

## SNAPS

Mild tremor  
jolts Ctg

**UNB, Dhaka**  
A mild earthquake measuring 3.89 in the Richter scale jolted Chittagong at 5:18pm on Tuesday. The distance of the epicenter was 141 kilometres off Chittagong Seismic Observatory. The tremor lasted for 16 seconds, said Met Office.

One to die for  
killing wife

**UNB, Cox's Bazar**  
A man was sentenced to death by a court here on Sunday for killing his wife in 1998.

The district and sessions judge court handed down the verdict and sentenced Farizulla of village Nandakhalia in Ramu upazila to death. Farizulla killed his wife Almas Khatun during a quarrel over a trifling matter on May 14, 1998.

Afforestation  
drive

**UNB, Netrakona**  
Some five lakh saplings will be planted in 10 upazilas of Netrakona during the upcoming plantation drive.

Department of Agriculture Extension and district administration will plant the saplings beside roads and compounds of government and private educational institutions and mosques.

Son handed  
over to police

**UNB, Chandpur**  
A father handed over his son failing to control his activities at village Bagdi in Sadar upazila on Monday. Police said Saifullah Bepari handed over his son Shahidullah Bepari, 25, when he demanded money from him at gunpoint.

250 phone lines  
disconnected

**UNB, Chandpur**  
A total of 250 telephone lines were disconnected in the district town in 24 hours till Tuesday.

According to official sources, the lines were snapped as the subscribers, after repeated reminders, failed to pay the outstanding bills amounting to Tk 10 lakh.

# Boro paddy, rice appear in 8 northern districts

Growers selling their produce to middlemen at cheaper rate

MOZAMMEL HUQ, Rangpur

**Boro paddy and rice have appeared in markets in greater Rangpur and Dinajpur districts in small scale following beginning of harvesting of the crop all over the eight districts.**

But poor growers have allegedly been selling their produce to farias (middlemen) at much cheaper rates.

The growers in Rangpur and Dinajpur zones achieved a bumper yield of *boro* this season, according to agriculturists and officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

Initially there was a target to bring 5,38,400 hectares of land under *boro* farming in the two zones this season, but the target

exceeded by 11,100 hectares. This is because 5,49,500 hectares were finally brought under *boro* farming. The district-wise break-up of *boro* farming is as follows: Rangpur-97,800 hectares, Gaibandha-95,600 hectares, Kurigram-70,900 hectares, Lalmonirhat-42,900 hectares, Nilphamari-63,600 hectares, Dinajpur-1,24,000 hectares, Thakurgaon-37,200 hectares and Panchagarh-18,400 hectares.

Originally, DAE fixed the *boro* production target at around 28 lakh metric tons. But at present its yield is expected to be around 29 lakh metric tons.

Farmers alleged that due to rise in fuel prices, tilling cost went beyond their capacity.

While visiting a number of villages in Gangachhara and



PHOTO: STAR

Both female and male members of a grower's family at Gangachhara in Rangpur are seen busy in cleaning and drying the newly harvested *boro* paddy. Farmers here achieved bumper production of the crop, but they are being deprived of its fair price.

## Miscreants cut tendons of BCL leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Unidentified miscreants cut the tendons of right hand and right leg of Shah Mostafa Alamgir, organising secretary of the central committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Joynagar in front of veterinary hospital in the district town on Sunday midnight. None was arrested.

Police sources said when Alamgir was returning to his home at Kurpar from the district Awami League office, a group of culprits obstructed him and cut his tendons of wrist of his right hand and heel of his right leg. He was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. None was arrested.

## RU students protest PSC decision

RU CORRESPONDENT,

Several hundred students of Rajshahi University (RU) brought out a series of processions and barricaded the Rajshahi-Dhaka highway on Sunday protesting the decision of Public Service Commission (PSC) to score minimum 45 per cent marks in Bangla and English to qualify for sitting in 25th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) competitive examination.

They demanded cancellation of the decision.

After the procession they barricaded the Rajshahi-Dhaka highway at the main gate point of the university. A number of buses and trucks got stranded on both sides of the highway. After one hour the barricade was withdrawn at the request of the Proctor.



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Farmers harvesting *boro* paddy from their land at a village in Naogaon where bumper yield of the crop has been reported. Despite loss of crop in series of cyclonic storms, growers here expect 20-25 maunds of paddy per acre of land.

## Eight lakh killed in 39 cyclonic storms in coastal belt in 40 yrs

ABDUL MONAYEM KHAN, Cox's Bazar

Thirty nine cyclonic storms left eight lakh people dead in the coastal areas in 40 years.

