

Upazila roundup

**CHANDPUR**  
**Bar Assoc executives**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 March 6: The annual general meeting and election of Chandpur District Bar Association was held recently with Md. Muslim in the chair. Mr. A.K.M. Fazlul Hoq, Mr. Ayub Ali and Mr. Zahurul Islam were elected President, Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively for the current year. Besides, 18 others were elected in the executive committee.

**DINAJPUR**  
**Housewife commits suicide**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 March 6: One Mrs. Palash Bala (35) wife of Bipin Chandra of village Uttar Palashbari in Chirribandar upazila allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself recently. Family trouble was said to be the cause of her suicide. The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. A case has been registered with Chirribandar PS in this regard.

**MADARIPUR**  
**5331 cases pending with Rin Shalishi Board**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 March 6: A total of 5331 cases filed with the Rin Shalishi Board in six upazilas of the district are yet to be disposed. According to sources, 466 cases were filed in Sadar upazila, 478 in Naria, 425 in Janzira, 161 in Damudya, 941 in Ghoshairhat and 2860 in Bhedarganj upazila. Poor farmers are visiting different upazila Rin Shalishi Board offices for early disposal of the pending cases but no progress has yet been made to this end due to administrative lapses. They urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to dispose the pending cases without further delay. Work on the town power distribution project at a cost of Taka six crore, funded by IDA began here recently. The work was inaugurated by Mr. Khalilur Rahman Khan, Chairman, Madaripur Pourashava. M/s Surma Corporation, the working firm of the project will, with the guidance of PDB, Madaripur and pourashava set up 40 kms of electric lines in and around Madaripur municipal area.

**SHERPUR**  
**Minor boy killed in road mishap**  
 March 6: A minor boy died on the spot while a speeding truck knocked him down at Vingachi on Sherpur Trunk Road, police said, reports UNB. The victim Abdur Rouf (8) met the accident when he was crossing the road. Police seized the vehicle but the driver managed to flee. The body was sent to sadar hospital for autopsy.

**FENI**  
**2 die of diarrhoea**  
 March 6: Diarrhoea claimed two lives in Fatehpur village in Sadar Upazila yesterday, reports UNB. According to villagers, the deceased are Jarina Akhter (40) and Selina Akhter (10). At least 10 more people were said to have been affected by the disease since it broke out on March 2. Sources in Sadar Health Complex, however said the victims died of food poisoning.

**RANGPUR**  
**3 commit suicide**  
 March 6: Three people including a woman committed suicide in separate incidents in the district, police said here today, reports UNB. According to sources, Shampa (30), a housewife, Monday took away her life by throwing herself under the wheels of a running train near Patgram railway station. The reason behind the suicide could not be known immediately. A girl, Nissan (17) of Raghunathpur village in Pirganj upazila, Tuesday committed suicide by taking poison. Her family members said but could not give reasons for the incident. Bacha Mia (30) of Shadulapur upazila hanged himself to death on Saturday after he failed to pay back outstanding bank loan, according to villagers. Cases were filed with police.

**MANIKGANJ**  
**Launch dacoity**  
 March 6: Valuables worth about Taka five lakh were looted Tuesday night in a launch dacoity, police here said. According to witnesses, the dacoits numbering 15 to 20 in guise of passengers, boarded the launch at Aricha Ghat and attacked the inmates as soon as after it left the ghat. The launch M V Nipu, was on a regular journey on Aricha-Daulatdia route. The armed dacoits looted cash, ornaments and other valuables from the passengers. The miscreants forced the driver of the launch to stop at Char Daulatdia and decamped with the booty. A case was registered with Aricha police in this connection.

**BARISAL**  
**Sarbahara party activist held**  
 March 6: Police arrested Abdus Salam Alias Yunus said to be an activist of the outlawed Sarbahara Party from Mehendiganj area here, reports UNB. Salam, hailing from Labukhali village of Patuakhali district was rounded up with a ptegun and some important document of the party. He was wanted in connection with a number of criminal cases.

**MAULVI BAZAR**  
**Shab-e-Barat observed**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 March 6: Shab-e-Barat was observed throughout Maulvi Bazar district with due respect, and religious fervour. The devotees offered special prayers on the occasion seeking the blessings of Allah. Thousands of devotees visited the holy shrine of the great Muslim saint Hazrat Syed Shah Mustafa (R). People also visited the graves of their relatives to offer Fatcha.

