

## NEWS SNAPS

## Massive afforestation programme

BSS, Bheramara

Bheramara upazila Administration has launched a massive afforestation programme in six unions the upazila with the assistance of Forest and Environment Department.

The unions are Bahirchar, Bahadurpur, Dharampur, Jeeniadaha, Chandgram and Mokarimpur. A total of 5000 saplings will be planted in the upazila. Professor Shahidul Islam, MP, inaugurated the programme by planting a sapling on the upazila parishad premises as chief guest. A discussion was held at the upazila parishad auditorium in this connection. Bheramara Upazila Nirbahi Officer M Shamsul Arefin presided over the function. Later, the chief guest distributed saplings and prizes among the people.

## Three get prison terms in arms cases

BSS, Bheramara

A court in Bheramara recently sentenced one person named Nasiruddin to 14 years, rigorous imprisonment (RI) in an arms case.

According to prosecution story, Nasiruddin of Isalmari in Mirpur upazila was arrested with firearms and bullets on August 30, 2001. After examining the records and witnesses, Special Tribunal Judge M Abu Taleb gave this judgment. Another court of the district on Tuesday sentenced two persons to 14 years RI each for possessing illegal firearms. According to prosecution story, Jafor Ali of Taragonia and Manik of Shitalpara in Daulatpur Police Station were arrested with fire arms on November 2, 1998. Additional District and Session Judge Idris Alam awarded the punishment.

## Motor cycle lifter arrested in Joypurhat

BSS, Joypurhat

Police arrested an activist of the students wing of a major political party and recovered a stolen motor cycle from his possession in Joypurhat on Monday.

According to police sources, a squad led by officer-in-charge of Akkelpur Thana Mozaharul Islam arrested Delwar Hossain from Charamtha intersection in Jamalganj area along with a honda motorcycle, which he was riding. The arrested student leader, son of late Jarip Sarker hails from village Kastogari in Badalgachi thana of Naogon. A case has been filed with Akkelpur thana police in this connection and the court sent the arrested person to jail hat.

## Alleged miscreant arrested in Feni

BSS, Feni

Feni thana police arrested an alleged miscreant from Feni town recently.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of police arrested Anwar Hossain, son of Shamsul Hoque, from his house in Bampur area in the town. He was accused of 11 cases including murder. A case was recorded with Sadar Police Station in this connection.

## Rat killing drive in Rangamati

BSS, Rangamati

Chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC), Dr Manik Lal Dewan inaugurated a month-long rat killing drive in Rangamati in a simple ceremony held at the conference room of the Additional Director, CHT region of the Department of Agriculture Extension on Monday.

Terming rat as harmful and damaging creature for crops, Chairman of RHDC laid down emphasis to make the drive a success by killing maximum number of rats. Dr Manik Lal Dewan made an announcement at the function that 10 individuals and 10 institutions will be rewarded in each upazila for playing successful role in killing rats during the drive. Concerned officials, farmers and social workers attended the ceremony with Deputy Director of Rangamati unit of DAE Paritosh Chakma in the chair.

## Phensidyl recovered in Tangail

BSS, Tangail

Police recovered 82 bottles of Indian phensidyl and four-litres of country-made liquor from Ballah Bazaar Wednesday.

Police arrested two persons from the spot on charge of possessing the contrabands. Acting on a tip-off Kalihati police raided Ballah Bazaar at night and arrested Nurul Islam, 45, and Matiuur Rahman, 42, with 82 bottles of Indian phensidyl and four litres of country-made liquor. A case was filed with Kalihati thana in this connection.

## Jute market dull in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Most of the growers in Gopalganj are selling their newly-harvested jute below the production cost due to dearth of buyers in the markets.

The newly-harvested jute, once known as the golden fiber of Bangladesh, has started appearing at different markets in Gopalganj.

But for want of purchasers, the jute growers are being deprived of fair prices. Most of the them are compelled to sell their produce at a price below its production cost. A few solvent growers are often seen taking back home their jute from the markets because of abnormal low price.

Gopalganj is one of the jute producing district in Bangladesh. Quality jute is produced here. So some important jute markets have grown up here. The markets are Bhorerhat, Sat Par Hat and Manikhar hat in Gopalganj Sadar upazila, Parampur hat, Randia hat and Tala hat in Kasiari upazila, Batikyamari hat, Tangrakhola hat

and Ujani hat, in Muksudpur upazila, Ghagan hat, Radaganj hat and Pasher hat in Katalipara upazila, Pathgati hat, Kushlir hat and Nilifa hat in Tungipara upazila.

Jute is on sale in these markets between Tk 250 to 275 per maund, according to quality which is less than the cost of production. Some jute growers told this correspondent, adding that jute has become a bane for them because of non-availability of buyers. Besides, production, as well as, quality of jute this year is not satisfactory due to prolonged drought followed by incessant rains.

Taking advantage of this situation some middle-man locally called 'Farias' have been buying jute at throwaway prices from the financially non-solvent growers and hoarding them in the hope of making a lot of profit when the recession period of jute market ends.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources, this year 5,767 hectares of land have been brought under jute cultivation in five upazilas in

Gopalganj with a production target of 9,031 tons. Last year jute was cultivated on 3,994 hectares with a production target of 7,500 tons and in 2000 jute was cultivated on 4,900 hectares with a production target of 7,718 tons respectively.

A farmer named Rafique Mollah came to Barhar hat in Gopalganj Sadar upazila from village Bedgram. He told The Daily Star correspondent that he waited for a long period in the hope of fair price of jute, but in vain. Ultimately he sold his produce much below the cost of production.

The comparative study shows that jute cultivation is on the increase at higher rate which has doubled in two year.

