

NEWS SNAPS

Tk 3.70 cr bridge construction work goes onUNB, *Sherpur*

The government has taken up a project to construct five bridges in the district at a cost of Tk 3.70 crore in the current fiscal year.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing the project. The bridges are being constructed on the Mirgi River in Sadar, Nalitabari-Tarakandi road in Nakla, Nakshi Khal in Nalitabari, the Gurmari River in Jhenitgati, the Gurguri River on Bagherbitha-Paikpara road. Construction works on first three bridges are going on in full swing.

Baby home for orphansUNB, *Barisal*

A baby home for orphans was constructed at Golla in Agoljehara upazila at a cost of Tk 3.08 crore.

Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid inaugurated the 100-bed baby home on Saturday.

13 'miscreants' arrestedUNB, *Jhalakati*

Police arrested 13 alleged miscreants from Betagi thana of Barguna district on Tuesday.

The arrested were Jamal, 22, Farid, 30, Monir, 25, Jafar, 32, Prince Gazi, 18, Dinnu Gazi, 26, Syful, 24, Sirajul, 29, Shawpan, 29, Alamgir Midha, 30, Bachchu Midha, 27, Shukur, 21 and Mizan, 26 of Rajapur upazila. They were wanted in a number of cases.

Post-polls violence 13 more arrested in LuxmipurUNB, *Luxmipur*

Police arrested 13 more people from Korpara and Kachua markets in Ramganj upazila on Sunday on charge of creating post-election violence.

Police and locals said some miscreants attacked and damaged a motorcar in which Deputy Commissioner, superintendent of police (SP) and upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) were returning to Sadar upazila after the Union Parishad election in Korpara union on March 3.

Earlier, police and BDR members in separate raids arrested 55 people. Police filed a case against the winning chairman candidate Abdur Rahim for his involvement in the attack.

Free, fair polls possible if people cooperate with admin, says Magura DC

HOSSAIN SERAJ, *Magura*

Elections to 27 unions in four upazilas of Magura district were held in a peaceful atmosphere.

No violence was reported in four days of elections.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Magura Md Shafiqul Alam told The Daily Star that no one was allowed to do any harmful activity. Free and fair polls are possible if people cooperate with administration, he added.

Elections were held in 27 unions on January 26, January 29, February 2 and February 6.

According to a directive of Election Commission (EC), Magura police identified 179 out of 246 centres 'risky'.

However, no election violence was reported even at 'most risky centres'.

Superintendent of police (SP), Magura Biswas Afzal Hossain said to this correspondent that they took special security measures in

most vulnerable centres to hold a free and fair polls.

A total of 119 candidates contested for chairmanship, 261 candidates contested in 81 women's reserve seats and 857 candidates for membership in 243 general wards in 27 unions.

Female candidates for reserve seats were very much active during polls campaign. Many promised to work for ensuring women's right and to eliminate social discrimination.

A few women voters in rural areas opined that previously they cast votes to the candidates of their guardians' choice. But this year the situation changed a lot. They cast vote according to own choice.

District information office organised various motivational programmes including songs, music and drama, said M Javed Iqbal, District Information Officer, Magura to this correspondent.

Zilabati at village Jhagurdian in Rajapur union of the same upazila

said to The Daily Star that he was very eager to elect a female candidate for reserve seat. This is because a woman can go without hesitation to her representative, she added.

This year community leaders and 'Imams' of mosques extended their whole-hearted cooperation to female voters, though previous years they not so cooperative, said female voters in Babukhali union of Mohammadpur upazila.

Sufia Begum another voter at village Balidia echoed in a similar manner.

Mohon Munshi, a chairman candidate of Rajhobdayeer union in Sadar upazila alleged that his rival candidate threatened voters of Hindu community several times with the help of his musclemen.

District election officer (DEO) Mohsin Ali, however, said to this correspondent that no significant incidents of violation of election code of conduct was visible.

In general rural voters want to cast vote in a peaceful atmosphere. Great enthusiasm was observed among themselves in this election season.

"We feel great to choose our representatives," said Rostam Ali, a voter at village Raimagar in Nakol union of Sreepur upazila.

Rifle looted from Ansar recovered in PatuakhaliA CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Police recovered a rifle looted from an Ansar from the bank of a pond at village Dhankhali in Kolapara upazila recently.

Police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) teams raided the village and arrested 87 people.

Male inhabitants of more than 10 villages are now in hiding, fearing arrest.

A gang of criminals attacked a polling booth of Dhankhali Government Primary School while vote counting of the Union Parishad (UP) election was going on. They chopped an on-duty Ansar named Jalil Mollah and looted his rifle. Jakir, one of the criminals died in police firing.

