

NEWS SNAPS

Girl killed in road mishap

UNB, Barisal

A little girl was killed under the wheels of a land-roller at city's Lutfar Rahman Road Tuesday.

Hospital sources said the unidentified girl, aged about three years, met the tragic end of her life while playing on the road at about 1.30pm. The driver fled the scene after the incident.

Three arrested in Natore

UNB, Natore

Three people were arrested along with a revolver by army-led joint forces in Shingra upazila Monday night.

Police said Samad accused in a number of cases was arrested with a foreign made revolver from village Tololipara. Acting on his confessional statement, they arrested Ashrafu and Emad from village Sonaghat.

Work in govt offices hampered

UNB, Jamalpur

Three important posts are lying vacant in various government offices in Madarganj upazila hampering official works.

The vacancies are upazila assistant commissioner (Land), fisheries officer and education officer. Officials said their repeated appeals to fill up the vacant posts went unheeded.

Brisk business of quilts

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Netrakona

Some 50 quilt-making makeshift shops have sprung up in Netrakona as the demand for quilts has marked a rise with the fall of mercury.

The prices of cotton and other materials have gone up, pushing up the prices of quilts, pillows and mattresses.

1.39 cr textbooks for primary school students

UNB, Panchagarh

Over 1.39 crore textbooks have been allocated for free distribution among primary school students in northern region for the academic year 2003.

The textbooks have already reached the districts and upazila education offices and the authorities completed all necessary measures to send those to the concerned schools.

Official sources said the books would be distributed among the students of class one to class five by current month.

27 die of cold related diseases in three districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cold wave claimed 27 lives in three districts. Of them, 19 in Rangpur, seven in Gaibandha and one in Sylhet.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: A biting cold wave has been sweeping over the greater Rangpur district for the last 10 days claiming 19 lives.

Hundreds of people have been suffering from cold related diseases. The deads are Abdul Matin, 65, of Palkan, Amena Bewa, 80, of Kolkond and Kulsum, 65, of Binin shoal in Gangachara upazila, Shahera, 60, of Damodarpur and Rahman, 80, of Badarganj Municipality in Badarganj upazila in Rangpur district while Ala Baksh, 45, of Naodanga, Alam, 50, and Kumkum, 70, of Fulbari upazila in Kurigram district, Reshmi (7 months) and Manik, 8, of Teesta, Karimon, 73, and Kailash, 50, of Kaligonj in Lalmonirhat district, Hajam Ullah, 60, and Abdul Hamid, 65, of Dimla upazila in Nilphamari district and seven others are yet to be identified.

On December 29 the Met office recorded 12.5 degrees Celsius temperature, but on following day it came down to 10.3 degrees Celsius.

In Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari districts close to Himalayan range, the temperature fluctuated between 8 degrees and 10 degrees Celsius.

The Met office predicted further fall of temperature during middle of January. People mostly elderly and minor and belonging to poor and low income group fell easy prey to cold related diseases like cough, asthma, bronchitis, acute respiratory tract infection (ARI) and cold fever.

A large number of such patients were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) and other hospitals and clinics.

Civil Surgeon of Rangpur Mohaddes Hossain admitted the report of outbreak of ARI diseases but he denied any deaths.

Normal life across the entire Rangpur zone completely paralysed. Poor people are in need of warm cloths. However, government so far allocated 500 pieces of blankets for each district of the zone which is quite inadequate to meet the need of the suffering humanity. Standing winter crops and seed beds of boro paddy partially damaged due to cold wave. Prices of essentials marked an upward trend all over.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Severe cold spell claimed

seven lives in Gaibandha district.

Continuous biting cold paralysed normal life in the entire district. At night railway ferry services have remained suspended due to dense fog.

The victims are Tara Chandra Shaha, 85, of village Daudpur, Jatindra Nath Chandra, 75, of village Hat Bamuni, Hamida Begum, 65, of village Boxiganj, Nabijan Begu, 70, and Azizul, 85, of village Santola in Sadullapur upazila, Abdul, 75, of village Maruadha, Helal, 20, of village Rajar Bazar in Sunderganj upazila.

Besides, two children Hasib (10-month-old) of village Ibamapur in Sunderganj upazila and one year old Mahmud of Kuthipara in Gaibandha Municipality died of cold related diarrhoea while 10 others have been suffering from the diseases and admitted to Gaibandha hospital.

According to Balashi Railway Marine sources, ferry services between Balashi ghat and Bahadurabad ghat have remained suspended during night time due to high density of fog. Same situation has been prevailing here for the last 13 days. So the connecting trains are running late by 10 to 12 hours beyond the schedule time.

The worst cold affected areas are the vast tract of shoal lands in Teesta and Brahmaputra basins where thousands of people could not go out of their huts due to ongoing cold spell.

Cultivation in the remote village areas nearly stopped as farmers are unable to work in the field. Cold spell is also threatening winter crops seriously.

