

Tots at 200 schools suffer for want of tubewells

KAFIL MAHMUD, *Khagrachhari*

Lack of tubewells for potable water in over 200 primary schools out of 433 in the district is causing immense sufferings to hundreds of kids and staffs.

The students, teachers and other staffs of these government institutions have to take pains every school day to walk to adjacent areas in search of water.

District Primary Education Officer sources said that apart from 105 primary schools without any tubewells, severe water crisis prevails in another 114 as the existing tubewells at those schools are out of order for long.

We have sent a list of all the schools that lack water facility to the district public health office recently, said an official, adding that they had also requested the executive engineer for prompt steps to resolve the crisis.

Students of the Mohalchhara Government Primary School under Sadar upazila, established in 1961, said that they often have to risk their lives as they cross the main road in search of a tubewell for potable water.

Kamita Chakma of grade-5 of the school said even for minor washing they have to cross the busy road.

"The school toilets are almost unusable due to lack of water and we suffer most during school hours," Usa



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Mohalchhara Government High School in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila take a risky walk across the adjoining main road to collect drinking water as there is no tube well on the school premises.

Marma of grade-4 at the same school told this correspondent.

Shipan Akter, teacher of the school, echoed the children saying that teachers and other staffs were also equally suffering due to the water crisis.

Headmistress of the school Mousumi Tripura said that water crisis is a long-standing problem at the school.

"I have informed the authorities concerned but they seem too indifferent to the matter. I asked them to

install a tubewell and mitigate the suffering," Tripura said.

Barapara Government Primary School, established in 1962 under Sadar upazila, is also facing similar problems.

Khagasshar Tripura, headmaster of the school, said that the sanitation problem at the school due to lack of water was too acute.

"Sometimes the children are forced to drink unhygienic surface water from nearby sources for which

they often suffer from water-borne diseases," he said.

"I wrote to the authorities concerned several times but in return we got nothing but hollow promises," he added.

Contacted, the executive engineer at Khagrachhari public health office told this correspondent that a project was being taken up to address the problem.

"We shall soon start repair and installation of tubewells in these primary schools," he said.

Top outlaw arrested in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Police arrested a top leader of an outlawed outfit from Nandanpur village on Wednesday night.

The arrestee was identified as Asadul Islam alias Asad, 35, regional leader of PBCP Red Flag faction.

Officer in-charge of Ataikula police station Robiul Hasan Sarkar said, acting on a tip off, a team from Ataikula PS raided a field at Nandanpur village on Wednesday night and arrested Asad.

Asad is accused in several cases including for murder with Ataikula PS, the OC said.

Wild elephants kill woman in Sherpur

UNB, *Sherpur*

A woman was killed in an attack by wild elephants at Hariakuna village in Sribardi upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nesfali Marak, 25, mother of a four-day-old boy and wife of Sandip Sangma of the village.

Witnesses said a herd of marauding wild elephants attacked the village and trampled Nesfali in front of her home, leaving her dead on the spot at around 4.00am.

The elephants also ransacked several houses.

Cop that kicked elderly farmer to death, closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogra*

The policeman accused of kicking an elderly farmer to death in Nandigram upazila under the district on Wednesday, along with his accompanying constable, was closed to the police lines yesterday morning.

The two policemen are assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Prodig Kumar and constable Samiul Islam of Nandigram Police Station.

The victim, Haresh Ali, 55, son of Fakir Ali Molla of Chokkoroi village under Bhatgram union of Nandigram upazila, was playing cards with four or five others near Hatkoroi Bazar at around 1:00pm when the two policemen went there.

ASI Prodig Kumar kicked

Haresh hard, causing his death on the spot, locals said.

They alleged that the law enforcers became angry as Haresh failed to meet their demand for bribe.

After the incident, local people brought out a procession demanding punishment for the killing.

At around 4:00pm on the day, they tried to bring out another procession with the body of the deceased but police prevented them.

"We want justice for my father's murder by police. We went to the police station to file a murder case but police asked us to wait until getting the autopsy report," the victim's daughter Feroza Begum told this correspondent.

When asked, ASI Prodig

Kumar said he went to the spot to arrest the 'gamblers' but he did not hit Haresh Ali.

Haresh Ali's body was sent to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital for autopsy, said Aminur Rahman, officer in charge of Nandigram police station.

