

NEWS SNAPS

Body found at cropland

UNB, Jhenidah

The body of a teenaged girl killed by miscreants was recovered from village North Boalia in Shalakupap upazila on Friday.

The deceased was Helena Khatun, 18, daughter of Sher Ali of the aforesaid village. Local people found the body at a cropland and informed police. The motive behind the killing could not be known. A case was filed and police arrested one person named Lalon.

Youth chopped to death

UNB, Pabna

A youth was chopped to death by assailants at village Shahapur in Shujanagar upazila here on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 22, of the village.

Police and hospital sources said the miscreants, led by local criminal Delbar, attacked the house of Mizanur and chopped him to death as he protested them for manhandling his younger sister on her way to school. Police arrested Delbar.

Hemp traders arrested

UNB, Sirajganj

Police arrested five hemp traders along with one maund of Indian hemp from village Ghurka in Shalanga thana here on Sunday.

The arrested were identified as Shafar Ali, 28, of Sirajganj, Shahidul Islam, 30, of Lalmonirhat and Faridul Islam, Kalam Miah and Shahadat Hossain of Kurigram. Plainclothes police raided the rented house of Hasan Ali in the morning and arrested them with the drug.

Police said they could not arrest ringleader Hasan Ali. A case was filed.

Sal forests on the wane in Tangail, Mymensingh

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Sal forests in Tangail and Mymensingh are on the wane. This is because of unplanned plantations of wood-lot forest, plundering of Sal trees and indifference of a section of forest employees.

Unplanned plantations of Eucalyptus, Acacia Menjam on forest lands have threatened the very existence of sal forest.

In 1989 the government started plantation of foreign varieties of trees in Radhupur sal forest of Tangail through a programme titled Thana Afforestation and Nursery Development Project (Tandp) funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB). Afterwards, such plantation was expanded in Madhupur of Tangail and Muktagachha of Mymensingh.

Following expansion of wood lot in forest lands, coppices of Sal trees were cut down indiscriminately without thinking severe consequences of the experiment, it is alleged. Forest Department has done two losses at a time because they fell down Sal coppices for new plantation, while the new programme could not achieve its goal. Cultivation of pineapple, sugarcane and banana in new plantation area are very harmful for soil-fertility and bio-diversity.

As the forests are vanishing fast, inhabitants of forest areas, mainly Garo people are the worst sufferers. Because, Sal forests provided their shelter and other requirements for centuries together, "Day by day

we face difficult problems here as the environment of Sal forests is being degraded," said Benedict Mangsung a former chairman of Aronkhola Union Parishad in Madupur. He also said during British period our people took land for jhum cultivation for three years' term and after tenure of the time they handed over the land to the authorities concerned after transplanting Sal seeds. "People were involved in afforestation," added Benedict.

Talking to this correspondent, Heromon Bibi, 75 of village Aamlitala said that there was a deep forest here with ferocious animals, but now it has been cleaned and a few people have been blessed with new plantation. Various problems have been created due to disappearance of Sal forests, lamented Heromon.

Sanuara, Helena and Jarina Khatun of the same village echoed the tone of Heromon, adding, innocent people of their locality are being implicated allegedly in false forest cases. Some people also alleged that organised gangs in connivance with a section of forest guards and officials were plundering Sal forests. Hafizul, 8, a student of Digirpar primary school said to this correspondent, "I like forest but it is vanishing fast."

We do not need afforestation in Sal forest area if we create a congenial atmosphere for growing Sal coppices, said Md Joyal Abedin, a professor of Madhupur Degree College. He hoped that bio-diversity would be protected this way.

Md Mustafizur Rahman, Range Officer of Dhokhola

Schoolgirl abducted In Jhalakati

UNB, Jhalakati

A schoolgirl of village Ostakhan in Sadar upazila was abducted by local criminals on Saturday evening.

Locals said Zakir and his accomplices abducted Shathi Akter, 14, a student of class IX, at gunpoint when she was

returning home with her mother.

In another incident, a group of local extortionists beat Subhash Hawlader, 40, a nursery owner of village Khordopara in Sadar upazila after taking him to a paddy field on Saturday night. They demanded illegal toll amounting to Tk 25,000 from him.