**COX'S BAZAR**  
**Eye camp held**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 A 7-day long eye camp was arranged by Bangladesh Navy at St. Martin Island and Kutubdia Island in collaboration with the Chittagong Eye Hospital and National Society for the Blind. All patients were treated free of cost. A total of 200 eye patients were operated upon and treated in the camp. Bangladesh Navy have arranged eye camp at coastal area every year.

**KUSHTIA**  
**Frequent power failure hampers production**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 March 6: Frequent power failure and load shedding have become regular feature in Kushtia and adjoining areas causing much inconvenience to the town dwellers and loss to businessmen. According to informed sources, hardly a day or night passes without power disruption. Almost every night electricity goes off plunging the entire town into darkness. As a result students and businessmen have been suffering much. Erratic power supply has also affected production in the local mills and workshops. Irrigation work in the IRR and Boro block with power connection is also affected at the sowing stage. The price hike of foodstuff in the market is largely attributed to frequent power failure. The people can not crush their paddy and wheat due to absence of power supply. Besides fluctuation of voltage causes damage to electronic goods. Inadequate street light have also aggravated the situation.

**CHUADANGA**  
**Press Club executives**  
 Mar 6: Election of the office-bearers of the Press Club here was held amid much enthusiasm, reports UNB. Kamrul Arefin (BSS) and Wasiqueur Rahman (New Nation) were elected President and Secretary respectively. Chitta Ranjan Chitva was also elected Treasurer. M.M. Alauddin, a senior journalist, conducted the polls held recently. Another message adds: Amar Ekushey was observed here with due solemnity.



Elephant — the giant of animals can occasionally be seen in circus or zoo. Here in Comilla country side rural children are running after the rare elephant to have a glance of it. — Star photo

Withdrawal of Ganges water by India  
**1.20 cr acres may turn into arid land in N. districts**

From Our Correspondent  
 KUSHTIA, Mar 6: The Ganges Kobadak Project biggest irrigation project of this region of the country, aimed at increasing agricultural production, is threatened with closure because of unprecedented low flow of Ganges water from the upper riparian much ahead of dry season and this phenomenon is continuing for the last few years due to the effect of Farakka Barrage constructed by India on the other part of the border. Informed sources predicted that the process of desertification has started in as many as 21 South-western and northern districts of the country. The mouth of intake channel which feed three main pumps and 12 subsidiary pumps for the irrigation of 3.50 lakh acres of land in Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura and Jessore districts have been silted up. As a result the project authority has been compelled to undertake dredging work much ahead of time at an expenditure of Taka one lakh per day for maintaining the water flow in the pump house which is situated 3000 feet away from the main river Ganges at Hardinge Bridge point. Lowest flow of Ganges water was recorded at 15,000 cusecs in February during the last few years and this year too it is no exception. This year emergence of innumerable chans in the middle of the main river Ganges indicates that huge quantity of water has been diverted to the upper reaches much ahead of dry season by India through Farakka causing dislocation of ferry service on Bheramara-Paksey route. To maintain the ferry service, Roads and Highways Department had already spent huge amount of money for dredging its route and frequently shifting the Ferry Ghat for the convenience of the riverine passengers. Paksey Paper Mills which require huge water from the river Ganges has also been facing problems due to abnormal low flow of water. The Mill authority has also utilised dredger as well as manual labour to fetch water in order to keep the mills running with extreme difficulties. Water and soil experts said that low flow of water has increased soil salinity in 21 districts of the country by 40 per cent. Experts apprehended more than 1.20 crore acres of cultivable land in the affected districts may turn into an arid land. This phenomenon has been increasingly lowering the moisture content of soil and experts termed it "a sure sign of desertification". The reduction of moisture in the soil will hamper the rabi crop production in greater Rajshahi, Pabna, Kushtia, Faridpur and Jessore districts, they said. Hence the rise of surface water salinity and soil intrusion salinity owing to unilateral withdrawal of water of the river Ganges by India will force us to change the usual cropping pattern in those affected districts for our survival, they added. It is learnt that a proposal for over Taka 6.28 crores project for comprehensive study to combat desertification in Bangladesh is awaiting approval.

**Science Week begins**

NETROKONA, Mar 6: The 14th national science week began at the local government college here on Monday amid much enthusiasm, reports UNB. Deputy Commissioner AHM Abul Kashem formally inaugurated the week where four local science clubs were taking part. Fifteen educational institutions of the district are participating in the programmes which include exhibition and extempore speech competition. A discussion meeting, chaired by Abul Kashem, was also held at the auditorium of the college in this connection. G M Haider, Prof Pratap Chandra and Kamal Azad also addressed the function.

