

## District roundup

## MAULDEE COURT

## Traffic jam hampers normal activities

Dec 23: Traffic congestion has severely affected normal activity in the town, reports UNB.

The busy Sonapur area of the town has no stand for bus, auto-rickshaws or taxis which park helter-skelter on the road, some times even over the railway line.

Local leaders have urged the authorities to put up passenger sheds and demarcate parking lots for buses, taxis and rickshaws.

Another report from Maulvibazar adds: Procurement of aman paddy is going on in the district under the auspices of Food Department.

Official sources said 63 metric tons of paddy and 25 metric tons of rice will be procured in six thanas.

A total of 10 purchasing centres have already been opened to procure aman paddy from the farmers.

## BARISAL

## 3,217 tons of wheat for 105 projects

Dec 23: The government has sanctioned 3,217 metric tons of wheat for implementation of 105 projects in ten thanas of Barisal district under Food-for-Work Programme in the current dry season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the works of the projects include repair and reconstruction of roads, bridges, culverts, educational institutions and excavation or re-excavation of canals and ponds.

Of the total, 10 projects will be implemented in Agailjhara thana, eight each in Gournadi and Babugonj, six in Hizla, 15 in Mehendigonj, seven in Muladi, 14 in Bakergonj, 12 in Barisal Sadar and 17 in Banaripara thanas.

## BRAHMANBARIA

## Paucity of pure water

Dec 23: Paucity of pure water is prevailing in seven thanas where a large number of tubewells went out of order, reports UNB.

A total of 656 tubewells out of 14,306 has already gone out of order and many of the others are not functioning properly.

As a result, people in rural areas are being deprived of drinking water.

Thanawise break up of disordered tubewells are: 164 tubewells in Sadar thana, 160 in Sarail, 60 in Kasba, 65 in Akhaura, 72 in Nabinagar, 74 Nasirnagar and 61 in Bancharampur.

## SATKHIRA

## Baby poisoned to death

From Our Correspondent

Dec 23: A 3-year-old baby was poisoned to death by his father recently.

It is learnt that Raisuddin of Kashimari village under Shyamnagar thana got married with one Hasina of the same village. After their marriage, a male child was born abnormally earlier. At this, husband and his family members considered the child as illegitimate. After three years, the father of the child in collaboration with his sister Talima mixed poison with biscuits and fed the baby. As a result, the baby died.

The Bangladesh Rifles personnel acting on secret information recovered 500 grams of heroin from a shop at Chuknagore Bazar under Dumuria thana on December 11, reports BSS.

An official source said, the value of the heroin was about Taka fifty lakh.

A case has been registered with Dumuria police. Two persons have been arrested in this connection.

## TANGAIL

## Tk 1 cr for uplift of college

Dec 23: The government has sanctioned Taka one crore for the development of Kumudini Government College in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

An official source said Taka seventy-five lakh will be spent for construction of a student hostel. Taka fourteen lakh have been sanctioned for the reconstruction of the old hostel building.

The rest amount will be spent for repairing the main college building, the source said.

## DINAJPUR

## Students protest cancellation of results

Dec 23: Students of Dinajpur Adarsha and KBM College staged demonstrations Thursday, protesting the cancellation of results of the Degree Examination held in 1990, reports UNB.

The students urged the authorities to publish the results and restore the examination centre of the colleges immediately.

Degree Examination results of the two colleges held in 1990 was cancelled by a decision of the Rajshahi University Academic Council at a meeting held last Thursday. The council also blacklisted the colleges to function as examination centres for the next five years.

## MANIKGANJ

## Want of doctors, medicines in hospital

Dec 23: Shortage of doctors, medicine, beds and medical equipment has been hampering proper treatment at the Manikganj Sadar hospital for a long time, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said, more than 90 per cent of the patients were being sent back due to lack of accommodation in the 50-bed hospital.

Serious accident victims from Dhaka-Aricha road and patients from remote areas of the district are returned without proper treatment.

The only ambulance remains out of order for most of the time and the local people are compelled to use minibuses for carrying serious patients to Dhaka, it was alleged.

The only X-ray machine of the hospital also remains out of order and patients are advised to get X-ray done from outside. Patients have also to buy medicine from the market.

Water supply is irregular and maintenance of the hospital is neglected. The doctors hardly maintain the government office time.

