

Power outage pounds tea industry in peak season

Moulvibazar and Habiganj need 44 MW, get 13 MW: Tea processing factories kept closed from 6am to 11pm: USAID proposal for a substation for gardens gathers dust in ministry

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Tea production in Moulvibazar and Habigonj districts is being greatly hampered during the ongoing peak season due to load shedding in tea gardens.

Over 100 tea gardens in the two districts out of total 161 in the country produce around 75 per cent of the total tea production. But production is being affected in at least 63 of the factories now, sources said.

Moulvibazar Polly Biddut Samity (PBS) and Habigonj Polly Biddut Samity (PBS) are supplying power to the tea gardens and factories here.

Tea industry sources at Sreemongal said, 39 tea factories in Moulvibazar faced 725 hours of load shedding and 21 factories in Habiganj suffered 1225 hours from March to May 10 this year.

The factory authorities are compelled to keep their factories closed from 6 pm to 11pm every day due to load shedding.

April to November is the peak season for tea production. So it is important to ensure uninterrupted power supply during this period, they said.

Sources at PBS offices at Srimongal and Shayestaganj said they are not getting the required power from the Power

Development Board (PDB).

Moulvibazar PBS needs 21 MW daily, including 12 MW for tea gardens. But PDB now supplies only 7 MW. Habiganj PBS needs 23 MW, including seven MW for tea gardens but it gets only six MW.

Sources at some of the gardens said a USAID survey team during its visit to gardens Moulvibazar and Habiganj in 1996 suggested setting up of separate power substations for tea garden areas.

As per its suggestion, a proposal to establish a 10 MW power plant at Srimongal was submitted to the ministry. It is gathering dust, they claimed.

The gardens suffering for load

shedding in Moulvibazar include Bharaura, Zerim, Balishira, Julekha, Denstone, Rajghat, Khejurichhera, Amrailchhera, Satgaon, Saifi, Mirjapur, Jangalbari, Hamidia, Madhabpur, Kurma, Champaroy, Patrokhola, Dholai, Srigobindapur, Madan Mohanpur, Nurjahan, Fulbari, Alinagar, Shamsernagar, Chatlapur, Mirtinga and Hussainabad tea estates.

Those in Habiganj include Surma, Noyapara, Teliapara, Jagadishpur, Baikunthapur, Nalua, Rena, Duendi, Lalchand, Daragaon, Sribari, Parkul, Rasidpur, Modhupur, Brindabonpur and Imam tea estates.

Tk 1.10 CR TEST RELIEF RICE SCAM IN GAIBANDHA 31 including officials face BAC case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) has filed a case against 31 people including the former Gaibandha District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer and Palashbari UNO in connection with misappropriation of 853 tonnes of rice worth about Tk one crore 10 lakh 89 thousand in fiscal 2001-2002 showing fake delivery orders of the relief ministry.

A former Union Parishad chairman and 17 UP members have also been charged in the case filed with Palashbari thana on Thursday. The case was filed by Polashbari thana

Officer-in-Charge Yusuf Ali.

They have been charged under Section 5 (2) of Corruption Resistance Act 1947 and sections 409, 420, 467, 468, 471 and 109 of BPC (Bangladesh Penal Code).

It has been alleged that in fiscal year 2001-2002, 853 tonnes of rice were released against 354 test relief projects in Kishoregari, Mahdipur, Barisal, Haripur and Palashbari unions under Palashbari Upazila under fake orders of the relief ministry.

The fake orders were faxed to the then Deputy Commissioner and the District Relief and

Rehabilitation Officer.

On getting the message, the then DC ordered delivery of the rice.

A 3-member team from the Relief Ministry investigated the matter last year and found all the 28 faxed allocation orders fake.

The matter was then referred to the Bureau of Anti-corruption. The District BAC re-investigated the matter for about one and a half years and filed the case. BAC Assistant Inspector did the investigation, sources said.

The probe revealed that former chairman of Kishoregari Union

Parishad Abdul Jalil Sarker and 17 UP members misappropriated of the rice allocated against 57 projects.

The accused persons are former Gaibandha District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Sirajul Islam Sikder, former Upazila Project Implementation Officer Shamsul Alam, former chairman of Kishoregari UP Abdul Jalil Sarker, 17 former UP members and Palashbari UNO Dulal Krishna Shaha.

The then District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer was suspended after the ministry probe.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial of the participants at the orientation course on Marshy Land Management, held at Debhata on Friday.

'Evolve planned shrimp culture in S-W region'

200 students join course on waterbody management

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at an orientation course on Friday said the ecology and the environment are being greatly affected due to unplanned building of dams in rivers waterbodies in the south-western coastal region.