PHOTO: STAR

Juned Ahmed, deputy general manager (DGM) of Janata Bank, Sylhet divisional office speaks at a conference of the bank's branch managers in Moulvibazar region. Assistant general managers Md Abul Hussain and Ratan Kumer Pal attended the conference which was held recently in the district town.

Abnormal price-hike of daily necessities in Gopalganj

UNB, Gopalganj

Prices of daily necessities including fuel oil have shot up abnormally in different markets of Gopalganj since the outbreak of US-led invasion on Iraq.

Consumers said each litre of kerosene is being sold between Tk 25 and Tk 28 as against Tk 17 while each litre of petrol and octane at Tk 35 and Tk

38.

Dishonest businessmen are creating artificial crisis by stockpiling fuel and essentials to earn windfall profit, they added.

According to market survey each kg of rice is being sold between Tk 15 and Tk 21, pulses between Tk 40 and Tk 48, onion between Tk 16 and Tk 20, soyabean oil between Tk 45 and Tk 50.

New committee of Satkhira Zilla Samity



A new executive committee of Satkhira Zilla Samity, Dhaka was formed at a meeting on March 21 at 62, Lake Circus, Kalabagan in Dhaka, says a press release.

The office-bearers are as follows:

President-Sheikh Shafi Ahmed, vice-presidents-Sheikh Anisur Rahman, Mohammad Fakhruddin (Shahjahan) and engineer Abul Kashem, general secretary-Mohammad Rezwana Khan Munna, treasurer-Alhaj Md Nazrul Islam, joint general secretary-Md Mahmudul Hasan Setu, joint treasurer-Md Abu Jafar Mia, organising secretary-Md Abu Masud, social welfare and development secretary- Dr GM Abdus Salam, education secretary-Alhaj Dr MA Jalil, literary and cultural secretary-Masuda Khan Papree, sports secretary-AM Mohidul Islam, information and publicity secretary-AKM Shahidul Islam, secretary (printing and publication)-MA Masud Manu, women's and children's affairs secretary-Momena Khatun, secretary (shelter and relief)-Sheikh Moazzem Hossain, secretary-in-charge of healthcare- Dr Shahidul Alam, secretary (employment)- A K M Abdur Razzaque.

The following persons have been elected as members: Kazi Abdul Hakim, H M Rahmatullah, Kazi Siddiqur Rahman, Sheikh Abul Hasan, Rezaul Karim, SM Khalilur Rahman, advocate Md Shahidul Huq, advocate Abul Bashar Khairul, Md Mosharrif Hossain, Abdul Bari-al-Baki and Md Abu Syeed.

AL, BNP clash leaves 20 injured

UNB, Pabna

A clash between the supporters of Awami League (AL) and BNP at Foilzana bazaar in Chatmohar upazila left 20 people injured on Sunday.

Police said the clash ensued between the two groups over gambling at a 'Boishakhi' fair at the village which lasted for several hours.

Of the injured, seven were admitted to the upazila health complex. Tension was prevailing in the area. Police visited the spot.

Property worth Tk 10 lakh gutted in Kurigram

UNB, Kurigram

Property worth over Tk 10 lakh gutted in separate fire incidents in Fulbari and Roumari upazilas last week.

The devastating fire at a godown owned by Safiar Rahman broke out from an electric short circuit in Fulbari upazila and gutted 800 maunds of rice, paddy, wheat, mustard and jute on March 24.

Firemen from Kurigram and Lalmonirhat rushed to the spot and brought the flame under control. The extent of damage was estimated at Tk 8 lakh.

In two other fire incidents at the houses of Ashraf Ali of village Bawai and Mohammad Amin of village Baguarchar in Roumari upazila, valuables worth Tk 3 lakh were burnt to ashes on March 26 and 27.

The fire-affected families were passing their days under the sky.



PHOTO: STAR

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque leads a big procession in Netrakona town to create mass awareness against cheating in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations. District administration, Sabolombi Unnyan Sangstha, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and Shikkhak Forum jointly organised the procession recently.