

NEWS SNAPS

BA examinee electrocuted**UNB, Jhalakati**

A BA examinee was electrocuted in Jhalakati town on Friday.

Locals said Abdus Salam, 20, son of a day laborer Abu Mia, came in contact with a live electric wire at noon while hanging his wet lungi on it after taking bath for performing the Juma prayers.

16 injured in clash**UNB, Brahmanbaria**

Sixteen people were injured in a clash over a trifle matter at Kandauk in Nasirnagar upazila on Friday.

Three of the injured Angura Khatoon, 40, Taju Miah, 30, and Khaleq Miah, 30, -were admitted to the Upazila Health Complex. A case was filed with the police.

Fish disease breaks out**BSS, Habiganj**

Fish diseases have broken out in an epidemic form in all upazilas of Habiganj.

The demand for fish has decreased in the local markets in the wake of diseases, which are known as "ulcerative varieties," according to local fisheries officials. Some dishonest fishermen are using illegal current nets and catching fish fries of different varieties hampering the growth of fish resources. Fisherman and owners of different water bodies urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to check spread of ulcerative fish diseases and illegal fish catching.

Agri fair begins in Panchagarh**UNB, Panchagarh**

A three-day agriculture fair began on the premises of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) office on Saturday.

Additional director of DAE, Rangpur region Mohammad Shamsul Haq inaugurated the fair in a function presided over by its deputy director (DD) Mohammad Abdul Aziz Dewan. Twenty stalls of different organisations including CARE-Bangladesh, Tea Board, Potato Research Centre and some nurseries have set up their stalls.

Acute scarcity of sweet water for Royal Bengal tigers in Sundarbans

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

Environmental degradation in the Sundarbans has been affecting adversely the health of Royal Bengal tigers.

In absence of sweet water, tigers in the Sundarbans drink saline water for survival. They fall sick frequently. As such the growth of their next generation is being threatened.

Royal Bengal tigers need adequate sweet water to satisfy their thirst. The Sundarbans lack sufficient tanks or sources of sweet water. Tigers drink water from deep forest.

There are about 450 Royal Bengal

tigers in the Sundarbans, according to forest office sources. They have been living in comparatively high land surrounded by dense forest to save from cyclone, storm and tidal wave.

Though a sanctuary for tigers in the Sundarbans is a crying need, but is yet to be materialised. Because of expansion of visiting areas in the Sundarbans by people like Mowals, Bawals and fishermen, the tigers are retreating deep inside the dense forest, where living condition is bad for them, said a forest official.

A forest official told The Daily Star they are pondering over the matter. "We

have submitted a project proforma amounting to nine crore taka as its estimated cost to the Ministry of Forest and Environment a few years ago," the official added. He hopes that that the proposed project was likely to be okayed in due time. The project proposes expansion of new areas for Royal Bengal tigers by creating a healthy atmosphere and environment in the Sundarbans which is congenial to their survival.

As estimated in the plan, the number of tigers would increase sharply from 450 to 1,000 if the plan is properly implemented.

Lack of official status

Newly-elected UP chairmen in Magura suffer from inferiority complex

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

The newly-elected chairmen of various Union Parishads (UPs) in Magura suffer from inferiority complex as they have no official status.

"We need an officially recognised status just like the members of parliament (MPs)," Mohidul Islam, chairman of Dariapur UP in Sreepur upazila told The Daily Star.

UP chairmen play a positive role to implement development works and in maintaining law and order in remote villages, but the government do not recognise their contributions by defining their status in society.

"Because of his role in society, the government should define their official rank," said Advocate Afia Akter Bani, a

Human rights activist to this correspondent.

A UP chairman has to go to different offices including police stations, upazila nirbahi office and upazila health complex, but because of lack of official status he has to depend on kindness of the officials concerned, it is widely alleged. Moreover, they have to spend lot of money from their pockets to go places as they have no official vehicle to do their job.

Elections to 28 unions in Magura were held between January 26 and February 6. In 23 unions new faces were elected while in rest five unions former chairmen were re-elected.

The chairman of DhaneSwargati union in Shalikhā upazila, Ishaq Mallick

further said to this correspondent, "We get a monthly allowance of Tk 1,500 only while a municipality chairman gets Tk 3,000 per month. They are also provided with an official jeep. The government should allocate at least a motor-bike for an UP chairman."

The Union Council system was introduced in 1957 without specifying the official rank of a chairman.

In 1997, Union Parishads were reformed increasing the number of wards and creating reserve seats for women.

"A bill should be passed in parliament for ascertaining the official rank of UP chairmen," Anisuddin Sarder, chairman of Bogia UP in Sadar upazila said to this correspondent.

Man murdered in Noakhali

UNB, Noakhali

A man was murdered allegedly by one of his in-laws over a trifle matter at village Chakla in Sadar thana on Thursday.

Police said Shamsul Huq of the village picked up a quarrel with his brother-in-law Muhammad Nurul Amin, 50, over the ownership of a tree. At one stage Huq hit Amin with a stick injuring him critically.

He was rushed to the general hospital where he died. The body was handed over to his relatives after post-mortem on Friday.

The death news of Amin infuriated the villagers who later caught Shamsul and handed him over to police after a good beating.

A case was filed with police.

PBCP leader arrested in Natore

UNB, Natore

Police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in a joint raid arrested a notorious outlawed party leader from village Shibpur Amhati in Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

The arrested was Shahjahan alias Saju, one of the top leaders of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Police and BDR launched a joint raid against the miscreant following killing of BNP leader Majedur Rahman Maju at Madhnagar in Naldanga thana on April 4 by the activists of the party.

In another raid, police arrested an alleged culprit Yunus Ali along with two pipe guns from village Burirbhag in Naldanga thana on the same night.

Fugitive arrested in B'baria

UNB, Brahmanbaria

A convicted fugitive was arrested from a fair at Kandauk in Nasirnagar upazila on Thursday.

Police said Abdun Noon of village Buriswar in Narisnagar upazila was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a dacoity case in absentia recently.



PHOTO: IQBAL SIDIQUEE
A motor cyclist plying his vehicle through dusty Sylhet-Sultanpur Road which is in bad shape. People suffer a lot because of this phenomenon.

New project for economic prosperity of marginal farmers

UNB, Patuakhali

A new project styled "Small Holder Support Project" has been launched in four districts to raise socio-economic condition of marginal and landless farmers.

Agriculture Ministry launched the five-year project in Patuakhali, Barisal, Jhalakati and Barguna recently involving Tk 76.35 crore with Tk 47.64 crore foreign assistance.

The project includes development of rural infrastructure and small irrigation system, providing agricultural loan and training and agriculture fair.

An additional two lakh metric tons (MTs) of rice, 250 MTs of wheat, 28,000 MTs of pulses, 1,200 MTs of oilseeds, 2,400 MTs of potato, 26,000 MTs of sweet potato and 80,000 MTs of vegetable are expected to be produced every year

under the project.

Some 1.60 lakh marginal and landless farmers will be benefited with the implementation of the project.

Forest pirates abduct man in Noakhali

UNB, Noakhali

Forest pirates abducted a man failing to realise toll at Charbata union in Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

Locals said pirates intercepted Manik, 30, on his way to Somirhat bazaar and abducted him after beating him for refusing to pay them toll.