"We have closed the two accused policemen to the police lines. A two-member investigation committee led by Additional SP Abdul Warish will give report on the incident within five days.

After getting investigation report or autopsy report we will receive the murder case. Meantime police has filed a general diary (GD) in this connection," said Mozzammel Haque, superintendent of police of Bogra.



PHOTO: STAR

With hardly any warm clothe, impoverish Sakhina Begum, 65, of Bhajandanga village in Faridpur Sadar upazila shows all signs of despair as the ongoing severe cold wave has come as an added woe to her, like millions of others across the country.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

Students form a human chain in front of Gopalganj Press Club yesterday to press for their demand to extend the age limit for entering government services to 35 years.

Girl commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

A 12-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide at Islampur village in Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon. Identified as Lota Khatun, daughter of Ibrahim Hossain of the village, she was a student of class five at Islampur Dakhil Madrasa. She was married off to one Monirul Islam of the same village a few months ago. Quoting family members police said, Lota came to her father's house three days ago. But yesterday noon they found the body hanging from the ceiling of her room.

Man held over wife's suicide

UNB, *Benapole, Jessore*

Police arrested a man on charge of instigating his wife to commit suicide at Baliadanga village in Sadar upazila of the district on Wednesday. The arrestee was identified as Monir Mollah, tenant of a house of one Babu at the village. Police said Monir used to live in a rented room with his first wife Rashida and they often locked into altercation centering his second marriage. As a sequel to this, Rashida committed suicide, they said.

Mobile court fines 10 shops

A CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A mobile court in separate drives fined 10 shops Tk 25,700 on different charges in Robibazar and Kulaura town in Kulaura upazila yesterday. The court, led by executive magistrate Hasin Aktar, conducted the drive. It fined Amena Misti Ghar, Masuk Traders, Global Homeopathic Clinic and Harbal Medical Centre in Kulaura district town a total of Tk 8,200. In Robibazar, the court fined Ishtikutum Restaurant, Modern restaurant, Jalalabad Bakery, Sujon Mishti Ghar, Al-Amin Dental Care and Al-Azia Auto Rice Mill Tk 17,500. The eateries were found preparing and selling food in an unhygienic environment.

25,000 yaba pills seized

UNB, *Cox's Bazar*

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) arrested three people along with 25,000 pieces of sex-stimulating yaba tablets in a pick-up van at Cox's Bazar Link Road here early yesterday. The arrestees were identified as Shah Azam, 18, son of Jamal of Rongkhali area, Mostafizur Rahman, 22, son of Farid Ahmed of Alikhali area in Teknaf upazila and Ashrafur Islam, 29, son of Saiful Islam of Matlab in Chandpur district.

Pumpkins stocked in good time help them in bad days

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Luck smiled on pumpkin farmers of char areas, who usually remain jobless during this time of year, as they had a bumper production this season.

Over 700 growers of 80 char villages under Sadar, Aditmari, Kaliganj and Hatibandha upazilas in Teesta and Dharla river basins are getting higher prices by selling the vegetable in the off season.

They are now selling a one Kilogram pumpkin at Tk 23 to 25 which was sold at Tk 5 to 6 during the harvesting period in April-May this year.

The growers said they cultivated huge quantities of pumpkins on vast areas of char lands on the river bas-

ins with the help of Practical Action Bangladesh, an NGO.

Nizamul Islam, 48, of Kalmati village in Sadar upazila, said he got 510 pumpkins from two bighas of land.

"Of them, I sold 300 at about Tk 1500 during the harvesting period. The remaining were preserved in the 'pumpkin bank' at the house to sell those when I have no job from October", said Nizamul.

"I have already sold 150 pumpkins weighing 1800 kgs at around Tk 3300", said the farmer.

Majher Ali, 55, of Rajpur char village, said he got 265 pumpkins from one bigha of land. He also sold 65 from the bank at about Tk 22,425

last month.

"I maintained my family by selling the pumpkins as I had no job during the period", he said.

Sobahan Shaikh, 65, a madrasa teacher of Shoalmari char village, who cultivated the vegetable on three bighas of land, said smilingly that he also got good prices by selling over 100 stocked pumpkins.

Sadar upazila agriculture officer Mohammad Nuruzzaman said, with the technical support of agriculture department and the NGO, people in the char areas had a bumper yield of the vegetable.

