

Upazila roundup

KHULNA

Forged seals, certificates seized

Jan 15: Forged seals of the Prime Minister and SSC-HSC certificates were seized from a city house on Sunday evening, police said, reports UNB.

Detective police hauled up more than 100 seals in name of Prime Minister, Home Minister, Education Minister and Inspector General of Police, and 80 HSC and 70 SSC fake certificates from the residence of Abdul Qudus at Maheswarpasha.

Abul Kalam Azad, Sirajul Islam, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Rabin Ghose and Nazimuddin Ahmed were arrested on charge of making and distributing fake certificates and seals.

Police said Azad, a former employee of Jessore Board, was dismissed from job on charge of corruption in 1988. Mohiuddin of East Bankhamar was a Professor of Mathematics at Daulatpur Day and Night College in 1976-81. Siraj is Proprietor of Banalata Press in Khalishpur Industrial Area. Robin was alleged to have been engaged in forging seals.

SATKHIRA

Help hold UP polls peacefully

Jan 15: Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf stressed the need for holding the forthcoming union parishad elections free and fair, reports UNB.

"We should try best to retain our past reputation gained in the last Parliamentary elections," he said addressing a meeting of high officials of the district on Saturday.

The meeting was organised by the district administration to discuss ways and means how to hold the elections peacefully with Deputy Commissioner Kabeer Rahman in the chair.

Joint Secretary Saidur Rahman and Deputy Secretary Yunus Hossain attended the meeting as special guests.

High officials of the district including UNOs, OCs and existing union parishad chairmen and members were present in the meeting.

RANGPUR

Lathicharge on demonstrators, 50 injured

Jan 15: At least 50 people were injured when police lathicharged demonstrators who damaged some shops in the town last Monday protesting construction of a sculpture on 1971 Liberation War, reports UNB.

Witnesses said police used batons and burst teargas shells to disperse stone-throwing protesters near Rangpur Carmichael College this afternoon.

The Anti-Islamic Activities Resistance Committee brought out a procession protesting the construction of the sculpture in Carmichael College compound.

Several cocktails were hurled at the procession when it reached near Salak petrol Pump. Apparently angry by the explosion of cocktails, the demonstrators started throwing bricks indiscriminately causing damage to at least 25 wayside shops.

COMILA

2 hijackers held, baby taxi seized

Jan 15: Chandina police caught red handed two alleged hijackers along with a hijacked baby taxi (Dhaka PA 1095) on Dhaka-Chittagong Trunk Road last week, reports UNB.

Police, on suspicion, halted the baby taxi at Kutambapur at midnight and nabbed the two hijackers. But two others were escaped.

They hijacked the baby taxi from Kanghasnagar after hurting the driver.

A case was registered with Burchong police station and arrested people were sent to jail.

FARIDPUR

Indian goods seized, 5 held

Jan 15: Police arrested 5 people and recovered contraband goods worth about Taka 59,000 from their possession at Madhukhali Rail Gate in the district on Sunday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, Madhukhali police raided a Jessore bound private car (No Dhaka Ca 67006) coming from Dhaka at the gate and recovered Indian sarees, imitation ornaments and pesticides.

The arrested were Babu, Golam Mustafa, Kazi Anwar Haq, Chan Mia and Anwar Mollah. Police also seized the car.

A case has been filed in this connection.

BARISAL

Sweet potato cultivation

Jan 15: A total of 8,660 hectares have been brought under sweet potato cultivation in 65 upazilas of eleven southern districts in the current season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, production target of sweet potato has been fixed at 1,84,652 metric tons this year in these districts.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) has supplied seeds, fertilizers and other necessary inputs to the farmers for successful implementation of the programme, the source added.

A total of 59,215 hectares have been brought under sweet potato cultivation in the country this year.

GAIBANDHA

80th founding anniversary celebrated

Jan 15: The 80th founding anniversary of Gaibandha Natya Sangstha, a leading cultural organisation of the district was celebrated recently.

The programme included discussion meeting, rally, staging of drama and cultural function. Participants of the discussion highlighted the role of the organisation in cultural field of the district during the last eight decades.

JHENIDAH

Bicycle rider killed in road mishap

Jan 15: One person was killed another injured in a road accident recently on Jhenidah-Magura Road at Madhupur, five kms from here, reports BSS.

Eye witness account said the victim, Jafar, (40) who was riding a bicycle was knocked down by a passenger bus.

He died on the spot. Mokbul a pedestrian who received injury was taken to Jhenidah sadar hospital for treatment.

Police seized the bus and the driver managed to escape.

PATUAKHALI

CPB district body formed

PATUAKHALI, Jan 15: The district committee of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) has been formed at a meeting held here recently, reports UNB.