When asked about the cause of the increasing trend of jute cultivation every year despite loss, same growers told that they had cultivated jute on more lands because of jute sticks which are sold at high prices bringing overall profit.

## Hospitals, health complexes in 2 districts run short of doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hospitals and health complexes in Panchagarh and Tangail are beset with manifold problems.

BSS reports from Panchagarh: The government hospitals in the district have been beset with problems including shortage of doctors, inadequate number of beds and short supply of medicines causing suffering to the patients.

According to Civil Surgeon Dr AKM Badruzzaman, there are 67 posts of medical officers in the sadar hospital and five upazila health complexes of the district but only 29 doctors are working there.

All the posts of five dental surgeons are lying vacant. As a result, dental patients take treatment in nearby districts which is costlier and troublesome. There is no senior consultant in Gynecology and Surgery departments in sadar hospital hampering treatment.

Besides, shortage of necessary staff in these hospitals has been

hampering the administrative activities. The total number of vacant posts of employees in the district health department is 67, said an official sources.

In Tetulia and Atwary upazila health complexes there is no X-Ray machine while the machine at Boda hospital is out of order for more than a year.

There are only 50 beds in sadar hospital which cannot cope with the increasing demand. However, expansions work of the hospital from existing 50-bed to 100-bed is going on.

The latrines and bathrooms of the hospitals are in deplorable condition and the patients also suffer a lot due to lack of water supply.

Another report from Tangail says: Madhupur upazila hospital in Tangail is beset with various problems. Shortage of doctor and medicine are the common problems of the hospital.

Everyday many patients come to the hospital for treatment but they

go back disappointed. The doctors refer the patients to various hospitals in Mymensingh or Dhaka citing shortage of medicine and various other causes.

Very often, doctors give prescriptions to the patients and advice them to purchase medicine from local market. The patients alleged they don't get any medicine from hospital.

Moreover, unhygienic condition of the hospital is also pitiable. Toilets of the hospitals are dirty. Two tubewells in front of the hospital are also out of use for a long time. As a result, the patients are being deprived of pure drinking water.

Besides, the hospital has no labour ward. This kind of patients face immense sufferings.

The lone X-ray machine of the hospital has been out of order for a long time. The food of the hospital is not at all up to standard. The patients allege the doctors often remain absent and they are not found in time of emergency.



Unabated erosion in Bhola by the Meghna despite placement of boulders along the river bank. Erosion has taken a serious turn here in recent days.

## Three children drown in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Three children drowned in ponds at different places of Fulchhari upazila in Gaibandha in two days.

On September 10, a 3-year-old child named Hamid, son of Idris Ali of village Madanerpara in Fulchhari upazila drowned after the victim fell in deep water of a pond while playing nearby.

On the same day another child Apel, 4, son of Jainul of village Kharia the same upazila drowned in a pond adjacent to a dwelling house while he was playing near the bank.

On September 8, Rubel, four-year-old son of Jainul Huq of village Kathur in the aforesaid upazila fell in a pond and drowned. Body of the victim was recovered from water after a few hours.

With the three dead, a total of 11 children drowned in ponds at different places under Fulchhari upazila in the last two weeks.

The incidents have created panic among the parents.

## Rat killing drive

## One lakh MTs of foodgrains saved in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

About one lakh metric tons (MTs) of foodgrains have been saved from rats last year in Jhenidah.

This has been possible by killing about 96 lakh rats, by the workers of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), farmers and students.

The rats damaged at least 10 per cent of the total foodgrains produced in Jhenidah worth several crores of taka.

Furthermore, the rats spread 33 types of diseases like plague and other deadly diseases.

According to DAE sources, a total of 95,46,868 tails of rats have been deposited by the extension workers of DAE, farmers and students of schools, colleges and madrasahs last year. The rats damage 71,601 metric tons of aman rice and 28,000 metric tons of wheat every year.

A total of 39,95,937 persons participated in the rat killing drive, DAE sources added.

## 100 drug addicts handed over to police by parents in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

About 100 drug addicted young boys have been handed over to police by their respective parents in Chuadanga in the last six months. They are kept in the safe custody.

According to some parents, their drug addicted sons have been disturbing them much for money for purchasing drugs like heroin and phensidyl. Sometimes they were involved in committing thefts at the residence of their neighbours and other places. So, they have been compelled to hand over their sons to police.

The number of drug addicts have abnormally increased throughout Chuadanga districts. Drugs are on open sale in many places.

A group of dishonest wine traders allegedly prepare adulterated wine and sell it. Besides, they sell smuggled opium and other drugs by deceiving the government.

"Tari" or rotten date juice is also on sale some government approved traders. Poor people who are addicted quench their thirst with "Tari", the cheapest intoxicant here.

There are also a large number of drug addicts who take wine and hemp.

According to an unofficial survey, the number of teenager drug addicts have been increasing abnormally here. They are being addicted to heroin and phensidyl. Local Narcotics and Liquor Department seems to be inactive in controlling the bad practice.

## Shots from districts



Former Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury speaks as the chief guest at the Literacy Award distribution ceremony of Sylhet Kendriyo Muslim Sahitya Sangsad, a prominent literary organisation in Sylhet. The programme was arranged at its office in the divisional town recently.



Madhab Dutta, executive director of Swadesh, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) and coordinator of the Campaign for Good Governance, Satkhira district chapter reads paper titled "Satkhira Declaration on Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme" at a press conference which was held recently at Satkhira Press Club.



People of all walks of life parade the streets of Jhenidah town in a colourful procession on the occasion of the Adult Education Week and International Literacy Day-2002. Jhenidah district administration arranged the programme recently.