**Kidnapped girl yet to be rescued**

RAJSHAHI, Mar 6: Two weeks have elapsed but police are yet to rescue a girl, kidnapped by some miscreants, reports UNB. According to sources, Rokshana Khatun Sheila (15), of village Kholabon under Poba upazila here was abducted by a group of miscreants while she was returning home from school. Police recently arrested co-villager Nasruddin (23) in this connection. Parents of the girl have urged the authorities to step up search campaign without further delay.

**One killed**

A man was killed on the spot when a speeding jeep ran over him near post office in the town, police said here today. The victim was identified as Shamapada Sarker, a retired employee of the district Collectorate.

**Arms recovered**

Large quantities of arms and ammunition were recovered from 16 districts of Rajshahi Division during the last two months. According to police, one SLR, 6 rifles, 6 country made guns, 63 pipe guns, 14 pistols, eight revolvers, eight bayonets, 16 daggers, 79 handbombs and about 1500 rounds of ammunition were recovered. Police also nabbed 313, people in this connection.

**Maulvi Bazar roads need care**

From Our Correspondent  
 MAULVI BAZAR, Mar 6: Almost all roads under Zila Parishad of the district are now in a deplorable condition. These roads with the culverts and bridges were constructed either during the British period or the Pakistan day. But due to lack of proper development and maintenance for several decades, these roads have become worn-out, innumerable holes and deep breaches have developed on these roads causing great inconvenience to the vehicular traffic and the people residing in the villages on both sides of these roads. There are 116 miles of roads under Zila Parishad here. Of them only 16 miles are pucca while the remaining portion still awaits carpeting. The existing pucca portion of these roads particularly Shamsheernagar-Matulyabazar road, Shabandar-Dighirpur Bazar road are also in a pitiable condition.

**Siltation in rivers hampers navigation, irrigation**

From Our Correspondent  
 JAMALPUR, Mar 6: The rivers Brahmaputra, Lohajang, Shabarua, Raimari and a portion of the Jamuna flowing through Jamalpur district have alarmingly silted up posing threat to irrigation, pisciculture and navigation. With the advent of the dry season the water level of these rivers has fallen to a large extent bringing a total standstill to the movement of even country boats. The river beds of the Brahmaputra and the Shabarua are now being used for cultivation as they are completely dried up. The Lohajang tributary of the Jamuna is also being dried up fast. A big charland has emerged on the offtake of the river hindering the flow of water. Fifty-nine miles long Raimari river is filled with hyacinth with knee-deep stagnant water. Cultivation would be possible even on this river bed in near future. Knowledgeable circles opined that comprehensive plan for dredging both the Jamuna and Brahmaputra rivers should be taken up immediately for smooth navigation and to keep continued the trade and commerce of the district. According to the sources, the Water Development Board undertook a scheme for re-excavation of these rivers but the scheme has been shelved due to fund constraints. The Railway ferries and launches plying between Bahadurabad Ghat and Teestamukh Ghat and Jagannathganj Ghat and Seraganj Ghat are taking three to four hours extra time to reach their destinations.



Passengers are so many but the ferry boat — only one, at the remote Jamalpur village hat. Boat cannot ply now due to alarming fall in water level of rivers and canals. — Star photo

Political scene

**Village squads help maintain peace**

Star Report  
 Different political parties have formed village squads across the country to prevent untoward incidents among the rival groups. This has been done in view of the sporadic clashes occurring between the rival political activists in several districts after the February 27 parliamentary polls. Star outstation correspondents have reported from various parts of the country that the villagers in large numbers have volunteered to be included in the vigilante squads formed by the local leaders. The squads keep watch on all activities related mostly to political demonstrations. At night they maintain vigilance on the movement of any strangers or local men having doubtful integrity. This is indeed a commendable job for the local units of the political parties or village headmen to maintain peace. Our correspondents have also reported that the rural people are happy to see their leaders working hard for ensuring peace in respective localities. Many people affectionately call them soldiers of peace.

