girls. The NFPE has also set up Grameen library for the children.

Anju Ara Khatun, a teacher at a NFPE school in sadar upazila said, the number of girls coming from poverty stricken families for education was on the rise.

According to Nityananda Mukherjee, a secondary school teacher, the female secondary stipend project has gone a long way towards creating awareness about education and attracting girls for secondary education. Under the project a student gets not only free education, but also financial assistance. Amir Ali, an experienced teacher of Hatalganj High School was of the same opinion.

In this profession since 1973, Amir Ali has witnessed the change of parents' attitude towards female education. Only two decades ago enrolling their daughters in schools was beyond their imagination, he said. Now many girls from poor families in these villages have not only completed SSC, but also gone for higher study in colleges and universities, he observed.

Abdul Muttalib, chairman of

Kumira Girls' High School told this correspondent that a large number of girls from these villages scored brilliant results in different examinations. His two daughters have completed their university education and one of them has joined a non-government college a lecturer.

According to official sources at the district education office, several girls high schools have been set up in the rural areas. Number of women in the teaching staff has also marked a remarkable rise as more and more female graduates take up teaching as a profession.

In near future more girls will be enrolled in different schools, experts believe.

Navigability of rivers in northern region reduce greatlyUNB, *Kurigram*

Navigability of some major rivers in the country's northern region reduced greatly due to accumulation of silt and turning a vast tract of cultivable lands fallow.

These rivers overflow in the monsoon inundating the adjacent crop lands accumulating two to five feet sands, making the lands uncultivable where boro, IRR1, Aush and other crops were produced abundantly.

A total of three lakh hectares of land on the banks of the Brahmaputra, the Dharala and the Teesta in Kurigram, the Padma in Rajshahi and other rivers in Gaibandha, Bogra and Sirajganj went fallow due to the silt.

With this impact, fertility of the remaining lands is reducing fast.

In mid 60s, an embankment was constructed from Kaunia to Bherakol area in Kurigram to protect the cultivable lands and dwelling houses from flood.

Later, a cross dam was also constructed, but almost all portions of the embankment and dam were eroded, rendering a large number of people homeless.

Although a number of embankments were constructed in the region later to protect the lands, but measures were not taken to remove sands from the lands.

Mustard farming on 4,000 hectares in KishoreganjUNB, *Kishoreganj*

Some 4,000 hectares of land in 13 upazilas of Kishoreganj have been brought under mustard cultivation during the current Rabi season.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), of the total 100 hectares each will be cultivated in Hossainpur, Katiadi, Mitamoin and Sadar, 80 hectares in Pakundia, 950 hectares in Karimganj, 900 hectares in Tarail, 400 hectares each in Austagram and Bajitpur, 200 hectares each in Bhairab and Kuliarchar, 170 hectares in Nikli and 300 hectares in Itna upazilas.

The target of mustard production has been fixed at 4,000 metric tons.

Official sources said, necessary measures have been taken to arrange loan, supply of high hybrid seeds and other necessary inputs to the farmers for successful implementation of the programme.

Meanwhile, DAE has taken up an intensive programme to cultivate groundnut on 2,000 hectares of land with a production target of 4,000 metric tons.



PHOTO: A K M MOHSIN

Extraction of date juice is going on in full swing in different parts of the country. The juice extractors, popularly known as 'gachhi' have started collecting date juice for making molasses, which is known as 'khejur gur'. In every winter 'gachhis' extract a huge quantity of juice from date trees. Molasses prepared from the juice have great demand among the people of the country. Winter brings a festive mood to the villagers particularly the farmers of rural areas. Their families eat different kinds of cakes made from the newly harvested paddy prepared from date juice, which are tasty and popular. The 'Nalen patali gur' of Bangladesh was famous throughout the undivided Bengal for its flavour and taste. But due to lack of proper patronisation the fascinated 'Patali gur' is on verge of extinction. Payesh, a sort of food prepared by combining newly harvested rice, milk and molasses, is taken as part of 'Nabanna' festival across the country.

Boro farming scheme on 40,000 hectares in 2 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has taken up schemes to cultivate Boro paddy in Madaripur and Khagrachhari districts.

UNB reports from Madaripur: Some 33,500 hectares of land will be brought under boro cultivation in four upazilas of Madaripur in the coming Rabi season.

Officials said high yielding variety of paddy would be cultivated on 30,200 hectares while local variety on 3,300 hectares fixing the output target at 1.82 lakh mts.

DAE will provide necessary seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and bank loans to the farmers to achieve the target.

Another report from Khagrachhari adds: DAE has undertaken a scheme to cultivate high yielding variety of paddy in eight upazilas of Khagrachhari in the upcoming Boro season.

The officials said 6,500 hectares of land would be brought under Boro cultivation with a production target of 16,250 mts paddy.

To make the programme a success, the farmers are being imparted training to acquaint them with the modern methods of cultivation.

Necessary inputs including seed, pesticide and fertiliser are being supplied among the farmers at fair prices to achieve the production target, they added.

Acute scarcity of fish in NarailUNB, *Narail*

Different varieties of fish are gradually being extinct owing to indiscriminate use of insecticides and fertilisers in the crop fields.

The sweet water fish like koi, catfish, singh, taki, padma, soal, boal, gojar, nayna, pholoi, puti, bain and tengra are rarely found in the local markets. In the past during rainy season the hats and bazaars in the rural areas were flooded with different varieties of fish. The people used to dry fish for consumption in the lean period.

But at present due to acute scarcity of those species, the common people cannot afford to buy those fish from the markets due to its high prices. The main reason for the gradual extinction of sweet water fish was said to be indiscriminate use of pesticides in crop fields, which kills the insects and also destroy the eggs of the fish.

In many cases the farmers use contraband fertiliser and pesticides, which is responsible for developing chemical poison in the soil and the water of the ponds are contaminated causing gradual extinction of fishes.

Besides, pesticides cause harms and destroy the fetus and egg cells of fishes. Moreover, the people of the rural areas are suffering from various skin diseases due to use of pesticides with their naked hands.

According to experts the farmers use about 3,000 metric tons of pesticides per year across the country to eradicate pest menace and about 25 per cent of those are carried in the ponds and other water bodies by rain waters causing immediate death of some fishes and weakening other species.

They said integrated pest management scheme by agriculture authority and proportionate use of pure fertiliser by the farmers could save the fish population from further extinction.

Separate incidents claim 2 in CtgOUR CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Two persons were killed and another was injured in two separate incidents at Fatikchhari in Chittagong on Friday night.

One person was killed while another injured when local people chased and gave massive beating to a group of drunkards for creating trouble at Kalapania in Fatikchhari thana in the evening on Friday.

In the mass beating Jahangir Alam, 28, was beaten to death and Nurullah was critically injured and later handed over to police.

In the other incident one unidentified youth was killed by unidentified miscreants at Nanupur village in the thana on the same night.

The victim's dead body was recovered in the morning on Saturday.