

Celebration begins before Biju festival

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Different programmes are being held in a festive mood in the district on the occasion of Biju festival beginning on Wednesday.

Biju is the prime socio-cultural festival in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which indigenous people celebrate by playing traditional games and holding cultural programmes, fairs, rallies, water festival and Garai dance.

The Biju festival is popularly known as Boi-Sa-Bi. The Tripura community calls it Boisai, Marmas call it Sangrai and Chakmas call it Biju. The first two letters of the three words form the word Boi-Sa-Bi.

Khagrachhari Khudro Nri-gosti Sangskritik Institute is holding a three-day-long fair and cultural programme. Member of Parliament Kujendra Lal Tripura inaugurated the programme on Saturday.

In Rangamati, Subimal Chakma, third year student of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, said he wanted to celebrate Biju with friends, but he cannot due to the final semester examination.

Marjana Chakma, an HSC examinee of Lalmatia Mohila College in Dhaka, said she will attend the Biju programmes although her examinations are going on.



A road is being built on a dried up tributary of the Teesta river in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha. PHOTO: K M REZAUL HOQUE

Road on dried up tributary of Teesta

K M REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

The local people are very happy as a road is being built on the dried up tributary of the Teesta river in Sundarganj upazila of the district.

The road between Belka Bazar and Kashim Bazar will facilitate movement of pedestrians as well as the transportation of goods in the char areas.

Belka Union Parishad started construction of the nearly one-kilometre road two months ago under the Local Government Support Project of Tk 80,000 funded by World Bank. Construction of around 400 metres of the road has already been completed with the cooperation of the local people.

However, a road on char (land-mass emerging from riverbed) land is not sustainable round the year as it might be washed away by surging water in the rainy season, said UP Chairman Ibrahim Khalilullah.

He said it is essential for easy movement of the char people during dry season.

"People face immense trouble crossing the sandy chars and knee to waist-deep stagnant water accumulated in the riverbed in the dry season", said Abu Bakkar Siddique. He said farmers and traders cannot transport their goods and agriculture produce to the markets, he said, adding that the road will help the local people to move easily and transport their goods quickly.

"This road will be very helpful for the local people as there is no road on the char," said Ekramul Huq of char Nawabganj in Belka Union.

If the road can last through the rainy season, more roads will be constructed in the chars to connect remote areas with the mainland, said Saghata Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Golam Kibria.

Netrakona flood worsens further

Another dyke flooded in Sunamganj

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Flood situation in Netrakona deteriorated slightly as Kadirpur embankment went under water yesterday, leaving thousands of people in Khaliyajury upazila in a state of panic.

Meanwhile, over 1000 acres of cropland were flooded as an embankment in Sunamganj went under water the same day.

The worsening situation in Netrakona's Khaliyajury occurred due to flash flood triggered by heavy rainfall accompanied by storm on Saturday night, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

Due to washing away of three more embankments -- Gachikhai, Joypur and Kadirpur -- in the upazila in the last two days, over 95 percent area was flooded, said upazila Chairman Shamsuzzaman Talukder.

Fresh areas of Nagar union were inundated yesterday, he said, adding that four unions out of six in the upazila were affected till Wednesday.

As many as 89 hours of Khaliyajury have been flooded, said the chairman.

Some 22,000 flood-hit families in the area are passing their days in untold miseries, he lamented.

Twenty eight tonnes of rice have been distributed among some 1000 flood-hit people so far but the relief is very meagre for the present crisis, he said.

The farmers who were waiting for reaping hundreds of maunds of boro paddy are facing uncertainty, said local UP Chairman Sanwar Hossain.

Standing robi crops like groundnut, wheat and potato were badly damaged in the flood, said farmers.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammed Tofael Ahmed said the administration is working for rendering immediate support to the affected farmers with rice at Tk 10 per kg.

According to our Moulvibazar correspondent, an embankment went under water in Shalla upazila of Sunamganj as flash flood triggered by heavy rainfall hit it.

Around 15,000 acres of boro land out of 17,290 acres in the haor area went under water due to collapse of the flood control embankment, according to local Water Development Board.

Grower Muhim Mia of Hobibpur area in Shalla said, "I'm undone as my six acres of land were flooded due to washing away of the embankment."

Local UP chairman Bibekananda Majumder said boro farmers are the worst sufferers in the flood.

C'nawabganj mayor sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A court here sent the mayor of Chapainawabganj municipality to jail after he surrendered before it yesterday.

Police arrested Mayor Nazrul Islam, also former ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami district unit, and 21 other people from Chamagram village in Sadar upazila on August 1 in 2016 and recovered gunpowder and homemade bombs from there.

A case was filed against 23 people, including Nazrul, with Sadar Police Station under Explosive Substances Act on August 2 in 2016.

Judicial Magistrate's Court sent Nazrul to jail after he surrendered before it on November 20 in 2016. He later got bail.

Special Tribunal-1 issued arrest warrant against Nazrul as he did not appear before it on April 5 in 2017 as ordered.

Judge Enamul Bari of Special Tribunal-1 sent Nazrul to jail, rejecting his bail prayer, when he surrendered before the court.

Housewife tortured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A woman was tortured by her husband and in-laws allegedly for dowry in Rajapur upazila on Saturday night.

The victim, Mansura Akhtar Emily, 23, is undergoing treatment at Rajapur Health Complex.