Housewife 'killed' in ThakurgaonUNB, *Thakurgaon*

A housewife, who was injured as her husband allegedly set fire to her three weeks ago, died at sadar hospital on Wednesday.

Fazlur Rahman of Atwari upazila married Selina Begum, 22, of Bahadanga upazila seven months back, family sources said. He used to torture Selina since their marriage.

He set fire to Selina's body with kerosene on February 14 following a family feud. Selina was first rushed to a local hospital and then shifted to sadar hospital where she died.

A case was filed with local police station.



Members of the Solidarity Council to Resist Anglo-US Aggression, Mymensingh parading the streets of Mymensingh town recently protesting the US-led war plans against Iraq.

Price spiral of betel leaf in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gopalganj*

Price of betel leaf has shot up abnormally in recent weeks in Gopalganj district.

As betel leaf is a traditional commodity, consumers are in great problem due to its abnormal price-hike.

Every 100 pieces of betel leaves were sold at only 8 taka to 10 taka in December last, while the present price varies between 90 taka to 100 taka, according to market sources at different hats and bazaars.

Betel leaf traders and sellers told

this correspondent that betel leaf plants were damaged during shivering cold waves in December last year and January this year.

Officials in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) told this correspondent that the price of betel leaf rose up due to low temperature in the winter season. Betel leaf plants cannot tolerate temperature below 10 degree Celsius, according to DAE officials.

Rural women are major consumers of betel leaf. A few of them told The Daily Star that they did not experience such abnormal price-hike of betel leaf before.

Man to die for killing wifeOUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gopalganj*

A killer husband was sentenced to death on Sunday.

Md Abdus Sobhan, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Gopalganj convicted the accused in his absence. He ordered his death by hanging.

Rafiqul Islam Molla, son of late Ratan Molla of village Sofra in Sadar upazila, Gopalganj killed his wife Salma Begum on February 8 midnight, 1994 in a pre-planned manner. A case was registered with Gopalganj Police Station. Afterwards, Gopalganj police submitted a charge-sheet against the absconding accused. Advocate Kazi Nazrul Islam, assistant public prosecutor (APP) pleaded for state, while Advocate Fazlul Haque Khan fought for the accused.

Eight others get life term RI

One to die in double murder case in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

A court on March 9 convicted nine young men in Sirajganj town in a case of double murder and dacoity.

Of them one culprit was given death sentence by hanging, while eight others were awarded life term rigorous imprisonment (RI).

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Sirajganj Abu Ahmed Jonnader examined 13 witnesses and declared the verdict on March 9.

Sumon, an absconder and son of Sohrab Hossain in Rahmatganj area of Sirajganj municipality was awarded death sentence by hanging. Other convicts Mehdi Hasan Kiron, 20, Abdus Salam Taluker, 22, Hira Sheikh, 20, Abdul Momin, 18, Shipon, 20, Aminul Islam, 21, absconding Shahidul Islam, 22, and Hiafujur Rahman, 25, were sen-

tenced to life term RI. They were fined 20,000 taka each, in default, to suffer two years more RI.

Housewife Shahanara Khatun alias Pata and her mother-in-law Jamila Khatun, 70, of village Rahmatganj under Sadar upazila in Sirajganj municipality were murdered by the convicted persons who also looted cash and gold ornaments on the night of March 4, 1998. Shahidul Islam, son of deceased Shahanara Khatun Pata filed a case in Sirajganj Sadar police station. The case was transferred to the criminal investigation department (CID). After investigation CID inspector Shahidullah Sheikh arrested six persons who confessed their guilt in the first class magistrate's court. Accordingly a chargesheet was submitted by the investigation officer against nine persons.



PHOTO: ISPR

Defence Secretary K M Ehsanul Haq handing over the trophy of the best all-round New Entry Sailor at a passing out parade of New Entry Sailors of Bangladesh Navy at BNS Shaheed Moazzam parade ground at Kaptai in Chittagong on Saturday.

Miscreants loot Tk 60,000 from shop in Chandpur

UNB, *Chandpur*

Miscreants attacked a shop at Sakua Bazaar in Sadar upazila on Saturday night and looted Tk 60,000 injuring seriously the shop owner.

Police said the hoodlums demanded toll from Jahangir Bepari, owner of the shop. On his

refusal they beat him. Later they looted cash from the shop.

The miscreants also ransacked Jahangir's dwelling house and set fire to it. He was admitted to sadar hospital in a critical condition. A case was filed.

Another report adds: Police recovered two firearms along with

ammunition from an abandoned house in Chandpur town on Sunday.

The law enforcers searched the house and recovered two cut-rifles, 29 rounds of bullet and 26 bottles of phensidyl.

Two separate cases were filed with police.