Our Pabna Correspondent writes: The security money of 28 candidates out of 44 from five constituencies of Pabna district have been forfeited in the parliamentary election held on February 27. The most important persons among them included former State Minister and former MP Major (Rtd.) Manjoor Kader (JP), Advocate Shamsul Haq Tuku (AL) of Pabna-1, Moqbul Hossain Shantoo, former MP (JP), central leader of NAP (M) Advocate Ranesh Maltra of Pabna-2, AKM Shamsuddin former MP (JP), Advocate Shahidullah Palash (JSD-Rab), Barister Korban Ali (Islam Oikya Jote), of Pabna-3, Manjoor Rahman Biswas former MP (JP), Comrade Jasim Uddin Mondal (CPB), Panjab Ali Biswas, former MP (JSD-Rab), of Pabna-4 and Member of politbureau of UCL Aminul Huq (Tipu Biswas), and Advocate Showkat Ali (JP), of Pabna-5.

The election was held in 437 polling centres with 1991 booths and everywhere people attended the centres with utmost devotion to select their favoured candidates. There was a peaceful atmosphere in all centres and election was held free, fair and impartial. No untoward incident was happened. Among 5 seats BNP got three followed by Jamaat-e-Islami two. About 65 per cent of votes was casts in the district. The election was held in 437 polling centres with 1991 booths and everywhere people attended the centres with utmost devotion to select their favoured candidates. There was a peaceful atmosphere in all centres and election was held free, fair and impartial. No untoward incident was happened. Among 5 seats BNP got three followed by Jamaat-e-Islami two. About 65 per cent of votes was casts in the district.

**Hundreds could not cast votes**  
 Our Kurigram Correspondent adds: Hundreds of people in Kurigram could not cast their votes in the Jatiya Sangsad election on February 27 as their names did not appear in the voters list. Many of them went to the vote centres and were disappointed when they did not find their names in the voters list. Elite, businessmen and common people were deprived of their voting rights due to this lapse in the voters list. Mr. Shib Narayan Roy (48), Anku Roy (21), Roghu Nath Paul (45), Khumini Bawa (45), w/o Khujia Mamud, Shahida (25), d/o Khujia Mamud, Komaruddin (36), Maleka Begum (28), w/o Rahmatullah, Saifur Rahman (45) and many others complained that their names were in the voters list earlier. Mr Rabindra Nath Roy, "Sangbad" correspondent of Kurigram could not also cast his vote for lapse in voters list. While, I visited Kurigram River View High School Centre, Kurigram College Centre and Kurigram Madrasah vote centre, met the aforesaid persons and many others, who questioned how their names were omitted even after they did not change their addresses.

**Patuakhali**  
 Our Patuakhali Correspondent adds: A big procession led by Jatiya Party leaders paraded main thoroughfares of Gatachipa and Mirzaganj upazila demanding immediate release of President Hussain Md. Ershad. In the February 27, parliamentary election he contested from five constituencies in his own district Rangpur and he has been nominated therein in all the seats. As the news spread that he has been elected in all the five constituencies Jatiya Party leaders and supporters who were for so long inactive and sordid burst out with great joy.

**Sherpur**  
 Our Sherpur Correspondent adds: A victory procession was brought out in favour of Shah Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury on his success in the parliamentary polls held on February 27. I may be mentioned here that Mr Rafiqul Bari, a Jatiya Party nominee was unofficially declared a member of Parliament. A procession from his native village parading 12 mile long road ended at Sherpur Bahadur Shah Park. About 20 thousand people from all walks of life took part in the procession and chanted slogans demanding release of H.M. Ershad. Later Mr Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury, MP elect from Sherpur Sadar addressed a gathering at Bahadur Shah Park.

**Barisal**  
 UNB from Barisal adds: Out of 63 candidates who contested in the February 27 parliamentary elections from six constituencies of the district, security money of 44 candidates have been forfeited. Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers' Party won from one of the constituencies has also had his security deposit forfeited from Bakerganj-5 constituency.

**Victory procession**  
 Meanwhile, a victory procession was brought out by the activists of Jatiya Party on the victory of Alhaj Tajul Islam Chowdhury (ex-Minister of deposed President Ershad) in the Jatiya Sangsad election in Kurigram-2 seat comprising Sadar, Rajarhat, and Fulbari upazilas. The processionists paraded

**95 cattlehead poisoned to death in Jamalpur**

From Our Correspondent  
 JAMALPUR, Mar 5: At least 95 cattlehead were poisoned to death last year to extract their skins. Numerous cattle lifters and dishonest persons have long been involved in this unfair activities. According to sources of Livestock and Animal Husbandry office, the cattle lifters in collaboration with skin traders and butchers steal cattlehead from grazing lands and cow-sheds and promptly kill them by poisoning and extract skin from them. This malpractice is rampant in Melanda, Islampur.