



Xefer presented a slick set with a dance routine.



Nusraat Faria rocks the stage with her performance.

A celebration of pop and hip-hop, FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The biggest names in pop and hip-hop came together at "The Hype Festival" on July 1 (Friday) at ICCB's Nabaratra Hall. Mila, Hridoy Khan, Jalali Set, Xefer, Imran Mahmudul, Muza, Tashlee, Mithun Chakra and Black Zang entertained a passionate crowd, which showed up to support their favourite artistes. The proceeds from the event will go towards providing relief to the victims of the devastating floods in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

PHOTOS: BAYEZID WAHEED & ABRAR HOQUE



Tashlee serenading the audience.



(M) Muza performing his hits.



Jalali Set were their flamboyant self with their hot verses.



(L) Mila's much awaited performance did not disappoint. (R) Black Zang presented "Ai Mama Ai", a crowd-favourite.



BTS J-Hope drops new single

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



J-Hope is currently most likely to become the first member of BTS to unveil their solo album. Titled "Jack in the Box", there is a lot of hype around the album amongst fans at the moment. To treat his fans, the singer dropped a pre-release single titled "MORE". BTS rapper J-Hope, who is usually seen as the 'sunshine' of the boy band, showed off his dark and twisted side in the new song, hinting at what fans can expect from the upcoming album.

Netflix crashes after Volume 4 of 'Stranger Things' released

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Netflix, the streaming service, was unavailable for a brief period during the early part of Friday. This was after the release of the highly anticipated two episodes from Volume 4 of "Stranger Things". According to the global uptime-monitoring website Downdetector, users reported a lot of problems with Netflix round 3 AM Eastern Time when Volume 2 of "Stranger Things" season 4 went live. A total of 13,000 complaints were lodged within just one hour.

Prabhas and Anushka to reunite for 'Raja Deluxe'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



"Baahubali" duo Prabhas and Anushka Shetty are reportedly all set to reunite for a comedy film. According to online portal Telugu 360, the pair will be seen in director Maruthi's film "Raja Deluxe". Shooting for the film will begin by the end of this year. Two other actresses will also be added to the mix for the movie. Prabhas and Anushka Shetty are the most loved on-screen couple due to their cracking chemistry in "Baahubali". The pair have also had other hits such as "Billa" and "Mirchi".

COUNTRYWIDE

Overtaxing rampant in Bagerhat temporary markets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Leaseholders are levying higher taxes than the government fixed rates in different bazars of Bagerhat. Buyers and sellers are being forced to pay extra amounts in face of the leaseholders' pressure.

As a result, the prices of daily necessities are also soaring at the consumer level.

Moreover, the rate chart of taxes (toll) is supposed to be hanged in the marketplaces but it is not being followed in most cases. Consequently, leaseholders and tax collectors are exploiting traders, buyers and sellers.

During a recent visit to Kachua's Badhal Bazar, one of the largest bazars in the district, no rate charts of taxes could be seen.

The government fixed rate levied by the district administration is 5 per cent of the purchase price of goats, Tk 10 per meat shop, Tk 6 for betel leaf stalls, Tk 7 for spice shops, Tk 5 for watermelon and other fruit shops, Tk 6 for molasses and sweet, Tk 6 for raw materials and vegetables. However, the sellers claimed that they were being levied many times higher than the government fixed rates.

Zakir, a vegetable trader in Badhal Bazar, said he has to pay Tk.120 taka. Many times they have to pay 200 takas. Otherwise, they are not allowed to sit.

A trader, wishing not to be named, said that in most cases ruling party men are the leaseholders of haats and bazars. They levy taxes as much as they want.

"Ordinary traders are beaten when they talk about government fixed rates," he also said.

The scenario is almost the same in all 154 haats in the district.

Sarwar Hossain, a tax collector at Badhal bazar, said that in many case they collect less than the government fixed rates. He, however, added that they charge more in some cases.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Bagerhat Mohammad Azizur Rahman said that they have received such allegations from different corners.