Salt water is flowing into croplands because of this, destroying land fertility.

The orientation course on "Marshy Land Management in South-West Coastal Region" was organised by a local NGO, Uttaran. It was held at Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah College at Debhata.

With Mauluzzaman Jamadda in

the chair, Principal Riazul Islam was present as chief guest. Vice-principal Abdul Majid was the special guest at the function, conducted by Mostafiz Kamal.

The discussants said lands in Satkhira, earlier used for agriculture, are now being brought under shrimp cultivation in an unplanned way. This is destroying their fertility.

The government, in cooperation with local authorities and shrimp farmers should evolve a policy for planned shrimp cultivation. This will increase the yield and also release lands now under shrimp cultivation, they said.

Dwelling on salinity, they said government efforts can not protect

lands here from the scourge. Local initiative, taking the people in confidence, is necessary.

They called upon political leaders to realise the problem and mobilise people with an aim to stop unplanned construction of dykes and shrimp enclosures.

More than 200 hundred students of KBA College, Hazi Kiyamuddin Mahila College and Debhata college took part in the course, where a set of recommendations were adopted to face natural and man-made disasters.

It was addressed by, among others, Advocate Mosharraf Hossain, Shahiua Nazma Poppy, Abdur Rashid and Selim.

SNAPS

6 fishermen bullet-hit by pirates in Moheshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Six fishermen were bullet-hit in an attack by pirates in the Bay near Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar Friday afternoon.

Sources said, some 30 fishermen from Banshkhali set out for fishing in two boats at around 9 AM.

As the boats reached near Ghutibhanga in Madarbari near Moheshkhali, some 25 pirates on board an engine boat attacked and fired shots on them, injuring six.

They are Syed Noor, 30, Babul Jalodash, 25, Gunadhar Bahodder, 22, Md Ilias, 35, Md Hossain, 55, and Faridul Alam, 24.

They have been admitted to Banshkhali health complex.

2 of Osman Bahini held after gunfight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police held two bullet-hit criminals after a gunfight with members of infamous Osman Bahini in Fatikchhari on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, Fatikchhari police raided Sairapara area. Sensing presence of police, the criminals opened fire. Police also replied with shots.

Police caught two bullet-hit miscreants. They are Jahangir Alam, 29, and Altaf Hossain alias Lengra (Iame) Manik, 27. The rest fled away.

Jahangir has been admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, police said.

Amir Khosru opens Ctg tree fair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury MP inaugurated a 10-day tree fair at Laldighi Moidan in the port city on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion he called for making the government's tree plantation movement a success to attain 25 per cent afforestation of the country's area by 2015 to maintain ecological balance.

The Department of Forest arranged the fair.

Speaking on the occasion, State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury urged the people to avail the government's social afforestation programme to alleviate poverty.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Ashrafal Moqbul and Additional Deputy Commissioner SM Abu Taher also addressed the function chaired by Forest Conservator Abdul Motalieb.

Airport handover to threaten national security'

Mayor Mohiuddin says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury has protested the government decision to hand over management and operation of Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong to Thai Airways.

In a statement on Thursday night, the Mayor said the handover of management without any international tender is "unethical" and "beyond rules". Local entrepreneurs have been deprived.

"This will establish foreign authority on the Key Point Installation and may threaten national security", the statement said.

The Mayor said the international airport was handed over to a foreign company due to inefficiency and irregularities by officials and the minister concerned. "It is their failure".

Mayor Mohiuddin demanded removal of the minister concerned and cancellation of the decision.

Tk 20 lakh shrimps poisoned to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Shrimps worth about Tk 20 lakh were poisoned to death by miscreants in a farm at Hajra Kati village in Tala upazila on Friday night.

Police said a gang of miscreants, in a sequel to previous enmity, poured poison into the shrimp enclosure owned by one Shahadat Hossain at dead of night killing all the shrimps.

Shahet Hossain has filed an FIR with Tala thana.

KCC-KDA stand-off over 3 prime revenue sources

KCC revenue declines 40 percent due to "alarming" rise in extortion, mayor says

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and Khulna Development Authority (KDA) are now at loggerheads, creating a deadlock in development activities.

City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur has claimed his "RCC right" over three important installations controlled by KDA. These are Sonadanga bus terminal, Rupsha New market and KDA New Market.

KCC says KDA New Market, Rupsha New Market and Sonadanga bus terminal have been constructed by KDA. According to terms and conditions, KDA was bound to handover the three installations to KCC as those were built on the land given by KCC on condition.

