

Samples from Atrai show presence of 49pc iron

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Scientists of Institute of Mining, Mineralogy and Meteorology (IMMM) in Joypurhat have found 49 per cent presence of iron in the randomly collected samples from the Atrai riverbed in Khansama upazila under the district.

"We conducted a laboratory test and found 49 per cent iron along with 35 per cent silica and 16 per cent

other particles in the previously collected samples," Prodip Kumar Biswas, a geologist and senior scientific officer of IMMM, said yesterday.

A five-member team of IMMM under Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) visited the site on Sunday.

The team led by Prodip Kumar Biswas comprised chemical engineer Imran Hossain, soil scientist Shanjida Sultana and two

technicians of IMMM laboratory, arrived at Guliyara village in Khansama upazila at around 10:30am Sunday.

During their four-hour visit to the area, they talked with a number of villagers of Guliyara and several adjacent villages in the area when the locals informed them that many of them have been facing trouble to sink tube-wells in the area.

Suggesting that the problem might be due to presence of iron ore, the experts

they would recommend Petrobangla and Department of Geological Survey of Bangladesh to conduct a survey to assess the deposition of iron in Atrai River.

The deposition of iron at Atrai riverbed seems to have been transported there with the river flow from the upstream in other neighbouring countries, said the experts.

They collected samples for further laboratory test.

Earlier, Mir Mohammad Abdul Hannan, deputy general manager (Geology) of Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd, told this correspondent, "Our observation suggests presence of iron ore in around 500-metre radius area, but the area may be found to be larger if survey is conducted."

Earlier on March 5, engineer Quarumzaman, managing director of BCMCL, Mir Mohammad Abdul Hannan, DGM (Geology), Sirajul Islam DGM (Admin), and Dr Shahahat Hossain Khan, professor of soil science department of Haji Danesh Science and Technology University visited the spot and confirmed the presence of iron ore in Atrai River.

