

'Stop maize import, save local growers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

Demanding steps to stop import of duty-free maize 'for ensuring fair price of locally produced maize', farmers of Panchagarh formed a human chain on Panchagarh-Dhaka highway at Sher-e-Bangla Park in Panchagarh municipality yesterday.

The farmers also scattered maize from several sacks on the road, protesting import of the agro-product saying they were deprived of fair prices of the item due to the import.

Over a hundred maize farmers took part at the hour-long programme.

The programme followed a discussion where farmers said that the maize growers

incurred huge loss due to low price of the item as the owners of poultry and animal feed producing factories were importing low quality maize taking the advantage of duty-free import facilities.

For the sake of saving the local farmers and traders the government should stop importing duty-free maize immediately, they said.

Later they placed a memorandum to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Salhuddin.

Mosharaf Hossain, a farmer of Haribhasha village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila, said last year they sold each kg of maize at Tk. 20/21 while this year they were selling it at Tk. 14/15 a kg.

Racketeers of fake notes active ahead of fests

AMANUR AMAN, KUSHTIA

The racketeers of counterfeit currency in south-western region have become active ahead of Eid-ul-Azha and Durga Puja.

At least 200 fake currency traders belonging to 20 gangs are working in Kushtia, Jhenidah, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Magura, Narail, Jessore, Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts of Khulna division and Rajbari of Dhaka division, said police officials referring to information extracted from Sahidul Islam, arrested at Goalondo with 20 counts of Tk 1000 fake notes on Saturday night.

Hailing from Dewgram village in Kahlul upazila of Bogra, Sahidul is ring leader of a 20-member fake currency traders' gang active in Rajbari and adjacent Kushtia district.

Goalondo ferry ghat in Rajbari sees large-scale dealing of fake notes as a large number of cattle are sold there and then ferried to Dhaka, sources said.

Police are investigating the matter following information from the arrested racketeer, said Taptun Nasrin, superintendent of police in Rajbari.

Criminals often choose festival periods for circulating fake notes, as shopping centres and markets see huge rush and the busy people often fail to check the notes for authenticity.

Ahead of Eid and Puja festivals, the racketeers are spreading fake notes at different markets through their agents, while a section of unscrupulous bank officials, local criminals and even some corrupt public representatives are allegedly involved in the act, police said.

Such racketeers often use local gangs to run the trade, said Sohel Reza, additional police superintendent (Crime) in Kushtia.

A number of traders alleged that they have got forged notes of Tk 100, 500 and 1,000.

This correspondent found a Tk 500 fake note from an ATM booth of a private bank in Kushtia town where he withdrew Tk 30,000 on Friday.

SM Moniruzzaman, deputy inspector general of police of Khulna Range, told this correspondent over phone on Sunday, "I have directed the superintendents of police in the division to take necessary steps in this regard and additional forces have been deployed at different vulnerable places, especially cattle markets and shopping malls, to check circulation of fake notes."



This file photo, published on Monday, shows a giant net in the River Titas. The nets were seized and fishermen punished in a prompt action yesterday.

Prompt action: Giant nets removed from Titas River

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Brahmanbaria

A mobile court fined Tk 1000 each to 10 fishermen and seized their 5000-metre current nets and 10 illegal giant nets locally known as *boroja* from the Titas River in Nabinagar upazila under the district yesterday.

Launching the drive with the fisheries department in Nabinagar upazila, the mobile court headed by Executive Magistrate Md Abul Kalam also removed an illegal and fake fish sanctuary locally known as *daam* which was surrounded with current nets to catch all kinds of fishes.

The court removed ten 'barricades' of giant nets from Radhanagar to

Bhairabnagar points of Gusaipur area in the Titas River.

All the illegal nets were burnt in the afternoon.

After reading The Daily Star report titled 'Mindless fishing threatens B'baria fish resources' on Monday, District Fisheries Officer Md Nurul Islam asked Nabinagar Upazila Fisheries Officer Md Mubarak Hossain to launch drives with the help of a mobile court.

"There are several fake fish sanctuaries at different places of the Titas River. But we do not have the ability to remove all. I have informed the high authorities concerned to take proper action in this regard," said the district fisheries officer.

Youth's body found near border

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Chapainawabganj

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered the body of a Bangladeshi youth from a beel (water body) in bordering Rokonpur village in Gomostapur upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Buzur Ali, 25, a cattle trader and son of Nader Ali of the village.

