

NEWS SNAPS

Two killed in road mishap

BSS, Pabna Two people were killed and three others injured in a road accident in front of Ichamati Cold Storage on the Pabna-Ishwardi Highway here on January 20 morning. The dead were identified as Kawsar Ali, 38, and Zillur Rahman, 35, of Alighar in Chapainawabganj district. Police said the accident occurred at 7:30 am when a Ishwardi-bound truck coming from Dhaka collided head-on with another truck coming from Ishwardi. Police seized both the trucks, but drivers of the vehicles managed to escape. A case was filed with Pabna police in this connection.

Killer awarded jail term

BSS, Chuadanga District and Sessions Judge Chuadanga A R Masud in a judgement recently convicted one person named Rabiul Hossain and sentenced him to suffer imprisonment for life and fined Tk 2000, in default, to suffer three months more rigorous imprisonment (RI) on charge of killing his first wife. The prosecution story, in brief, is that Rabiul of village Parapanur in Damurhuda upazila married Faima Khatun about 13 years ago, but they had no issues. Rabiul got second marriage with Aley Begum, following which frequent quarrel was continuing between convicted and his first wife. At one stage on December 3 in 2000 Rabiul killed Faima. The judge after examining the evidences and hearing statements of witnesses convicted Rabiul Hossain and awarded the aforesaid punishment.

Five shops gutted

BSS, Rajbari Five shops were damaged in a fire that broke out from electric short circuit at Kallyan Pur Bazar in Sadar upazila of Rajbari district Sunday. Police sources said, the fire burnt the shops full of merchandised goods into ashes. The local fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot and brought fire under control with help of local people. The affected shop owners filed a case with local thana in this connection complaining negligence of the authority of the Power Development Board (PDB).

NASIB election held

BSS, Rajshahi Annual election to the 17-member executive committee of the local unit of National Association of Small Industries in Bangladesh (NASIB) was held at its office recently. A total of 112 out of 118 voters cast their votes in the election. Thirty-three candidates contested for the 17 executive posts in the election. The elected members are: Alhaj Monzur Faruque Chowdhury, Abdus Selim, Abul Hossain Maleque, Sharif, Begum Rafika Hossain, Merajul Alam, Shafiur Rahman, Tohrul Islam, Habibul Haque, Abdus Samad, Ahsan Ullah, Arif Ahsan, Abdul Kader, Rajab Ali and Hafiz Uddin.

82 uplift projects undertaken

BSS, Bagerhat The government has taken up 82 development projects under Food for Works Programme in nine upazilas of Bagerhat district in the current financial year. Seven hundred six tons of wheat have been sanctioned for implementation of the projects. The projects, including repairing and maintenance of kutchra roads, educational and religious institutions, are progressing fast.

Cold related diseases claim seven lives in Faridpur

ABDUL MATIN FAKIR, Faridpur

Seven persons died in Faridpur district due to cold related diseases, according to an unofficial source. The deads are shukur Ali, 60, of village Mongol Matubberer Dangi in Char Bhadrasan upazila, Dhala Baru, 61, of Mayana, Boalmari upazila, Nbirun Begum, 70, Zahura Begum, 69, of village Shukdebnagar and Baka Mia, 55, of village Falennagar in Boalmari upazila, Md Yunus Ali, 45, of village Maniknagar in Nagarkanda upazila and Khaleque Dewan, 60, night guard of Faridpur Zila Parishad. An elderly man aged over 80 said that Faridpur never experienced such a biting cold. However, children and the old are the worst sufferer in the cold spell. January 15 was the coldest day of the season in the district. On the day the sun was completely invisible and thick fog accompanied with piercingly cold wave persisted throughout the day keeping most people in-doors with doors and windows shut up. As a result normal activities came to a standstill. Different philanthropic organisations including Faridpur Press Club, Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Faridpur Rotary Club have, in the mean time, started distributing warm cloths among the destitute people. Faridpur Press Club has so far distributed 8,500 pieces of old warm clothes including sweaters, cardigans, coats, pants,

and wrappers while the chamber of commerce and industries distributed new warm clothes worth Tk one lakh. Besides, the district administration distributed new warm clothes worth Tk one lakh. BSS from Joypurhat reports: The unofficial death toll in the unprecedented cold wave has so far stood at 322 in the northern region. The sky continued to remain overcast by dense fog keeping the sun invisible throughout the region. The sufferings of the affected people aggravated as shivering cold wave continued to whip up from the Himalayan range. The poor, especially the day labourers have become the worst victims of the prolonging cold spell as they can not go out for work. The minimum day temperature remained in between 6 and 8 degrees Celsius at different places of the region, official sources said. Meanwhile, the government has intensified distribution of warm clothes among the affected people in all the 16 northern districts. According to official sources, more clothes and funds have been allocated from the Prime Minister's Relief fund and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to cope up with the prolonging cold wave accompanied by dark clouds and thick fog. So far, a total of 53,800 pieces of warm clothes, including 21,000 pieces of blankets, 16,400 pieces of sweaters and jumpers, 16,400

pieces of warm baby clothes and fund of Tk 14, lakh have been allocated for the cold affected people of 16 northern districts. Responding to the call of the Prime Minister a good number of affluent citizens, organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), members of parliament (MPs) and politicians have also come forward to distribute warm clothes in the region. The district-wise break-up of warm clothes and cash relief distributed so far were: Joypurhat 3,100 pieces of warm clothes and Tk 1.50 lakh, Bogra-7,100 pieces of clothes and Tk 1.50 lakh, Panchagarh-3,100 pieces of clothes and Tk one lakh, Thakurgaon-2,300 pieces of clothes and Tk one lakh, Dinajpur-3,900 pieces of clothes and Tk one lakh, Nilphamari-2,300 pieces of clothes and Tk one lakh, Kurigram-1,500 blankets and Tk one lakh, Rangor-1,500 blankets and Tk one lakh, Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha-2,300 pieces of clothes and Tk one lakh each, Chapainawabganj-3,400 pieces of clothes and Tk 50,000, Naogaon, Rajshahi and Sirajganj-5,000 pieces of clothes and Tk 50,000 each, Natore-4,200 pieces of clothes and Tk 50,000 and Pabna-1,000 pieces of warm clothes and Tk 50,000.