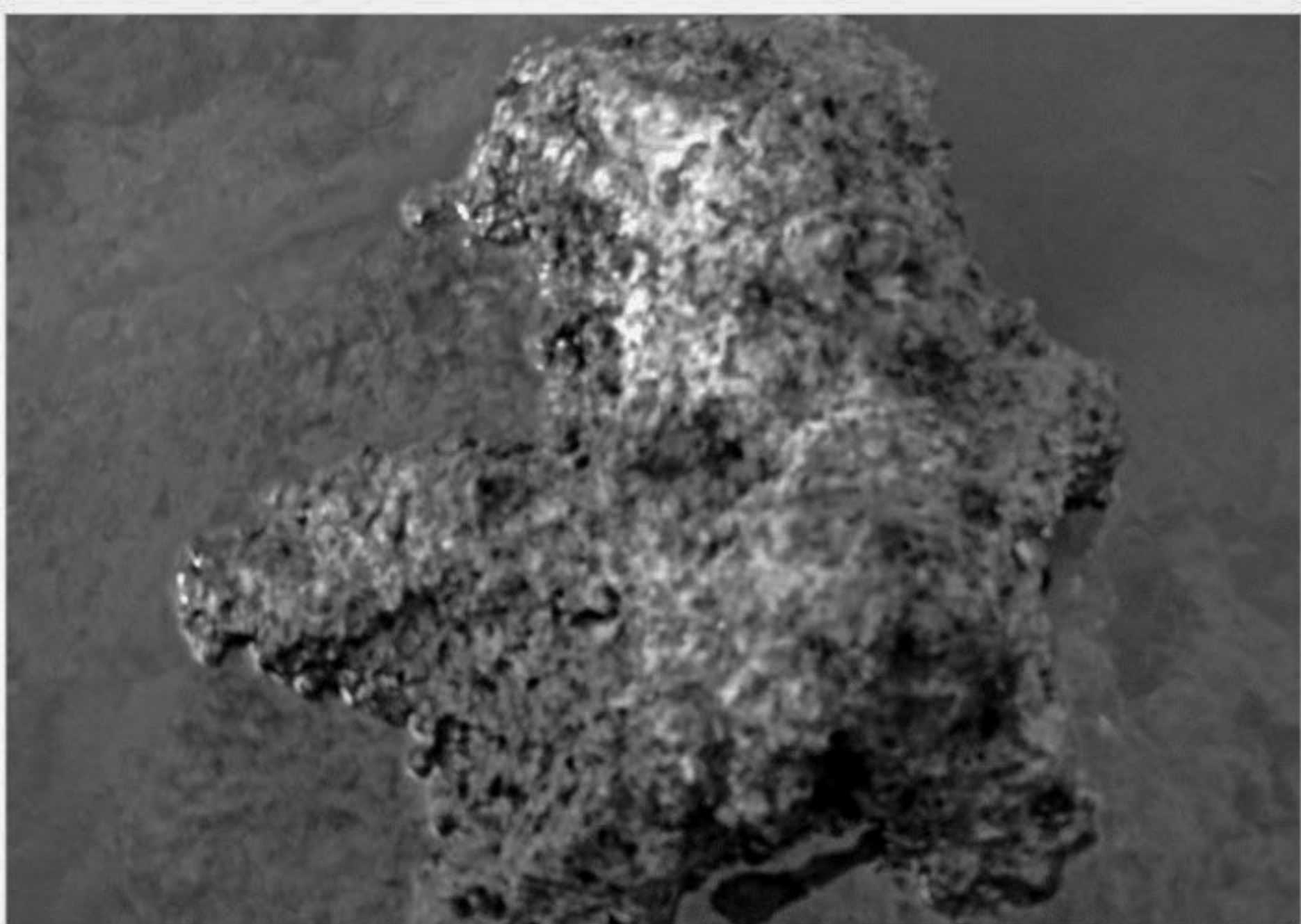


PHOTO: STAR

Scientists have found presence of 49 per cent iron in the samples collected from Atrai riverbed.



PHOTO: STAR

Remains of a 1300-year-old temple were found during excavation at Bhitargarh archaeological site in Panchagarh district recently.

More features of post-Gupta period found in Panchagarh

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

The ongoing excavation by the teachers and students of the Department of General Education of the University of Liberal Arts has brought to light some interesting features of post Gupta period structures at Bhitargarh archaeological site in Panchagarh district.

A team of the department headed by Prof Dr Shahnaz Husne Jahan started an archaeological excavation in the country's largest fortified ancient city Bhitargarh in 2008 aiming at finding out the history of the protected archaeological site.

The team earlier found a cruciform temple of post Gupta period along with other artefacts like copper and iron made objects and a black stone made statue of goddess 'Manasa', said Dr Shahnaz.

Recently found brick built structures belong to a temple of 7th century AD but the construction technol-

ogy was different from other fortified cities like Mohasthangarh in Bogra, said Dr Shahnaz.

"We have found that the 25-square-kilometre city was independent and it was the part of 'Kamrup state' in India. The city was protected by four fortified walls, which is only one of its kind in the country," she said.

"The people constructed three stone embankments on the Shalmara River in the city to irrigate. Our research findings show that they also developed themselves in engineering and technologically.

The city people maintained good business relations with Mohasthangarh city as well as different places in India, Nepal, Bhutan, China and some other South Asian countries through rivers, she said.

"The existing pond in the city is an exceptional one because of its brick built bank."

The team will continue their excavation till April and it will start again in September this year, said Dr Shahnaz.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Fishermen buy freedom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two fishermen, who were abducted by 'forest robbers' from the Matiranga canal in the river Mamundo in the Sundarbans on Thursday, were released on payment of Tk 30,000 ransom each on Sunday afternoon. The fishermen are Nur Hossain of village Parshekhali and Murshid Gazi of village Jyotindranagar in Shyamnagar upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Villagers found two cubs of fishing cats at an abandoned hut at Bilbilas under Baufal upazila of Patuakhali on Sunday night. They were later rescued by the owner of the hut, Abdus Sattar Mia.