Advocate Abdul Aziz and Md Motaleb Mollah were elected President and General Secretary respectively.

Md Khalilur Rahman has also been elected Assistant General Secretary of the committee.

SIRAJGANJ

Tk 1.6 cr PDB bill outstanding

Jan 15: Power Development Board of the district has realised Taka 1.6 crore outstanding electric bill of the last year, reports UNB.

It may be mentioned that Taka four crore has been lying outstanding in the district, a PDB source said.

The main defaulters are: Water Development Board — Taka 25 lakh, Palli Bidyut Samity — Taka 22 lakh and Qaumi Jute Mills — Taka 12 lakh, the source added.

SAVAR

Botanical confce

Jan 15: The Second Annual Conference of Bangladesh Botanical Society (BBS) will be held at the Social Science Gallery of Jahangirnagar University on January 15, reports BSS.

On the eve of the conference, the organisers on Tuesday held a Press Conference at the Council Room of the Vice-Chancellor's Office of Jahangirnagar University.

Dr Abdul Aziz Khan, Ex Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University and President of BBS, Dr A B M Enayet, Director of Life Science Institute, Jahangirnagar University spoke in the Press conference. Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University was also present.

He organisers said that Bangladesh should be a member of the Overseas Economic Committee for Development (OECD) for getting the facilities of Bio-Technology. They said that neighbouring India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka are already OECD members.

The speakers sought co-operation from all for making the conference a success.



RAJSHAHI: Two athletes of RU bearing the torch at the inaugural ceremony of Inter-College Athletics Competition held at varsity stadium recently — Star photo

Farmers becoming landless

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Jan 15: The marginal farmers of the district are gradually becoming landless as the crops and dwelling houses were destroyed by the several cyclones and floods.

The absence of proper rehabilitation programme is also making them helpless and then are bound to sell their lands for their survival.

Some farmers informed that the continuous floods and cyclones have left them in miserable economic condition and now they can not stand on their own feet without the financial assistance of the government.

They informed that the relief of the government after natural calamities can help them only to survive for the time being. But after that, they

require money to restart cultivation and other purposes for which they had to borrow from the local moneylenders at a high interest. Ultimately, they are to sell all their crops to repay the loans with interest.

They expressed that if they got loan at a considerable rate of interest from any quarter, they could at least save some crops from their cultivation.

Commercial banks including the branches of Krishi Bank of the district are disbursing loans to unproductive sectors like cinema halls, houses, transports, restaurants and hotels.

The farmers do not get loans from these banks to restart their cultivation after any calamities as they are unable to furnish papers and

other requisite securities, it is informed. They alleged that the existing rules for advancing loans to small and marginal farmers through pass books are not carried out.

It has been alleged that a group of middlemen and rich land holders are taking loans in fictitious names in connivance with some bank employees depriving the genuine farmers.

Meanwhile, most of the marginal and small farmers received notices to clear up the loans. But the present economic condition of the farmers are quite negative to repay the loans.

The farmers have urged the concerned authorities to take steps to provide loans through easy terms and conditions to help them survive.

Work on Barisal Airport project in progress

Early approval needed to continue earthfilling

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 15: The earthfilling work for the extension of Barisal Airport has already been started from Thursday last.

The extended area will be filled up with about 95 lakh cubic feet earth at cost of Taka 4 crore.

The existing 1800 feet long runway will be extended to 6,000 feet and the breadth of the runway will be extended from 60 feet to 100 feet.

The Civil Aviation Minister earlier directed the concerned authority to take necessary steps to start the works of the project after visiting the area.

Recently, Prime Minister Khaleida Zia also directed the authority to start the work on Barisal Airport Project immediately.

But it was learnt that the

earthfilling work may be suspended if the project fail to have approval of the Planning Commission and Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC).

The Civil Aviation Authority started the work earlier of the project only with a verbal assurance.

It is also learnt from a reliable source of the concerned authority that till now no fund has been allocated for the project though six months of the current financial year have passed. The concerned Minister also assured the availability of lum-sum amount of fund for the project.

It can be mentioned here that after the completion of the project, the Barisal Airport will be an important airway link with Dhaka, Khulna,

Chittagong and the southern districts of the country.

Out of the total electricity bill of Taka 3.75 crore, Taka 1.04 crore have been realised upto December 31, 1991 in the Barisal Division of the Power Development Board (PDB).

According to official sources, there are 16,000 consumers both domestic and commercial in the division to whom Taka 3.75 crore is outstanding.

The authority recently took a step to realise the outstanding amount through formation of a mobile court. Side by side, a team was also formed which comprises the officials of Commercial Power Distribution Division and the local administration to disconnect power lines.

Notes from Maulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MAULVIBAZAR, Jan 15: Various Bank of Maulvibazar district have written off Taka 4 crore 60 lakh 72 thousand and 8 hundred agricultural loans of 19571 borrowers.