Property worth crores of taka destroyed during the period in cyclones in the offshore islands.

But proper and adequate infrastructures are still absent to face cyclone, tidal surge and other natural calamities in the vulnerable coastal areas.

A master plan of Tk 2,000 crore was prepared in 1986 to face the natural calamities in the coastal areas, but it was shelved. Met office sources said that 12,050 square kilometre areas in 52 coastal upazilas are vulnerable to natural calamities. Of the area 9,962 square km in 238 unions of 47 upazilas are most risky for cyclone, tidal surge and other natural calamities in the vulnerable coastal areas.

NGO sources said that 80 lakh people live in the vulnerable areas.

At present, there are more than 1,400 cyclone shelters in the vulnerable areas. But many of those have become unfit for use as those were constructed long ago.

Red Crescent and government officials said some 10 lakh people took shelter at the cyclone shelters after the great danger signal number 10 was hoisted on May 19, 1997.

Because of early warning and evacuation of the inhabitants, the casualty figure was low. Some 200 people died in the cyclonic storm.

But hundreds of houses, property

and crops worth crores of taka damaged in the coastal belt of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

The cyclone on April 29, 1991 killed at least 1,38,866 people. It also affected 1,07 crore people in 95 thanas and eight municipal areas in 18 districts. The cyclone also destroyed standing crops on 98,113 acres totally and 6,22,384 acres partially. Some 7,88,081 houses were damaged. Some 10.3 lakh cattle perished in the cyclone. The damage to crops in 1991 cyclone was estimated at Tk 114,47 crore, to educational institutions Tk 467 crore, to civil aviation Tk 3.20 crore and to Chittagong port Tk 500 crore. And the total number of damaged bridges and culverts was 496.

According to available data, the death toll was 545 in 1996, 91 in 1995, 134 in 1994, 11,650 on May 25, 1985, and 19,279 on May 12, 1986.

Unofficial death toll in the cyclonic storm in 1970 was 10 lakh, though officially it was five lakh.

Some 11,520 people were killed by cyclone on May 25, 1985, 19,279 were killed on May 12, 1986 and 3,000 others were killed on October 9, 1960.

About eight lakh coastal people of seven upazilas of Kutubdia, Moheskhal, Pekua, Chokoria, Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ukhia and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district became panic-stricken as a severe cyclone formed over the Bay of Bengal recently.

In adequate cyclone shelters still pose a major challenge to the evacuation of tens of thousands of people living in the coastal areas of the district. Cox's Bazaar needs at least 550 shelters, but at present there are 416 shelters.

## Notorious criminal remanded in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A notorious criminal was placed on seven days' remand on Monday. The criminal was Md Hasan Ahmed, 38, alias Hasainya Dakat (robber).

Police arrested Hasan, an accused in 23 criminal cases including five murders and sensational United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) capture case, from Gondamara in Banskhali on Sunday morning.

One of his accomplices Nuruchhafa, also an accused in three criminal cases, was also arrested and two fire arms were recovered. Banskhali thana police said, during the remand Hasan would be interrogated about the illegal fire arms under his possession.

Hasan and his gang was involved in delivery and smuggling of goods worth around Tk. 1 crore at the coastal area of Gondamara on May 2. Centering the incident Hasan and his gang had a quarrel with police. Following at the continued threat from the gang 14, police force were withdrawn.

After the incident police became active to arrest the notorious criminal. Police sources said, Hasan was involved in the sensational UCBL bank capture incident that took place in Dhaka in early 1999. Besides, five incidents of murder he was involved in many killing, robbery and smuggling cases.

He was accused of killing Abdul Mazid in 1987, Abu Taher in 1990, Nurul Kabir in 1994, housewife Hamida Ali in 1997 and Gondamara Union Parishad (UP) chairman Badiul Alam in 1998.

During the killing of the UP chairman, Hasan and his gang looted three licensed fire arms.

Hasan was also allegedly involved in killing six fishermen at Banskhali that took place around two and a half years back.

Hasan severed one leg and one hand of Mostafa Ali on July 29, 2001 for helping police recover six fire arms from him.

However, Hasan confessed his involvement in the murders of Abu Taher and Nurul Kabir. He denied other charges.



Mymensingh municipality Chairman Advocate Mahmud Al-Nur feeding a malnourished child nutritious food made by World Vision Bangladesh, a major non-governmental organisation (NGO). World Vision has undertaken a programme to supply four packets of nutritious food to each malnourished mother and two packets to each malnourished child of a ward in Mymensingh Sadar and eight remote villages of Phulbari thana every day.