Three held for intrusion

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Three Indian nationals, including a customs official, were held at Benapole Bazar yesterday morning on charge of intruding into Bangladesh territory. The arrestees were identified as customs official at Petrapole check post Balai Paul, his son Tonmoy Paul and Sotyajit Maiti, son of Ajit Kumar Maiti of Medinipur district in Paschim Banga. Commander Sher-e-Alam at Benapole camp of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) said the three Indians entered Benapole Bazar, one and a half kilometres into Bangladesh territory from the border. Local people informed the BGB men suspecting their movement. Later, the border guards arrested them at around 11:00am.

Abducted girl rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A 14-year-old girl, abducted by criminals while going to school in Assassuni upazila on Saturday, was rescued by police from a Dhaka-bound night coach at Goalando ferry ghat in Rajbari district around 10pm the same day. Police also arrested the alleged abductor, Sheikh Abu Taher, 22, son of Sheikh Zulfikar of village Dargahpur in the upazila. The victim is a class nine student of Dargahpur Collegiate School. Quoting relatives of the victim police said, the accused used to stalk the girl on way to school. Victim's father Sheikh Sadar Uddin filed a case with Assassuni PS.

Woman murdered

UNB, Sirajganj

A three-month pregnant woman was killed allegedly by husband at Charnalshapara in the town on Sunday. The dead is Hazera Khatun, 20, wife of Helal Uddin of Nalshapara village of Sadar upazila. Locals said Hazera was married off with Helal, son of Monir Uddin of Charnalshapara Mahalla two years ago. Helal and his sister-in-law (bhabhi), who lives at the same house, developed an extra-marital affair soon after the marriage. On Sunday, Helal strangled Hazera to death and went into hiding.

BCL-backed outsiders beat up Kuet staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An employee of transport section of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) was seriously injured in an attack by two BCL-backed outsiders on Sunday.

The injured, now under treatment at the KMCH, was identified as Imran Hossain, 25, helper of a Kuet bus.

According to the sources at Kuet, the incident occurred following a dispute over sharing of bribe for appointment.

Imran was appointed on March 1 last as an employee of the transport pool on daily wages basis by offering Tk two lakh. A driver and an auto mechanic received the money from him, the sources said.

At about 6pm on Sunday, two leaders of Khanjahan Ali thana unit of Chhatra League went to the campus and demanded share of the money.

At one stage of altercation over the matter, they beat up Imran seriously for refusing to pay any amount to them.

Earlier Kuet was shut for over a month from January 2 following a violence led by a group of non-student BCL cadres.

Fake fertiliser factories sealed, six jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) unearthed two fake fertiliser factories and arrested six people in this connection on Friday night.

The arrestees are Pappu, 20, son of Hasen Ali, Emon Khan, 13, son of Abdul Awal of Mirpur Dakkhin Moholla, Mamun Sheikh, 25, son of Abdul Mazid of Goila Moholla, Ibrahim Khalil, 45, son of late Abdul Jabbar, Kartik Halder, 20, son of Shombhu Halder of Char Raipur Moholla under Sirajganj Municipal area and Rubel Khan, 16, son of Zahurul Haque of Chandaikona village in Raiganj upazila in the district.

On Friday night, a team of Rab-12 at Sirajganj camp, led by ASP Rabiul Islam, raided the two rented fertiliser factories of Jewel Rana and recovered a huge quantity of fake fertiliser and fertiliser making materials including coloured brick dust and sand from the spot.

A mobile court, led by executive magistrate Ashraful Islam, later awarded one year's imprisonment to the six arrestees and sealed the two factories.

Arms, bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man along with three firearms and recovered 37 petrol bombs from two places of the district town on Sunday night and yesterday.

The arms were recovered from the possession of wanted criminal Imrul Javed, 30, at Paschim Paikpara village early yesterday.

According to Rab-9, acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force at Bhairab camp raided Imrul's den and arrested him with one pistol, two guns and three big knives.

Major Abdullah Al Mamun, the commanding officer at the camp, said they had information that Imrul was illegally selling and buying firearms for long.