A meeting of the bankers took the decision after reviewing the cases of borrowers who took up to Taka 5 thousand as agricultural credit. The exemption was done according to the directives of the government.

A source mentioned that the said amount excluded Rupali Bank loans because the Rupali Bank, Maulvibazar Zonal Office had not received any circular from Head Office about exemption of agricultural loan.

Ramakrishna Mission

Sreemongal Ramakrishna Mission distributed winter clothes among the poor people recently.

Sreemongal Ramakrishna Mission organised a function on this occasion at Mission premises with Professor Nripendra Lal Das in the chair.

Professor Nikhil Bhattacharya, President of Habiganj Ramakrishna Mission and Mr M A Rahim, Chairman of Sreemongal Poursava attended the function as chief guest and special guest respectively.

The function was attended among others by Miss Juthana Goswami, Head Mistress of Sreemongal Government Girls' High School and Mr. Ajit Kumar Pal of Habiganj Ramakrishna Mission.

Sreemongal Ramakrishna Mission collected these winter clothes from generous people of Sreemongal. Leaders of the Mission declared in the function that winter clothes distribution programme will be continued and they also have taken a programme of textbook distribution among the poor students.

Sarada Samity formed

A 21-member committee of Sri Sri Maa Sarada Samity, a new organisation for women's was formed in Sreemongal Upazila with Miss Juthana Goswami as Resident, Mrs Sunila Das as Vice-President and Miss Rupali Chowdhury as General Secretary.

The organisation was formed at a meeting at Ramakrishna Mission premises of Sreemongal town with Miss Juthana Goswami in the chair.

The elected committee taken up some programme on social-welfare.

Winter clothes distributed

UNB reports add: The Srimongal Bebakananda Juba Samity distributed winter clothes among 1,000 distressed people of Srimongal Upazila and adjoining areas of the district during the last few days.

Meanwhile, prices of winter clothes has registered a sharp rise in the local markets beyond the purchasing capacity of the low income group of people.

Local elites have urged the government to distribute warm clothes among the distressed and moribund people of the district to save them from the clutches of biting cold wave prevailing in the district.

Juba Dal committee announced

Bangladesh Jatyatabadi Juba Dal, Rajnagar Upazila unit has held its biennial conference at the thana auditorium.

Chaired by Abbas Ali, Begim Khaleida Rabhani MP, attended the conference as chief guest while among others, Musharraf Hussain, Abdul Mukit, Md. Solayman, Selim Ahmed, Nahaj Khan and Iqam Ahmed spoke on the occasion.

Over 50,000 eye patients get free treatment

Faridpur Eye Hospital, a project of Apex Club of Jahangirnagar, Dhaka organised 20 mobile eye camps and 40 screening camps during August to December, 91, says a press release.

One thousand and six hundred cataract eye patients were operated upon successfully while 50,000 poor eye patients were given out-door treatment free of charges.

Dr Md Farukuzzaman and Dr A Bari Eye Specialists conducted operations in the camps.

All the camps were financially assisted by the Sight Savers (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind).

It may be mentioned here that the hospital was opened on July 26, 1991 by the renowned Eye Specialist, Prof Syed Modasser Ali under the direct control, Management and Sponsorship of Apex Club of Jahangirnagar, Dhaka. Regular out-door and indoor services are being extended by the hospital.



EYE CAMP: Faridpur Eye Hospital, a project of Apex Club of Jahangirnagar, Dhaka organised 20 mobile eye camps and 40 screening camps during last five months — Star photo

Irregularities in leasing of beel

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 15: The government has been deprived of a big amount of revenue due to irregularities in leasing out of local beels.

It is alleged that the Bil Kuzine, one of the biggest water bodies of the district was auctioned at the instruction of the concerned ministry recently.

This waterbody, an area of 23.39 acres was auctioned at Taka 31,000 in 1397 B S in 1398, a person applied to the local administration for taking lease of the beel at Taka 50,000 in the month of Baishak (April). Accordingly, the local administration sought approval of the concerned ministry. But even after six months, the ministry did not respond to the proposal for the reasons not known.

As a result, the said beel could not be auctioned and thus the government was deprived of six month's revenue, it is informed.

Later, the local administration leased out the said beel for two and a half years up to 1400 B S at Taka 4.92 lakh to Ghabari Matsojibi Cooperative Society.

Immediately after the auction, Islampur Matsojibi Cooperative Society applied for taking lease of the same for three years. The ministry rejected the earlier auction and granted the prayer of Islampur Cooperative Society and accordingly instructed the local administration for the implementation of the order.

The Islampur Society made a contract for three years and they paid Taka 4.16 lakh as six months had already been over. This means that the government is losing Taka 70,000 by the latest auction.

