

15 Indian cattle seized in Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel seized 15 Indian cattle from Bhurungamari upazila of the district yesterday.

Diadanga BOP Camp Commander Subedar Dinesh Chandra Barman said a BGB team, led by Nayek Abdul Latif, of the camp went to the border village South Daldanga and took position at Shirajer Mor area, which is 200 yards from border pillar No S-13/980.

"After some time, we saw a man coming from the border area with Indian cattle. He fled from the spot keeping the cattle when he saw the BGB men. The BGB men seized 15 cattle from there," Dinesh said.

"We estimate the value of the cattle to be about Tk 5.2 lakh," said Commanding Officer of BGB-45 Battalion in Kurigram Lt Colonel Jakir Hossain.



Construction of the second Teesta Bridge over the Teesta river on Mahipur-Gangachara route in Lalmonirhat is still not complete, although two deadlines have passed by.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

School kids, women get lessons on nutrition, sanitation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Around 300 students of Khalishakhali High School in Patuakhali Sadar upazila along with some rural women took part in an awareness building programme on nutrition and sanitation yesterday.

Different issues including proper intake of iodised salt, oral saline, zinc tablet and iron tablet, washing hands before taking food, use of sanitary napkins and toilet pans, were discussed and video lessons presented in the programme aiming at promoting health among the poor rural women and adolescents.

ICCO Cooperation arranged the event under Profitable Opportunity for Food Security (PROOFS) project.

Minoti Rani, nutrition sales agent of the organisation, conducted the session and made presentations on the use of sanitary latrine, napkin, washing hands and other health and sanitation issues.

Such programmes will motivate the students to develop healthy habits to keep good health and good mind, said Habibur Rahman, a teacher of the school.

The issues discussed at the meeting are very helpful to maintain good health if we practise them regularly, said Ramija Akhter, a student of Class X.

Abdul Haque, a local farmers' leader, and Md Nesser Uddin, district nutrition officer of ICCO Cooperation, addressed the function, among others.

The four-year PROOFS project in Patuakhali, Bhola and Barisal districts under Barisal division started in 2013 and will end in 2017.

The project covers 15,000 ultra-poor families in Patuakhali district alone.

Missing man found dead in maize field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A missing middle-aged man was found dead in a maize field in Hatgupalpur village under Sadar upazila of the district yesterday.

The victim was Shariful Islam, 40 son of Alfaj Uddin of the village.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Harandranath Sarkar said Shariful went out of his house on Friday and had remained missing since then.

Locals found his body in a maize field and informed the police, who recovered the body and sent it to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The body bore no injury marks, the OC said.

Second Teesta bridge misses deadline again

Third deadline to complete the work is now April

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Construction of the Second Teesta Bridge in the district is yet to be completed even though the second deadline for its completion expired in December 2016.

The first deadline for completion of the 850-metre-long bridge at Mahipur ghat of Kaliganj upazila was June and the second deadline was December 2016, while the third deadline has been fixed as April this year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone on October 19 in 2011.

Officials of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and the construction firm said the first deadline was missed as the firm could not bring machines and materials to the project site on time due to the

countrywide strikes and blockades in early 2015. The second deadline was missed as two girders fell from the gantry crane while they were being placed on the pillars of the bridge on November 15 and December 17, 2016.

Locals alleged that the girders collapsed as low quality materials were used for their construction.

Refuting the allegation, Lalmonirhat Executive Engineer of LGED Al-Amin Khan and project manager of the construction firm Sadhon Kumar Saha said it was just an accident.

"Construction of the second Teesta Bridge will be completed by the first week of April, and it will be opened for public by the second week," Al-Amin said. "Only four of 17 deck slabs are yet to be made, otherwise all

the work has already been completed," he said, adding that the construction firm says the remaining slabs will be completed by March this year.

"Several lakh people of Aditmari, Kaliganj, Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas go to Rangpur city and other parts of the country by crossing the Teesta on boats," said Mobarak Hossain, 52, a trader at Kakina Bazar in Kaliganj.

"Construction of a bridge on Mahipur-Gangachara route over the Teesta river was our longstanding demand. Finally our dream is going to be fulfilled," said Mansur Ali, 55, of Mahipur village.

Navana Group-WMCG jointly got the work order for the construction of the bridge, which has 85 girders and 17 slabs and cost Tk 121.65 crore.

18-MONTH-OLD GIRL MURDER: Indrajit, uncle-in-law sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A Jamalpur court yesterday sent a 24-year-old young man and his uncle-in-law to jail in connection with the killing of an 18-month-old girl in Sarishabari upazila of the district early Monday.

The Judicial Magistrate's Court in the district town gave the order when police produced the duo before it, said Court Inspector Abdul Kader Miah.

The accused are victim's brother Indrajit Ghosh and his uncle-in-law Ananda Kumar Mahatma. Indrajit was arrested for allegedly killing his sister and Mahatma for aiding and abetting the murder.

Victim's father Paritosh Ghosh of Shimla Bazar area filed a case in connection with the murder of his girl child Prapti with Sarishabari Police Station on Monday evening accusing his elder son Indrajit and Mahatma, 35, of Hasra Manjalia village.

Of the two sons and two daughters of Paritosh and Shilpi Rani Ghosh, Prapti was the youngest.