The DC added that government rent will be fixed anew through discussion with all upazila nirbahi officers. The new rate will be fixed keeping in mind that the leaseholders, buyers and sellers do not face any loss.



A teprai craftsman displays the fish traps at Gaglar Haat for sale in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Teprai: A trap for good

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Artisans in five northern districts are spending busy days making 'Teprai', a bamboo-made fishing trap, as the rainy season sets in the country.

The traditional method of catching fish with fishing trap, locally known as Teprai, is still popular in Rangpur region. The artisans are happy as each teprai is being sold at Tk 980 at local markets in the region.

Teprai is made in three sizes — five feet, three feet and two feet in length and one foot in width. Each teprai has five to 10 openings to allow fish to enter, and one pocket.

Men, women and children make Teprai from the middle of May and the business continues till the middle of August. Rest of the time of the year, they work in farmlands and do other jobs.

Khirod Chandra Barmon, 70, a teprai craftsman of Chaklar village in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila, said he has been making teprai since his childhood.

"We weave teprai as it is our seasonal

earning source and it is also our ancestral profession," he said adding that each family earns around Tk 70,000 to 80,000 thousand from the craft during the monsoon.

"We can make at least 10 teprais including four big sized and six middle and small sized ones with 10 bamboos," said Sushil Chandra Das, an artisan of Kutirpar village of Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila. Each of the families can produce 30 to 35 teprais every week.

Mobarak Ali, a Teprai weaver from Gagla village in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila, said that some 20 to 25 artisans sell the popular fish traps at Gagla Haat.

Locals are buying this item from them and the demand for their craft is likely to grow in the coming days, he added.

Teprai trader Saber Ali at Gagla Haat (market) in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila, said he buys the item from the craftsmen from different villages and supplies those to markets in neighbouring districts. "I earn Tk 60-Tk 80 selling each

teprai," he said, adding that around 200-800 pieces of teprai are sold in each haat (market) and locals are their customers.

Meher Ali, a farmer at Kulaghat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said they use teprai to catch fish in knee-deep water and they get one to three kg of fish from each attempt.

"The prices of teprai are higher than those of last year. We are buying teprai at a high rate as this fishing equipment is essential for us," said Santosh Chandra Barmon of Gharialdanga village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila.

"I have bought four Teprais at Tk 550 each from the local market," he added.

Farukul Islam, fishery officer in Lalmonirhat, said that catching fish with teprai is a common scenario in Rangpur region but it is not seen in other regions. Many villagers catch fish using teprai.

Teprai is used mainly catching local varieties of fishes in low water, he said adding traditional teprai traps bring good days for many.

Kaun farming ebbing in char areas

S DILIP ROY

Cultivation of kaun (Foxtail Millet) in char areas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram has drastically decreased as farmers are switching to other crops due to not having the desired yield of the crop.

Even a few years ago, the char areas of the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla and Dudhkumar in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat were extensively used for kaun cultivation. About a decade and a half ago, char people used to cultivate kaun as an alternative to rice.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), this year Kaun has been cultivated on 690 hectares

of land in different river char areas of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat compared to 920 hectares last year. Only a decade ago, this crop was cultivated on six thousand hectares of land. While one and a half decades ago, kaun was used to be cultivated on 20,000 hectares of land.

Abdur Rashid, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram, said farmers in the char areas are switching to other crops as they are getting expected yield and profit.

If the ebbing trend of kaun cultivation continues, the crop will not be visible in the next decade, he said.

Nazrul Islam, a farmer from Char Bamandanga in Nageshwari upazila of Kurigram, said he cultivated kaun on two bighas this year compared to five bighas last year. The cost of kaun farming is low and so it is the yield, he said.

He said that four to six maunds of kaun are produced from one bigha of land and the production cost is Tk 2000-2500.

Each maund of kaun is being sold at Tk 1000-1200 but last year the price was Tk 1400-1600, he said adding that they are losing interest in kaun farming.

If the ebbing trend of kaun cultivation continues, the crop will not be visible in the next decade.