Lt Col Mujib, commanding officer of BGB 43 Battalion, said locals spotted Buzur's floating body and informed the BGB men.

Later police went to the spot around 11:30am and recovered the body, said Mominul Haque, sub-inspector of Gomostapur Police Station.

Several injury marks were found on the face, head and other parts of the body, added the SI.

BGB sources said, Buzur went to India along with some other fellow traders to buy cattle on Sunday night. On Monday around 1:00am, members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) chased them while they were returning home along with the smuggled cattle.

On September 7, BGB members recovered the floating body of Md Asadul, 25, of Joshail village of the upazila, from the same spot.

2 policemen beaten up

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pirojpur

Two policemen were beaten up by a group of local people when the law enforcers went to arrest an alleged drug peddler at Sohagdal village in Nesarabad upazila on Sunday.

Sub Inspector of Nesarabad Police Station Mizanur Rahman said, when he along with constable Yusuf went to the grocery shop of Nuruzzaman at Hazipur village in the evening to search the shop on charge of hemp trading, a group of 15-20, along with alleged drug peddler Touhidul Islam of Sohagdal village, swooped on them and beat them up. They also kept them confined to the shop.

Later, OC Monirul Islam along with additional forces went to the spot and rescued the two.

Touhidul, an upazila Jubo League leader, alleged that the two policemen kept hemp in the shop to frame false charges.

Pirojpur additional superintendent of police M Ashraf said, they will take departmental action against the two policemen if they are found guilty in the investigation.



Heavy rain in the last couple of days has triggered flash flood in several districts of the country. Photos show a woman along with her kid wades through floodwater in the yard at Etapota village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. Right, inundated croplands in Fakirhat under Palashbari upazila of Gaibandha.



PHOTO: STAR

Heavy rain triggers flash floods in dists

People in low-lying areas marooned, croplands inundated

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Heavy rain in the last few days have caused flash floods, leaving over one lakh people marooned and inundating about 10,000 acres of cropland in Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Mymensingh and Netrakona districts.

Vast low lying areas in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat went under water after heavy monsoon rain in last three days since Sunday triggered flash flood, reports our correspondent.

The floodwater engulfed crops, mainly aman paddy on about 11,000 hectares of land, in the areas, said sources at Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) office in Lalmonirhat.

Most of the ponds of the areas have been washed away, causing a huge loss to at least 5,000 fish farmers, it added.

"I cultivated fishes in a pond covering over one acre of land but maximum fishes have been washed away," said Hafizul Islam of Etapota village in Sadar upazila.

"A large number of fishes of our

three ponds have gone out due to the floodwater during the period," said Pradip Kumar Dash of Khochabari village in the upazila and two other fish farmers of the area.

"Aman paddy on our eight bighas of land went under water after incessant rain in the last three days that caused flash flood in the area," said farmer Tamarul Islam, 48, of Swarnamoti village in Aditmari upazila.

Lalmonirhat Water Development Board (WDB) sub-divisional engineer Al-Mamun yesterday said the floodwater has already started receding.

He hoped that it would recede fully today if there was no downpour.

In Gaibandha, incessant rain in the last three days engulfed a vast tract of cropland in the low lying areas of the district, reports our correspondent.

Most of the areas went under knee-deep water, causing immense sufferings to the townspeople.

Due to the heavy rain, recently transplanted aman seedlings in low lying areas again got flooded, much to

the worry of the farmers of the area.

I cultivated late variety of aman seedlings on two bighas of land, but the plants have been submerged by rainwater, said Lal Mia, a farmer of Belka village in Sunderganj upazila.

If rainwater recedes within three days, the seedlings are expected to survive, said Mir Abdur Razzaque, deputy director of DAE in the district.

Away in Mymensingh, at least 70,000 people were marooned as over 100 villages in frontier Dhubaura upazila went under water due to flash flood caused by heavy rain in hill areas across the border yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The upazila administration will distribute relief goods among the flood victims tomorrow, said UNO Md Shamsul Haque.

In Netrakona, flood situation deteriorated further in Durgapur, Kalmakanda, Atpara, Madan and Khaliajuri upazilas of the district yesterday morning, leaving over one lakh people in 150 villages marooned.

College boy stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtia

A college student was stabbed to death in the town yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Ashlamul Haq Zelin, 17, son of Mahbubul Haq of Aruapara area of the town. Zelin was a second-year student at Kushtia Government College.