In the meantime, the Ghabari Matsojibi Cooperative Society sought injunction against it in the court and the court after considering the papers granted the prayer. It is alleged that a vested quarter is involved in the auction of the waterbodies of the district and they are creating obstructions to lease out these bodies smoothly. This quarters have relations with some of the concerned officials including the ministry and thus they are depriving the government lakhs of money.

The fishermen of the cooperative societies who are the legal participants of the auctions are being harassed by the non-fishermen of the localities. These non-fishermen sometimes threaten the fishermen.

It can be mentioned here that there is instruction from the government that all the waterbodies would be leased out to genuine fishermen as they are the appropriate men who are facing economic hardships.

The fishermen of the district have urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to stop the harassment of the fishermen and help government realise the actual revenue from the waterbodies of the district.

Abnormal fall in bamboo production

BORGUNA, Jan 15: Bamboo production of the district is now on the verge of decline due to lack of proper maintenance and planned plantation, reports UNB.

Now the district has about 5,000 acres of land under bamboo cluster but most of them are in poor condition.

Besides, the prices of bamboo increased several times due to scarcity causing untold sufferings to the poor consumers.

A pair of medium size bamboo is being sold between Tk 200 and Tk 225 in the local markets, which is beyond the purchasing capacity of the poor people, who live on hand to mouth, local people said.

Frequent natural calamities is the main reason for decreasing bamboo production, they added.

Agriculture experts said that if proper nursing and motivation training are imparted, the production can be increased to a great extent.

Meanwhile, repair and construction of thousands of kutcha houses, which collapsed due to natural calamities, are being hampered for want of bamboo.

It may be mentioned that about 80 per cent of dwelling houses in the rural areas of the five upazilas of the district are kutcha.

At least 1,09,290 sets of books for primary students will be distributed in 5 upazilas of the district for the year 1992.

According to officials sources, of the total, 35,185 sets will be distributed in Sadar, 29,580 sets in Amtali, 8,635 in Bamna, 15,200 in

Patharghata and 20,700 sets in Betagi upazilas of the district.

The distribution has already started and is expected to be completed soon, it is learnt.

Winter birds

With the advent of winter, migratory birds have started crowding the beels, canals and chars of the district.

Different types of birds including Dighari, Kalighari, Sarails, Balihas, Ababil and Pankhuri are flying here from different parts of the globe to escape the biting cold.

According to experts, most of the winter birds come from Siberian region where severe cold prevails from the month of November to February. With a view to avoiding this severe cold the birds migrate to tropical countries like Bangladesh and with the advent of the spring they return to their homeland.

About 300 species of migratory birds usually throng in different waterbodies including Amtali, Patharghata and Sadar upazilas of the district.

Only a few years ago, local and migratory birds were abundantly available to beels, haors and canals of the district in the winter season. But now a days the birds are decreasing gradually. The reason behind the gradual decrease of both local and foreign birds are attributed to hunting of birds and scarcity of fish in the beels and haors.

If birds can be protected, it will not only help promote generation of birds but also supplement the national income from natural resources.

Prices of essential commodities up

KUSHIA, Jan 15: Prices of rice and other essential commodities have gone up in the markets here during the last few days, reports UNB.

Rice has been selling between Taka 1 and Taka 1.50 kg more than the previous week.

Rice traders said the price rise was due to sudden short-fall in the supply of rice in the markets. They feel that open marketing operation would normalise the price situation.

Other commodities like edible oil, baby food, dry chilly, garlic, fish, poultry and pulses are also selling high.

Food Department sources said, the target of aman procurement in the district may not be achieved because of the price increase.

The department have so far procured 1,786 metric tons of rice out of 4,000 metric tons fixed for this season.

UP election

The Union Parishad election scheduled to be held from January 22 to February 6 has generated much enthusiasm among the people of the district.

District Election Office source said, a total of 252 candidates is contesting for the posts of Chairmen and 1746

candidates are contesting for membership in 57 unions of six upazilas of the district.

The campaign for the election is gaining momentum and the countryside is now humming with brisk activities of candidates and their supporters. Hundreds of colorful posters, banners, festoons, placards, wall writing and big symbols are on displaying extensively everywhere in the district.

Candidates are holding meetings will voters, supporters, workers and campaigners, moving door to door requesting the voters to cast votes in favour of them.

They are usually gathering at the local hats and bazars, tea stalls, restaurants and play grounds. Campaigners are bringing out processions carrying portraits of their candidates with their symbols.

District administration has been taking all possible measures to hold the election free and fair.

Tk 68 lakh for development

Facilities Department has sanctioned Tk 67,63,000 for the development of three college and three school houses in the district during this current fiscal year.