But KDA seems to be determined not to hand over those to KCC as "there is no provision like that in the agreement with KCC".

The KCC Mayer wrote a letter on April 10 to LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan complaining against KDA for illegal possession of the three installations. He sought the minister's intervention to compel KDA to "comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement by handing over Sonadanga bus terminal, KDA New market and Rupsha New Market".

The Mayor also wrote another letter to Hosing and Works Minister Mirza Abbas seeking his intervention to resolve the dispute.

Mirza Abbas asked the secretary of the ministry to submit a report on the matter after a probe.

The probe report submitted to Mirza Abbas by Deputy Secretary (Admn-2) Mohammad Mahbubur

Anti-drug day observed in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Anti-drug day was observed here yesterday with various programmes including processions and discussion meetings, organised by the district administration and different socio-cultural organisations.

The day's events began with a big gathering of students from different schools, colleges and representatives of socio-cultural bodies on the Zila Pareshad premises, followed by a colourful procession in the town. The processionists carrying banners, posters and fastoons chanted anti-drug slogans.

It was led by Deputy commissioner Md Younusur Rahman and Police Superintendent ATM Tareque.

The processionists then converged at the municipal auditorium, where a discussion meeting was held with ADM Banamali Bhawnik in the chair.

Advocate Haroon-Al-Rashid MP was the chief guest and the DC, the SP and Municipal Chairman Md Hafizur Rahman Mulla Kachi were the special guests.

It was addressed by, among others, Advocate Tanvir Ahmed, convener of the District Anti-rug Committee, physician Ali Ahsan, Md Foyez Ahmed, Abul Bashir, Advocate Sirajul Islam, freedom fighters Jalal, Uddin and Abu Huraira, Narcotics Control Department Inspector Md Mehdi Hosan.



PHOTO: STAR

The Akhaura-Agartola road, snapped yesterday near the Akhaura border check post, was under 2 to 3 feet water.

42 villages flooded in B'baria

Over one lakh affected as Saldanadi, Haura rivers burst banks at 5 points

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

At least 42 villages were flooded in Akhaura and Koshba upazilas affecting over one lakh people as rain-fed Haura and Saldanadi rivers rolling from Tripura hills in India burst their banks at several points Friday night.

Two kilometres of the Akhaura-Agartola road in Bangladesh territory went under knee deep water. Movement of trucks and busses on the road were stopped.

Portions of several other roads in the two upazilas also went under water, ADC (General) Abdullah Mamun told this correspondent after a visit to the affected areas.

The worst affected villages are

Sanarba Kushumbari, Nunasar, Kholapara, Chaigoria, Joynagar, Bautola, Rajendrapur, Brashtapur, Noorpur, Adampur, Tanuapara, Kalkapur, Anandapur, Abdullahpur, Narayanpur, Mugra and Bayek.

Local body leaders in those areas said most of people in those villages have become marooned as rural kutcha roads have gone four to five feet water.

The Haura river burst its embankment at five points at Mugra, Kushumbari, Tanuapara, Dhutraphela and Khalapara due to three days' incessant rain and onrush of waters from across the border, official sources in the district town

said.

The Saldanadi burst its embankment at three points at Nayanpur, Bayek and Konakata.

They said the situation may deteriorate as flood water is gushing through all the breaches in the two rivers. Water is also rolling down the Kalandi channel, originating in the Indian hills, they said.

The crop damage is yet to be ascertained. Fishes in scores of ponds have been washed away.

The district administration yesterday distributed five tonnes of wheat in worst affected areas in Koshba and two tonnes in Akhaura, sources said.



EAM Asaduzzaman



Tahmin Haq Bobby

New journos' body formed in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A new journalists' body styled Reporters Association of Nilphamari was formed here on Friday with a pledge to do constructive journalism.

EAM Asaduzzaman Tipu, correspondent of The Daily Star and Tahmin Haq Bobby, correspondent of the Janokantho were elected president and general secretary respectively of the 15-member body for a two-year term.

All local journalists representing the print and electronic media took part in the election.

Other office bearers include: Vice-presidents--Mostafa Abid (Jugantor, NTV) and Mozaffar Ali (BSS, Ittefaq); assistant secretary--Shaheen Jahangir Alam (New Age); finance secretary--Mir Mahmudul Astat (Prothom Alo); office secretary--Ratan Sarkar (ATN Bangla, Karotoa); sports and cultural secretary Ansarul Islam Jewel (local weekly Nil Sagor).



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers of non-government educational institutions brought out a procession in Barisal city on Friday protesting the draft National Budget in which additional allocation has not been proposed for them.