(Left) Some illegal structures on the railway land were demolished in an eviction drive in Sylhet recently, while (right) some railway personnel fixed a signboard in the name of railway graveyard on a vacant land just after the eviction drive.

Progress in crop farming in Barind area

BSS, Rajshahi

Significant progress in the crop farming has been achieved in the Barind area for providing facilities of irrigation to beneficiaries. The Barind area, covering 25 upazilas under Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj and Naogaon districts used to cultivate single crop (aman paddy) about 15 years before. But now at least three crops are being harvested as the essential infrastructural development in the area was made. Before the modern irrigation system, farming of more crops was very difficult on the dry land and the farmers had to depend on only rainfall. Vast tracts of land remained idle after aman paddy harvest in November every year. Barind Multipurpose Development Authorities (BMDA), which played a pioneering role in changing the lots of the region's people, successfully offered irrigation programmes like construction of rural roads, tree plantation and re-excavation of derelict canals. According to the official sources, about 0.52 lakh hectares of land was brought under irrigation till 1986. The land rose to 1.65 lakh hectares by 2002. As a result, the crop production hit 18 lakh metric tons in the 2001-2002 fiscal. About 33 per cent of the total Barind land has so far been brought under irrigation by operating 6,350 deep tubewells.

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Step to promote cultural activities

BSS, Rangamati

A cultural function was held at the premises of Sapehhari High School in Sadar upazila of Rangamati district on Saturday to promote cultural activities in rural and hilly areas of the region.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of the Rajshahi University unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front parade the streets of the university campus in a procession. The procession marked the 19th founding anniversary of the student organisation recently.

Pirates loot cash, valuables from boat

UNB, Chandpur

Pirates looted cash and valuables worth Tk one lakh from a passenger boat leaving some 20 people injured on the Meghna River Sunday. A gang of pirates numbering 10/11 swooped on the passengers of the boat bound for Chandpur Boro Station from Alam Shah Bazaar. They looted the valuables after beating up the passengers mercilessly. They threw one of the passengers into the river when he cried for help. When contacted police of the nearby police outpost said they knew nothing about the piracy.

Sharp rise in armed robberies in Rupsha upazila of Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Armed robberies have become rampant in different places of Rupsha upazilla in Khulna district. Similarly, mugging and toll collection by the cadres of outlawed organisations and political parties have also taken an alarming turn creating panic among the people. On January 20, muggers snatched at arms point Tk 15,000 from Obaidul Huq, Field Officer of Grameen Bank. Muggers escaped by private car while he was on way to Kazdia branch office. On January 10, an armed robbery was committed at about 9-30pm in the house of Saiful Islam Babul of village Amdabad. He is Rupsha upazila correspondent of Dainik Lokshamaj published from Jessore. According to FIR, 10 bandits stormed into his house and decamped with money, gold ornaments and other articles worth Tk 1,50,000. Saiful Islam's father Hatem Ali was severely stabbed when he tried to resist the robbers. On the same night the same gang of bandits looted money and valuables worth Tk one lakh from the houses of businessmen Yusuf Howlader, Golam Howlader and Dulu Howlader of Naihati union. On the night of last December 30, a sum of Tk 35,000 were looted at arms point by dacoits from the house of fish trader Syed Nurunnabi

of village Naihati and on December 29 dacoits looted Tk 65,000 from the house of another fish trader Abul Kalam Azad of the same village. On January 1, a dacoity was committed in the house of Syed Sirajul Islam of Kismat. The dacoits looted money and gold ornaments from his house worth Tk 2 lakh. He is a fish farm owner. Besides, four armed dacoities were committed on Sunday night in the houses of four businessmen of village Mahishaguni in Rupsha upazilla. The alleged dacoits gave death threats for lodging any case. The alleged dacoits are cadres of outlawed and political organisations, said complainants of the cases.

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3 robbers held

UNB, Narsingdi

Police arrested three robbers and recovered arms and ammunition from village Kumradi of Shibpur upazila Monday. Police said they raided the village and arrested Alamgir Hossain, 25, Mokter Hossain, 22 and Jauz Mia, 25. They also recovered one locally made shotgun, one bullet, 12 swords, one chapati and two other sharp weapons from the village on the basis of their statements.

4 convicted for manhandling teacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A speedy trial court here on Thursday convicted four school students (teenage boys) and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment (RI) for two years and six months for beating their teachers and damaging furniture of a school. The convicts Hamdul Islam, son of Majnu Miah of Diardhangara Mohollah, Sumon Rahman, son of Iqbal Hossain, Mamoon son of Ansar Hossain and Rafiqul Islam Rafiq, son of Saiful Islam of the Diardhangara Mohollah in Sirajganj town were also fined Tk 1,000 each, in default, six months more in prison. According to prosecution, on November 13, 2002 the authorities of Janadatyini High School pasted the result of test examination of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinees. The convicted students failed in the test and they, in collaboration with some outsiders attacked the school and damaged furniture and manhandled the teachers. After the incident headmaster of the school lodged a case against four convicted students in Sirajganj Sadar police station. Police submitted chargesheet in the speedy trial court. Speedy trial court magistrate Fariduddin Ahmed examined the witnesses and declared the verdict.