The forces at the same camp recovered 37 petrol bombs from Kazipara of the town at around 8:30pm on Sunday.

The CO said while recovering the petrol bombs they failed to arrest anyone as the bombs were found in an abandoned condition.

Fire incidents kill minor girl, damage 30 houses, 23 shops

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Fire incidents killed a 6-year-old girl and damaged at least 30 houses and 23 shops in five districts on Sunday.

A minor girl was burnt alive and 13 houses were gutted in a fire at Dakkhin Charagram Moholla in Chapainawabganj municipal area on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Priya Karmakar, 6, daughter of Lob Karmakar of the area, reports our correspondent.

Mahmudul Haque, station officer of Chapainawabganj fire service said, the fire broke out at about 10:30pm when Lob's family members including Priya were asleep.

Locals managed to rescue other members of the family but failed to save Priya.

The fire spread quickly and gutted 13 houses.

On information,

firefighters rushed to the spot and put out the blaze at about 1:00am with the help of local people.

In Rangpur, at least 7 shops were gutted in a fire at the bus stand market in Pirganj upazila on Sunday night.

Eyewitnesses said that the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at a mobile phone sales centre at the market, reports a correspondent.

As all the shops were locked, locals could not save any goods or valuables. Owners of the shops said the damage caused by the fire would be around Tk 20 lakh.

Angry victims and locals tried to attack the firefighters as they came late. The firefighters quickly fled away from the spot.

In Bagerhat, a fierce fire gutted three dwelling houses in Nagerbazar area of the district town on Sunday evening.

Local people said the fire

originated from the kitchen of a house of Ratan Pal at around 6:00pm and soon engulfed the adjoining two houses.

In Pabna, at least 14 houses were gutted in Ramchandrapur village in Sadar upazila on Sunday noon, reports our correspondent.

Locals said that the fire originated from a stove at Manu Fakir's residence at about 2:00pm and spread to adjoining houses.

Victims claimed that the fire damaged property worth Tk 10 lakh.

Our correspondent in Sirajganj adds: At least 16 shops of Alam Market, adjacent to Mousumi Cinema Hall in the town, were gutted at about 12:45pm on Sunday.

Locals said that the fire broke out at a quilt shop owned by one Momin of the market and quickly spread to other 15 shops.



PHOTO: STAR

Two women take care of medicinal plants cultivated in Pachish Mile area in Madhupur upazila of Tangail yesterday.

'Grow medicinal plants, not eucalyptus, acacia'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Speakers at an awareness programme in Madhupur upazila under the district yesterday urged the government to take steps for planting medicinal plants instead of eucalyptus and acacia in Madhupur forest to preserve its biodiversity.

Although locals have already caused a great deal of damage to the traditional *sal* forest including its medicinal plants and biodiversity, they can contribute to its revival if awareness is created, they said at the programme in Pachish Mile area in Madhupur upazila.

As part of campaign for organic cultivation, popularisation of medicinal plants in home treatment and employment generation through their cultivation and marketing, non-governmental organisation Society for Protection of Medicinal Plant and Environment (SEMP) arranged the programme in Pachish Mile area in Madhupur upazila in cooperation with Oxfam GB.

The campaign aims at increasing aware-

ness about the use of medicinal plants for quality treatment and promoting income generating activities through cultivation and marketing of the plants, the speakers said.

Revival of near extinct species of medicinal plants and their large-scale cultivation can contribute greatly to primary health care, especially for the poor people, they said.

Madhupur Assistant Conservator of Forest Rajesh Chakma, Joinshahi Unnayan Parishad President Eugene Nokrek, village herbal practitioner Khagendra Dibra, and medicinal plant cultivators Ishak Bangali of Sherpur and Nirmola Hadima of Madhupur addressed the programme presided over by SEMP Chairman Robi Khan.

The delegates at the programme distributed medicinal plants among local students.

A photo exhibition on climate change by artist Mohammad Shaju and an exhibition of eatable foods and medicinal plants of *sal* forests were also arranged on the same venue.

Mymensingh-based organisation Mati screened a film show on climate change at the ending session of the programme.