This has reduced the woes of the jobless a lot, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Pumpkin farmers in the basin of Teesta River at Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila are now lucky to have a 'pumpkin bank' as the vegetable stocked there are sold for good prices during other seasons.

Addict kills his minor son

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

A five-year-old boy was killed allegedly by his drug addict father at Mollapara village in Gobindgnaj upazila on Tuesday evening.

Police arrested Chand Mia, father of the deceased of the village in this connection.

Police said Chand asked his son Limon to bring some ganja from the house of a neighbour. Ignoring the order, the boy continued

to play with his friends.

Chand got angry and beat his son up mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot after the boy returned home without the hemp.

Hearing the hue and cry, locals rushed to the spot and caught the man and handed him over to police.

Four other family members of the boy were also taken to the custody by police.

Abducted trader rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

A joint force of Netrakona Sadar PS and Netrakona DB police yesterday rescued a businessman after three days of abduction.

The team, led by Netrakona OC Azizur Rahman, raided the spot and rescued Sheikh Sadi from bordering Kalagor jungle under Dharmapasha upazila of neighbouring Sunamganj district.

They also arrested five 5 people in this connection.

The alleged abductors took Sheikh Sadi of Konapara under Netrakona Sadar upazila to Kanachora hill area of Kalmakanda upazila. He is a businessman of building manufacturing materials at Shidli bazar under the upazila.

OC Azizur Rahman said that on Tuesday, at about 10 pm, a gang picked up Sheikh Sadi at gun point on his way back home from the bazaar.

Later they demanded Tk. 20 lakh as ransom from the family members of Sadi.

Fish seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole, Jessore*

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have seized a truckload of *rupchanda* while the fish was being smuggled to India at Chotoachra road in Benapole.

Major Firoz Wahid, operational officer of BGB-26 Battalion, said acting on a tip-off, a team of the border force raided the area Wednesday night and seized a truck loaded with the fish. However, sensing the presence of the force, the smugglers managed to flee the scene.

Market price of the seized fish would be around Tk 10 lakh, the major said.

One killed in gunfight in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khagrachhari*

A man was killed in a gunfight between two groups of criminals over establishing supremacy in Jogapara area of Panchhari upazila on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Kalopriyo Tripura alias Rayan Tripura, 38, son of Birendra Tripura of Matiranga upazila.

The half an hour gunfight took place at about 5:30pm, leaving Rayan dead on the spot, said Alamgir Hossain, officer in-charge at Panchhari police station.

On information, police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) went to the spat and recovered the

body yesterday after a frantic search.

The body was sent to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the OC.

Police said the gunfight might have taken place between the armed cadres of Santu Larma-led Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and its rebel group PCJSS MN Larma or United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

Contacted, press secretary of Santu Larma-led PCJSS Sajib Chakma, press secretary of UPDF Niran Chakma and president of PCJSS MN Larma faction district unit Sudhakar Tripura refuted the allegation.

SATKHIRA RANGE

Revenue earning from Sundarbans falls

UNB, *Satkhira*

Arrival of tourists at Satkhira range of the Sundarbans is declining day by day, thanks to increased tourism tax and lack of sufficient infrastructural development.

As a result, revenue earning from the world's largest mangrove forest is also decreasing largely.

Satkhira range office sources said that in 2011 per person tourism tax was Tk 50 which has been raised to Tk 150 in the current fiscal year. There are five tourist spots under the range-- Kolagachhiya, Dobeki, Mandarbaria, Natabeki and Pushpokathi-- which are generally visited by the tourists from home and abroad.

Forest officer Maniruzzaman said, the revenue income from this

range was Tk4.17 lakh in the first three months of the last tour season.

Of the total revenue, Tk 47,000 was collected in September, Tk1.2 lakh in October and Tk 2.66 lakh in November.

But the revenue income was recorded at Tk1.46 lakh in the first three months of the current tourism year which is 60/65 per cent less than that of the corresponding period of the last season.

"Though the government has tripled the tourism tax, it has not taken any initiative to increase facilities for the local and foreign tourists," Polash, a college student who came from Jhenidha to visit the Sundarbans, said.

There is no good quality hotel for passing night, nor is there any restaurant for taking food and security measures here are also not sufficient, he remarked.