Victim's father Abu Taleb said Emily's husband Lokman Akon and his parents often tortured his daughter for dowry since their marriage.

"My husband and his parents started pressuring me recently to bring money from my father," said Emily.

As she refused, they beat her mercilessly until she went unconscious, she added.

Goat's eating costs owner's life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man was beaten to death at Nodia Bazar Kandi village in Madhukhali upazila under the district on Saturday.

The victim was Jihad Fakir, 32, a farmer of the village.

As Jihad's goat began to eat crop at a field of Motiar Sheikh, 36, of the village, they engaged in an altercation on Saturday, locals said.

Around 2:00pm, Motiar with his brother and others came to Jihad's house and beat Jihad mercilessly.

Seriously injured Jihad was rushed to Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex, then to Faridpur Medical College Hospital. But the on-duty doctor referred him to Dhaka as his condition deteriorated. He died on the way around midnight.

The body was sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy and his father Abdur Rouf Fakir filed a case against nine people, said Ruhul Amin, OC of Madhukhali Police Station.

Jihad lived with his wife and two sons.



Workers use a large saw to fell this century-old joytun tree on the premises of Nawab Palace in Bogra town yesterday. Right, a picture of the tree taken last year. PHOTO: STAR

Century-old joytun tree felled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A century-old rare joytun tree was felled on the premises of Nawab Palace, a protected place under the Department of Archaeology in the town, yesterday, much to the grievance of conscious people.

The tree was sold at merely Tk 28 thousand although its usual price would exceed Tk 5 lakh, said locals.

Jahedul Islam, manager of Nawab Palace, admitted giving order to cut down the tree, and said, "It is a personal property under three owners and they have the right to fell the tree here."

Hearing about the matter, Hasibul Hasan, field inspector of archaeology department visited the palace area as the government through a gazette notification had declared it a reserved place last year.

However, failing to stop felling of the tree, he later said that he would inform the higher authorities of the matter.

Nahid Sultana, regional director of archaeology department, said, "The land of the palace is yet to be handed over to the department and the tree is not part of archaeology. I cannot tell anymore now."

Earlier, the palace was owned by former prime minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ali and finally, his sons and brother sold it to three influential persons of Bogra -- Masudur Rahman Milon, Abdul Gafur and Shafiqul Islam Jewel.

Amid demands by locals including civil society and media men, the government hung a gazette notification for preservation of the palace in the middle of 2016.

Rain frustrates garlic growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Garlic growers in different upazilas of Dinajpur have suffered a huge blow due to the untimely rainfall for the last couple of weeks.

Usually Dinajpur is well known for producing garlic. Two upazilas, Khansama and Chirirbandar, produce the largest quantity of the item due to suitable soil.

Farmers in the district have cultivated garlic on 4,518 hectares of land this year with production target of 30,496 tonnes, said officials of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Dinajpur.

Of the total cultivation, the growers in Khansama upazila have cultivated the item on 3,280 hectares of land.

Rafiqul Islam, a farmer at Kachina village in Khansama upazila, said due to the gloomy weather and untimely rainfall almost every day garlic growers are not getting sufficient sunlight to dry their harvested garlic.

"If the present weather prevails for a few more days the crop will start rotting," Rafiqul said.

During a visit to Khansama's Kachina Market, largest garlic market in Rangpur region, this correspondent found farmers are not getting expected prices of their produce as they could not dry it properly.

"Prices of each maund of garlic dropped by Tk 500 to Tk 700 in the last couple of weeks," said farmer Chitta Roy of Uttar Bhajanpur village in Chirirbandar upazila.

Garlic farmers would face heavy losses this year if the weather condition does not improve immediately, said Nazrul Islam of Satnala village in the upazila.

Onion and chilli growers are also facing similar problem due to the untimely rainfall, Nazrul said.

Mahmudul Hasan, agriculture officer at Chirirbandar DAE, said due to the untimely rainfall garlic growers may not get proper prices of their produce this year.

2 shot dead in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Bullet-hit-bodies of two alleged drug peddlers were found at Tetulbaria village in Jhenidah Sadar on Saturday morning.

The deceased were Mofiz Uddin, 25, son of Abdul Mazid of Baparipara village in Sadar upazila, and Manik Hossain, 26, son of Korban Ali of the area. They were accused in three drug cases.

Police said Mofiz and Manik had been running drug trade in the district town for long. They were arrested several times on charge of peddling drug in the area.

The two might have been murdered following a feud over drug trade, said Harendranath Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Four armed robbers held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided the den of a gang of robbers on Saturday night in Ishwardi upazila and arrested four robbers.

Rab seized three foreign made pistols, six bullets, five magazines, 16 stolen mobile sets, a motorbike and a battery-run auto-rickshaw from the den at Shershah road in the town.

The arrestees are Md Manikuzzaman alias Manik, 43, of Shershah road, Mokles Sardar, 25, of Gokulnagar village, Abdus Salam, 35, of Velupara village in Ishwardi upazila, and Tuhin alias Tushar of Khemirdiar Munshipara village in Kushtia. They are inter-district robbers, Rab said.



A garlic grower looks worried as farmers in Dinajpur are not getting sufficient sunlight to dry their harvested crop due to untimely rainfall and cloudy sky for the last couple of weeks. PHOTO: STAR

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