UNB from Sylhet reports: A 2-month-old baby died of pneumonia caused by severe cold in Chhatok here Monday.

Motaleb Hossain, son of Phool Mia of village Itkona in Doara upazila, died on way to Osmani Medical College Hospital from local health complex.

Our Pabna correspondent reports: Cold wave paralysed life in Pabna district on Monday. Small number of people were seen on the streets in the district town.

As there is no arrangement to measure the temperature, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) took the initiative to measure the temperature. On Monday mercury fluctuated between 9-12 degrees Celsius. Drivers of long route buses faced problem in driving their vehicles owing to dense fog on the day.

3,100 primary schoolbags missing in Thakurgaon

UNB, Thakurgaon

The schoolbags stolen from the storeroom of Primary Education Office here are being sold at some local shops bringing back the much-talked-about scandal in the lime-light.

Mohiuddin, storekeeper-cum-typist of the office, was suspended after 3,100 bags allocated for primary school students were stolen from his storeroom last year.

Official sources said the government sanctioned 7,204 schoolbags for the primary students of Sadar, Pirganj, Rani Songkoil and Haripur upazilas of the district in March

2002.

The bags were stored in the storeroom of the office, but when distribution of bags started in September, the authorities found 3,100 bags missing. The storeroom was opened in absence of the storekeeper.

Mohiuddin was then suspended for his alleged involvement in the scandal. But the bags with a monogram of "Education for All" are now being sold in a section of shops in the town.

A number of guardians whose kids are using these bags said that they bought the bags from a cosmetic shop in the town.

Meanwhile, local Teachers Association recovered some bags from a shop at Boda upazila on December 11.

Sensing trouble, the booksellers now have changed the monogram of the bags.

Mohiuddin, the suspended employee, said he had kept all the bags in the storeroom and then handed over its key to the district Education Officer, and he was not present when the bag distribution started.

Demolition drive in Magura



PHOTOS: HOSSAIN SERAJ

The district administration recently launched a drive to demolish unauthorised structures on government 'khas' lands in Magura. The drive started from December 25 and lasted till December 31 last year. During the period at least 200 illegal structures were demolished by the bulldozer of the administration. Many also demolished their structures voluntarily. Some buildings (in pictures) are being demolished by bulldozer while people including businessmen are observing the scene anxiously. The boundary wall of local Government Girls' High School on MR Road in the district town was also demolished during the drive.

Counterfeit notes flood Dinajpur markets

UNB, Dinajpur

Huge counterfeit notes have swamped different markets of Dinajpur district due to failure of the administration to crack down on fake note smugglers.

Innocent people are frequently swindled since they cannot identify the real and forged notes because those are almost similar in quality.

The counterfeit notes have no security thread rather a black line is drawn in its place. The colour between the forged and real ones is a bit different.

An official of Sonali Bank here said huge fake notes of Tk 500, 100 and 50 denominations were seized by different branches of the bank recently and those were destroyed.

He suspects that an organised gang is involved in trading fake notes, which are printed mainly with machines from India and Hong Kong.

According to him, huge fake

notes are also smuggled into the country through different border points.

Hundi traders also use forged notes flouting the government efforts to curb the illegal money transaction, concerned sources said.

Fake notes are sold on commission basis, they said.

A forged note of Tk 500 is sold at Tk 100 to Tk 150 while that of Tk 100 at Tk 30.

Convicted prisoner dies in hospital

UNB, Barisal

A convicted prisoner of Jhalakati jail died of heart attack at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (BSMCH) early Tuesday.

Hospital sources said victim Aziz Sardar, 65, who was sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) in an armed robbery case in February, 2001, fell sick on December 21, 2002.

He was sent to BSMCH Monday evening when his condition deteriorated where he died at 2.30am. His body was handed over to his relatives.

No office buildings for 70 branch post offices

UNB, Thakurgaon

Normal activities of 70 branch post offices in the district are being hampered seriously in absence of their own office buildings.

Although these are full-fledged government post offices, most of the branch offices are running their official activities in unionparishad (UP) bhobans (building), abandoned warehouses, school verandas and front rooms of private houses.

Worse yet, the furniture being used in the post offices are almost broken. In most of the offices, there is no Almirah.

Local people demanded of the government to construct buildings for 65 branch post offices and five sub-post offices, including 28 under Sadar post office, 16 under Pirganj, seven under Ranisongkoil, nine under Baliadangi and five under Haripur post offices.

Stolen medicine recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police of Kamalgonj Police Station recovered huge quantity of stolen medicine from the house of Abdul Matin, a quack at village Chitlian in Kamalgonj upazila and arrested two persons recently.

Earlier, a robbery was committed in the store room of Kamalgonj Upazila Health Complex.

Acting on information, Kamalgonj police raided the house of the quack named Md Abdul Matin at village Chitlian and recovered huge medicine.