Abdul Khaleq, officer in-charge (OC) of Kushtia Model Police Station told this correspondent that Tushar, a friend of Zelin, stabbed him when he was gossiping with four friends at Babur Ali Gate in the town around 3:30pm.

Zelin was rushed to Kushtia Medical College campus where he died around 4:30pm.

Police suspected that Zelin's three other friends—Ranjan, Durjoy and Fahim were also involved in the incident.

All the four went into hiding after the killing. Drive has been started to nab them, the OC said.

Rly to remove illegal structures

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The Lalmonirhat division of railway west zone will start demolishing illegal structures on its 4,759 acres of land from today, according to Divisional Estate Officer (DEO) Ashis Kumar Chakraborty.

Earlier, the estate office had served 9,700 notices on illegal occupiers to remove their structures from railway land in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Gaibandha and Panchagarh districts by a month, but they failed to comply with the order.

Estate officials said the deadline to remove illegal structures from railway land expired on Monday. "As illegal occupiers did not do the job within the deadline, they

will face eviction," the officials said.

Of the total 11,296 acres of lands of Lalmonirhat railway division, 3,300 acres are being used for railway activities, 3,237 acres are leased to 9483 leaseholders and the remaining 4,759 acres of land are directly under the possession of land grabbers who have built structures on these lands, estate office sources said.

Illegal occupiers have built structures on railway land through managing the unscrupulous railway officials, sources in estate office said on condition of anonymity.

Divisional Estate Officer DEO Ashis Kumar Chakraborty said illegal occupiers will face music if they try to obstruct eviction teams from performing their duties.



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal structures have been built on railway land in Lalmonirhat town. The railway authorities will start a demolition drive today.

3 held with gold bars

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police arrested three alleged smugglers along with three gold bars, weighing around 30 tolas, from a transport counter area of the district town early yesterday. The arrestees were identified as Sumon Hossain, 28, son of Anis Ali Kamura village in Singair upazila of Manikganj district, Maruf Hossain, 30, son of Sheikh Alam of Kamalnagar in Satkhira town, and Abdur Rauf, 30, son of Abdul Gony of the same area. Police said Sumon brought the gold to the district town from Dhaka city on Monday night in a bid to smuggle them to India. Police arrested Maruf and Rauf from the bus terminal area on suspicion when they were waiting there for Sumon. Later, the law enforcers recovered three gold bars from the possession of Sumon as per the information given by Maruf and Rauf. OC of Satkhira Sadar PS Golam Rahman said that the seized gold would be worth Tk 12 lakh. A case was filed.

Durga idols vandalised

UNB, Faridpur

Criminals vandalised four idols of Hindu gods and goddesses at a household temple at Garua village in Bhanga upazila on Sunday. Local people said the miscreants attacked the house temple at the village in the dead of night and vandalised four idols constructed for the upcoming Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the Hindu community. Entering the temple on Sunday morning, devotees found the idols vandalised. Expressing frustration over the incident, local Hindus said they will not be able to make the idols again before the Puja due to too short time. Bhanga Police Station officer-in-charge Nazmul Islam said, police have already launched a drive to arrest the miscreants involved in vandalising the idols.

Baby girl drowns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A one-year-old girl drowned in a pond at Langolgram village in Boda upazila of Panchagarh on Monday afternoon. Local people said, Lamia was playing in their courtyard in the afternoon while her mother was busy with household work. At one stage, she fell in the pond adjacent to their house and drowned. After sometime when her family members searched for her here and there, they found the baby floating in the pond.

'Arms peddler' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Police in a drive arrested an alleged arms peddler along with a pistol and two bullets at bordering Ghiba village under Benapole port police station on Monday night. The arrestee was identified as Laltu Sardar, 29 son of Abdus Salam of the village. Following a tip off, a team on Benpole Port Police raided the business house of Badsha in the village at night and arrested Laltu along with the pistol and bullets, Apurba Hasan, OC of the port police station said. Laltu had been selling arms in different areas after bringing those from India illegally since long, said the OC.



A traditional boat race, popularly known as 'Nouka Baich', was held on Soyajoni River in Nikli upazila of Kishoreganj on Monday. Fourteen teams from Kishoreganj, Sunamganj and Habiganj districts participated in the 13-kilometre-long boat race from Nikli Bridge to Nikli Beri Bandh (cross-dam).

PHOTO: STAR

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