During interrogation on Monday afternoon, Indrajit told police that he had killed his sister. He said he took his sleeping sister Prapti from her bed around 1:00am, strangled her and then dumped the body into a nearby pond, Tauhidur Rahman, an inspector of Sarishabari Police Station, quoted Indrajit as saying.



Production of kul (plum) is poor this year, but farmers are not that unhappy as they are getting good prices for the fruit. The photo was taken at Tarabuniya village in Nazirpur upazila of Pirojpur.

PHOTO: STAR

Passport broker jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A man was jailed and three others were fined for harassing passport seekers at the passport office in the town yesterday.

A mobile court, led by Executive Magistrate Padman Singh, pronounced the verdict, said Hayatul Islam Khan, company commander of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Jamalpur.

The convicts are Rana, 30, son of late Kala Miah of Kacharipara area of the town, Ripon Miah, 30, son of Md Shahabuddin, Bablu Miah, 40, son of late Kazimuddin, and Al-Amin, 40, son of late Chan Miah of the area.

Of the passport brokers, Rana was jailed for one month while Ripon fined Tk 4,000, Bablu Tk 2,000 and Al-Amin Tk 1,000, said the Rab official.

Poor kul production, good price

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Although there has not been expected production of kul (plum) this year due to the flowers falling off, growers are happy at getting good price for it.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Pirojpur, there are kul orchards on 258 hectares of land in the district. Among seven upazilas, Nazirpur has kul orchards in 140 hectares and produces the highest amount of the winter fruit.

Mainly five varieties of kul -- Narikel Kul, Apple Kul, Bao Kul, Bari-1 and Thai Kul -- are cultivated in the district. Among them, Apple Kul has the greatest demand as it is very sweet and tasty. Thai Kul is being cultivated for the last two to three years, but on a small scale.

"This year, around 60 percent of kul flowers dropped off. As a result, the production is not good," said Porimol Biswas, a cultivator in Tarabuniya village.

"We don't know the reason for dropping-off of the flowers," said Jagodish

Boral, another grower.

But the growers are not disappointed at the poor production as they are getting good prices for the produce.

"Though the production is not as high as expected this year, we are getting high price for kul," said cultivator Manoranjon Mondal, adding that they are selling one maund for Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,000, depending on the variety.

Growers said they started collecting kul from their orchards around two weeks back, and the fruit will be available in the market for the next one month.

Kul has been grown in the district for over ten years, and its cultivation is spreading rapidly.

DAE Deputy Director Md Abul Hossain Talukder said, "Production of kul decreases if the age of trees crosses five to six years," adding that they advise the farmers to cut down kul trees after five years and to plant new trees as they start bearing fruit one year after planting.

Last year 1,743 tonnes of kul were produced in the district, he added.

Car with 1,988 bottles of phensidyl seized in Naogaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police seized at least 1,988 bottles of phensidyl from Patnitola upazila in Naogaon early yesterday.

They also seized a private car carrying the illegal drug, said Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Patnitola Police Station.

On secret information, a police team raided Sitaalmath area and recovered the phensidyl from the car.

However, the driver managed to flee the scene, said the OC.

Two women return after serving in Indian jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Two women returned home yesterday through Benapole check-post after serving two years in an Indian prison.

Border Security Force (BSF) handed them over to Benapole check-post Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

Benapole check-post BGB Camp Commander Abdul Wahab said the two had entered India illegally three years ago for jobs.

Police arrested them from Kolkata in West Bengal. An Indian court sentenced them to two years' imprisonment each for illegally crossing the border.

India returned them following exchange of letters between the two countries.

BAMBOO CRAFTS on decline

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Only five years ago, around 900 craftsmen in six villages under the district were involved in producing items made of bamboo, but now the number has come down to about 150.

Many craftsmen have given up their ancestral profession and taken up rickshaw pulling, jobs in garment factories or working as labourers in construction sites. Now only women and a few male craftsmen are engaged in their ancestral work.

Craftsman Dhaniram Chandra Das, 48, of Mahishkchoha village in Aditmari upazila said he was engaged in his ancestral job of producing bamboo made items since his childhood, but he changed his job four years ago and is now working as day labourer. "The demand for bamboo made things has decreased alarmingly due to plastic products," he added.

"Now I earn Tk 200 to Tk 250 a day pulling a rickshaw, while it is impossible to earn Tk 100 by making bamboo items," said Nani Gopal Das, 45.

Sarothi Bala Das, 52, a widow, said, "I saw my grandparents, parents and husband making bamboo items, and they were lucky as there was a good market for bamboo products," adding that she earns Tk 70 to Tk 80 per day now, while it was Tk 300 to Tk 350 a few years ago.

Fani Chandra Das, 42, a physically challenged craftsman of Bhotmari village in Kaliganj upazila said, "If I got another job I would say goodbye to my ancestral work forever, but unluckily I'm a physically challenged man," he said.

Suro Bala Das, 63, of Namuri village in Aditmari upazila said bamboo prices have increased while prices of bamboo

The number of craftsmen has come down to 150 from 900 in five years as they have changed their job in Lalmonirhat.

products have decreased, so their ancestral job is not enough to earn a livelihood. "Now women in our community are keeping our ancestral job alive, while the males have already left it," she added.

Delowar Hossain, 68, a farmer of Kulaghat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said now they are getting all kinds of plastic items at low rate, so they do not need to use bamboo items.



Two craftswomen are busy producing items made of bamboo at their house yard in Mahishkchoha village under Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR