

NEWS SNAPS

Ex-UP chairman arrested

BSS, Mymensingh
Former union parishad (UP) chairman and a candidate of Shahaghy Union parishad elections in Ishwarganj upazila Abdul Aziz was arrested by police here Thursday morning.
According to police sources, Aziz was arrested on charges of extortion. Abdul Aziz was the ex-chairman of Shahaghy Union Parishad.

50 shops gutted

BSS, Madaripur
Property worth about Tk 2 crore was burnt to ashes in a devastating fire that broke out at Karachi Bidi road of the district town Thursday noon.
At least 50 shops were destroyed in the fire. Local people rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire. The fire originated from an electric short circuit and engulfed the shops. The fire service personnel in cooperation with the local people, fought for two hours to brought fire under control.

Three receive acid burn injuries

BSS, Barisal
At least three persons including mother, daughter and son of a family were injured seriously by acid on Sunday night here at Lohalia village in Sadar upazila of Patuakhali.
Police and family sources said that one person named Shukkur Ali Jamadder along with his associates threw acid on Noorjahan Begum 30, her daughter Shahinor Begum 6, and son Mehedi Hasan, 2, at dead of night on Sunday last at village Lohalia in Lohalia union of Sadar upazila in Patuakhali district following a previous family feud. They have been admitted to the Patuakhali Sadar Hospital in a critical condition where they are fighting for their survival. Police arrested Shukkur Ali Jamadder, 40. A case was lodged with Patuakhali Kotwali thana police in this connection. All the victims are the members of a family of a rickshawpuller named Amir Ali of the area.

Bumper output of onion expected

BSS, Joypurhat
The farmers of Joypurhat district are cultivating onion with huge enthusiasm in this season with a hope to achieve bumper production of the crop.
The crop is now growing well everywhere in the district, official sources said. A target of producing 12,750 ton of onion from 1,500 hectares has been fixed in this rabi season of 2002-2003 here. Climatic conditions here are always favourable for onion farming. Besides, there was no crisis of onion seeds this year. A bumper production of onion is expected here in the current season.

Winter clothes distributed

BSS, Faridpur
Faridpur Police administrations distributed 500 pieces of winter clothes among the distress and poor people of the town recently.
According to official sources, the clothes were distributed among the people lying on footpaths and in some slums. Warm clothes will be distributed soon at all thana headquarters.

Tin allotted for flood victims

The Relief and Disaster Management Ministry has allotted 1600 bundles of tin for 12 upazila in Bogra district recently.
According to official sources, 1600 bundles of tin has been allotted for tornado and flood affected people. Of the total, 400 bundles for Bogra Sadar, 100 bundles for Shibganj, 63 bundles for Kanhua, 37 bundles for Nandigram, 300 bundles for Shariatkandi and Shenatala, 300 bundles for Adamdighi and Dupchanchia, 400 bundles for Sherpur and Dhunat upazila.

Great enthusiasm among female candidates
749 nominations for women's reserved seats in Faridpur

ABDUL MATIN FAKIR, Faridpur

Female candidates are showing great interest in the ensuing union parishad (UP) election in Faridpur.
A total of 749 nomination papers have been submitted in all 75 unions of the district for reserved seats of women.
Election fever has gripped the entire district. The candidates are visiting from door to door seeking voters' blessings. Supporters of the candidates have been pasting colourful posters, leaflets and hand bills on the walls of educational institutions, shops of markets and houses. Even posters have also been pasted on trees also.
The election campaign began here on January 25 and will continue till March 3 this year.
According to the election office sources, there are 75 unions in eight upazilas. There are 11 unions in Sadar upazila, four in Char Bhadrason upazila, nine in Sadarpur upazila, 11 in Boalmari upazila, eight in Bhanga upazila, 17 in Nagarkanda upazila, nine in

Modhukhali upazila, six in Alfadanga upazila, nine in Modhukhali upazila and six in Alfadanga upazila.
In all 398 nominations against 75 posts of chairmen have been submitted in the district.
Of these, 45 nominations have been submitted in Sadarpur upazila, 20 in Char Bhadrason, 48 in Sadarur, 46 in Boalmari, 58 in Bhanga, 198 in Nagarkanda, 44 in Madhukhali and 29 in Alfadanga upazila.
Besides 391 nomination papers against 33 posts of general members have been submitted in Sadarpur upazila, 94 nominations against 51 posts in Nagarkanda, 296 nominations against 27 posts in Modhukhali and 185 nominations against 18 posts of general members in Alfadanga upazila.
Female and male candidates have expressed their optimism that the ensuing UP election would be held in a free and fair atmosphere under army vigilance. They also opined that the people's desire would be reflected through this election.



PHOTO: STAR

(Left-right) Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Abdul Quadir Mahmud, Managing Director (MD) of Sonali Bank (SB) Rabiul Hussain and an officer of the Moulvibazar branch of the bank H M Mustaque Ahmed speak on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of 'on line remittance system' through banking channel, organised by Sonali Bank at Moulvibazar Saifur Rahman Auditorium recently.

Unabated erosion by Meghna in Shariatpur

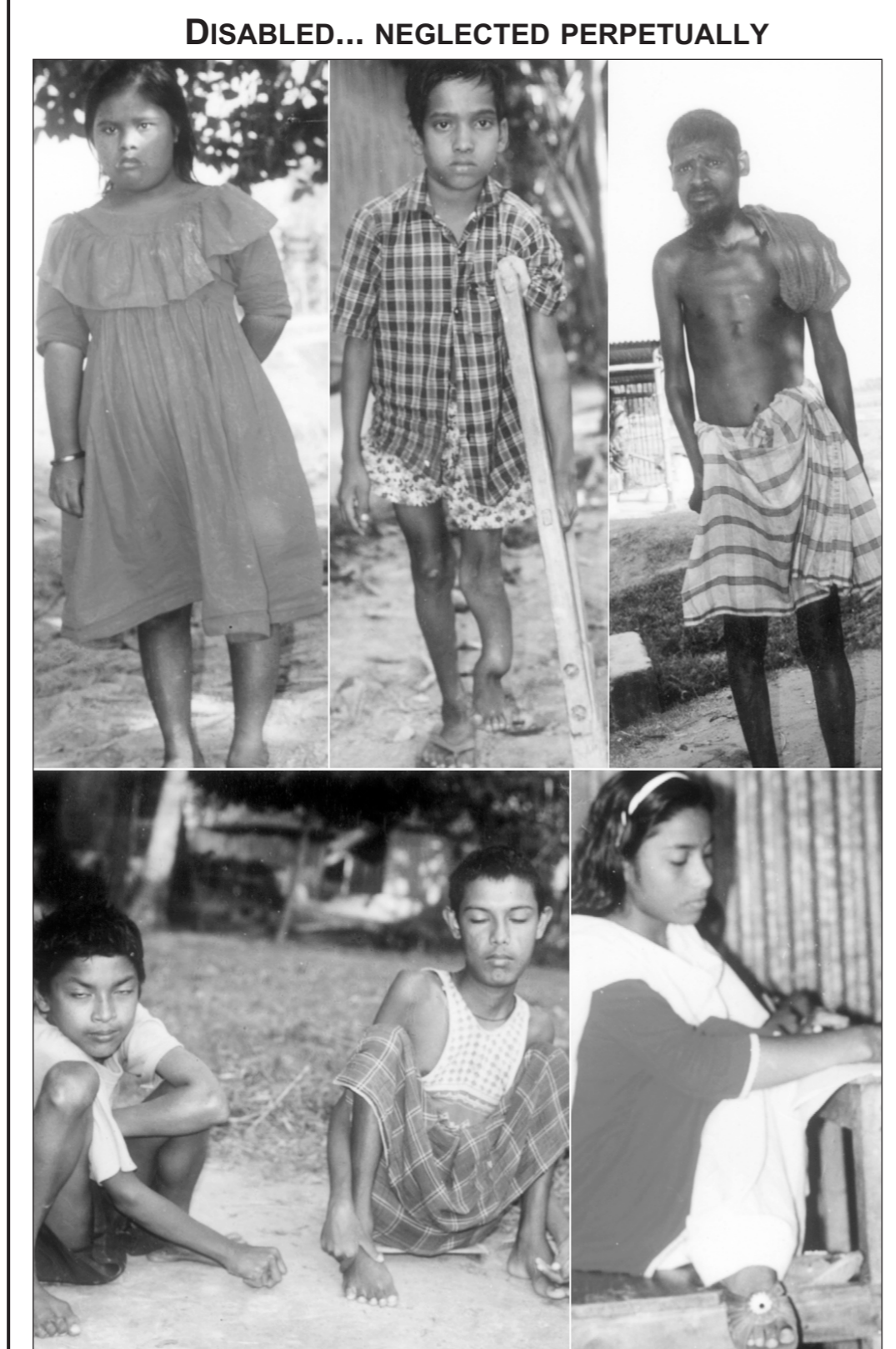
BSS, Shariatpur

Erosion by the mighty River Meghna has taken a serious turn devouring a large area in Damudda of the district.
Local people said five villages of the district have already been eroded during the last six months.
About 200 dwelling houses of these villages and 100 acres of crop

and other lands were devoured and a child was killed by the erosion during the period.
Some 2,500 people were rendered homeless due to the erosion and four rural markets went into gorge of the river, they said.
A survey conducted locally revealed that the Meghna devoured 14 villages in the island during the last two years rendering over 8,000

people homeless.
The survey report said the erosion here started in 1972 and since then three unions, out of the total nine have completely been devoured. Some 80,000 people of about 25,000 families became homeless.
Most of the affected families migrated to other parts of the district. The thana headquarters was

shifted to Naria in 1985 to avoid erosion. But local people said the new thana headquarters was also under threat due to the approaching river.
Many erosion-affected poor families took shelter on the flood protection embankments. They complained that no measure was taken so far by the concerned authorities for their rehabilitation.



DISABLED... NEGLECTED PERPETUALLY

PHOTO FEATURE: HOSSAIN SERAJ

Amalsar is a neglected rural area in Sreepur upazila, Magura where 3,000 villagers live. Awfully 10 per cent of its entire population are disabled. Over the years fate of these unfortunate human beings remained unchanged owing to sheer indifference of the authorities concerned. Here are some innocent faces. (Top left-right) Rina, 18, a mentally disabled girl, physically handicapped Sujon Ali, a student of Class five and another disabled named Atiar, 35. (Bottom left-right) Two brothers - Ershad, 22, and Motabbir, 18, who became crippled at the age of 10 and 12 years respectively and another ill-fated female student of Class nine named Salma whose right hand is active only.

Hectic days for date juice extractors

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Faridpur district is famous for date juice, the best presentation of the winter season.
The extractors locally called "Gachhis" are now very busy in extracting date juice which is very tasty and sweet. In chilly winter mornings people of all walks of life, especially little boys and girls are thronging around 'Gachhis' to drink date juice, locally called "Khejurer Rosh".
Women in rural areas here are preparing many kinds of sweets made of date juice. They are also preparing cakes of different kinds using date juice.
'Patali' and molasses are being prepared by boiling date juice in large scale here for commercial purpose. 'Patali' is on sale at Tk 50 to 75 per kilogram (kg) in the local markets depending on quality.
Housewives in rural areas are now entertaining guests and visitors with winter cakes and delicious sweets made of date juice.

3-day folk music festival in C'nawabganj

UNB, Chapainawabganj

A three-day folk music festival began at Shaheed Shatu Hall in the town Sunday.
Deputy Commissioner M Nurul Haque inaugurated the festival organised by local fine arts academy with the help of district administration.
Some 107 artistes from 30 organisations are taking part in the festival.
Competitions are being held on different folksongs including 'palligiti', 'gombhira', 'bhatiali', 'murshidi', 'baul', 'marfoti', 'alalongiti', 'jatra', 'jari', 'palakirton', folk drama, regional dance and fine arts.

A pot of date juice weighing nearly one kg is selling here at Tk 30-35. A 'Gachhi' named Arshed informed that he usually earns a lot for the entire year during the winter season.
The government should patronise people to plant date trees in large number around their houses and beside roads and highways.
There is a good prospect of exporting 'Patali' and molasses in the Middle East and other countries, the authorities concerned may take note of it.

Bandits snatch motorbike of 2 policemen

UNB, Rajshahi

Armed bandits swooped on two policemen in Pockekhali area of Putia upazila and snatched their motorbike Saturday night.
Police said the robbers waylaid Bagha thana Sub -Inspector Enamul Haq and Havildar Haider Ali while they were returning from Putia thana in a motorbike. The muggers beat them mercilessly and took away the motorbike.
While fleeing with the motorcycle, SI Enamul fired on the robbers who also returned the fire and fled the scene.
Seriously injured Havildar Haider Ali was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. A case was filed.

Robbery at RMC principal's house

UNB, Rangpur

Robbers stormed into the house of Principal of Rangpur Medical College (RMC) in the town and looted cash and valuables worth Tk two lakh Saturday night.
Police said some 4-5 robbers entered into the house of Prof Hamidur Rahman by breaking open the collapsible gate at about 8pm and confined the house inmates in a room.

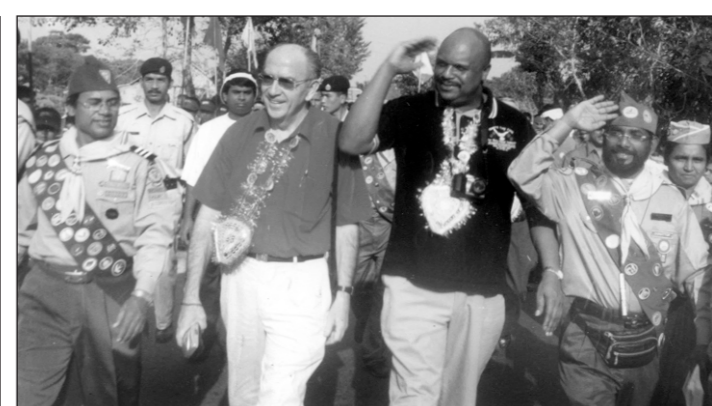


PHOTO: STAR

(Far left) Wiley Gomaliel Falia, president of South Bangladesh Union Mission, (2nd from left) Siegfried G Mayr, president of Bangladesh Union Mission, (3rd from left) Dr Barake G Muganda, youth director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and (far right) R Kisku, youth director of Bangladesh Union Mission lead a procession at Jalirpar in Muktadpur upazila, Gopalganj on the occasion of the first Pathfinder Camporee. The camporee was held recently at Kollogg-Mukherjee Memorial Seminary.

Two killers to die in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

A court here Monday awarded death penalty to two persons in a murder case.
The convicts are: Kalu Mia, 35, and Abdul Aziz, 37, of village Boro Jum of Chunarughat upazila. Two other accused of the case - Sajid and Faruk were acquitted of the charge.
According to the prosecution, the convicts raped and killed Rahima Khatun when she went to graze her cattle near the bank of a river on May 30, 1994.
Later, her body was recovered from a sugarcane field of the village and a case was filed.
After examining the records and witnesses, the District and Sessions Judge A K M Istiak Hossain handed down the verdict.

Pottery in Narail faces extinction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

The potters in Narail have been facing hard days as pottery is on the verge of extinction.
As a result they are increasingly leaving their inherited profession and shifting to other professions. Even many have already left the country to the neighbouring India. About 200 years back pottery was a sign of Bengali culture.
In Narail district about 100 'Pal' (potter) families used to create and supply various clays like plates, pots, dolls, flower tubs and many other utensils. Forty to fifty years back there was a great demand of these items all over Bangladesh including West Bengal, India and Pakistan. The famous potters of Narail were Nagen Pal, Tulshi Pal and Kalipada who used to prepare

Durga, Sarosshati and Kali Protima (Goddess) in a very beautiful manner in greater Jessore district. They were also invited by the people from different areas of country to make Hindu goddess. They were awarded many presentations and gold medals in those days.
But at present these potters are no more in demand.
Still some of their sons and grand sons are struggling hard to survive pursuing their original profession facing a lot of problems. They are leading their lives with great poverty.
The demising process of their trade is mainly due to acute scarcity of necessary implements and also of fuel. Those are available but beyond their purchasing capacity.
Lack of prospective buyers of their products is also behind their misfortune.

The government and other non-governmental organisations should come forward for their proper rehabilitation and ensure marketing of their products which have already disappeared.

4 acid throwers arrested

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Police arrested four people including a woman Saturday night for injuring two young men with acid at village Kathalkandi in Nasirnagar upazila.
They were identified as Rawshan Ara, 30, Abdul Motaleb, 50, his sons Ebarat Mia, 32 and Wajed Ali, 30. They allegedly hurled acid on Alai Miah, 25, and Kolimuddin, 30, on Friday night as a sequel to previous enmity.

1,89,750 MTs of potato output target fixed

UNB, Kishoreganj

Some 16,500 hectares of land in five districts of Mymensingh agriculture zone will be brought under potato cultivation this season with an output target of 1,89,750 metric tons (MTs).
District-wise breakup: Mymensingh-4,500 hectares, Jamalpur-4,500, Kishoreganj-4,000 hectares, Sherpur-1,500 hectares and Netrakona-2,000 hectares.
To make the programme a success, necessary measures have been taken to provide seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other agri-inputs to the growers at fair prices, officials said.
Bangladesh Krishi Bank and state-run commercial banks have also taken steps to provide soft loans to the farmers.