## FARIDPUR

## Role of Ansars, VDP lauded

Dec 23: A rally of the Ansars and Village Defence Party (VDP) of Faridpur district was held on Saturday at local Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, reports BSS.

Lt. Col. (Retd) Mohammad Harunur Rashid, Director of Ansar Academy attended the rally as chief guest while it was presided over by K M Nurul Huda, Deputy Commissioner of Faridpur. Md Abul Kashem, Deputy Director of Ansar and Md Haidusuddin, Police Super of Faridpur attended the rally as special guests.

The Director of Ansar addressing the rally underscored the need for building the Ansars and VDP as an important force for maintaining law and order in the country.

He lauded the role of the Ansars and VDP in nation building activities especially in the fields of tree plantation, health and sanitation programmes.

A number of Ansars and VDP members were awarded prizes at the function.

## GAZIPUR

## Brickfield worker electrocuted

Dec 23: A brickfield worker died of electrocution near Mouchak Govt Primary School in Kaliakoir thana, family sources said here, reports UNB.

The victim, identified as Niamat Sheikh (35), worker of Mouchak Govt Primary School in Kaliakoir thana, was electrocuted when he touched a live wire of a deep-tubewell.

The body of the victim was sent to his village in Faridpur Sadar thana after autopsy at Gazipur Sadar hospital.

## MAULVIBAZAR

## Girl violated

Dec 23: A village arbitration fined Faruk Mia of Kalapur village in Sreemangal thana for allegedly violating a young girl of the same village, reports UNB.

The victim Halima (14), was sleeping when Faruk broke into her room and applied force on her, the village elders were told.

Faruk has to pay a fine of Tk 15,000 for his immoral activity.



JESSORE: Al-Haj Amir Ali Shaik, father of martyred Idris, is lying the foundation stone of the mass graveyard of martyrs of Liberation War near poultry farm of the district town recently. — Star Photo

## Paddy, rice buyers inadequate, growers use barter system

LALMONIRHAT, Dec 23: Absence of adequate buyers at the peak of the current harvesting season has forced hundreds of farmers in the rice-growing northern districts to resort to archaic barter system, reports UNB.

Rice or paddy took the place of cash money as mode of payment in many hats and bazars, according to news despatches from major rice producing pockets of the greater Rangpur district.

Farmers are being compelled to procure their daily necessities in exchange of rice, and the practice is reportedly giving the 'Farihs' (middlemen) the chance to bring down the price level for rice to a rock-bottom level.

In Lalmonirhat district, rice-producing areas like Char Dawabari, Haldibari, Shinduna, Ketakibari, Naudabas, Gaddimari, Bankanda are places where such barter is now rampant and peasants reportedly have fallen prey to unscrupulous Farihs.

Farmers in some places attributed the situation to inadequate intervention by the government in purchasing paddy during current season which has seen a record harvest, according to local people.

Prices have come down to an abnormally low level as a result of insufficient government purchases which normally in-

fluence the market. In many places a maund of paddy is being sold at Taka 120 to Taka 130 while in case of barter deals, farmers are getting a maximum Taka 90.

UNB correspondent in Lalmonirhat found desperate farmers in many areas were procuring a litre of kerosene in exchange of 8 to 10 kilograms of paddy and one bag of TSP fertilizer, which cost Tk 450, in exchange of four maunds of paddy.

Most of the farmers are to return home with 70 per cent of their paddy they brought for selling at Daikhawa hat under Hatijhanga thana of Lalmonirhat because of scarce buyers.

Farmers alleged that the authorities of different rice godowns in Lalmonirhat and adjoining districts are virtually not procuring rice on the pretext that the godowns are already stockpiled. The government's directive to procure only fine quality of rice has provided another justification for meagre purchase.

Many a godowns have not yet begun procurement. Officials in Bhotmari godown said they are not in a position to purchase any grain as there is already 570 metric tons of paddy in their stock against their capacity to hold only 500 tons.

According to Lalmonirhat

Agriculture Department, share of fine rice would not be more than four per cent of the total production in the district.

The government has set a target of procuring only 2 lakh tons of paddy in the current aman season against last year's target of 3.65 lakh tons. Procurement price this year has also been revised downward from Taka 245 per maund to Taka 210.

The decision came as a blow to the country's farmers, specially when the government has withdrawn almost all the subsidies from agriculture inputs, according to local farmers' lobby.

The government action has also been seen by many observers as being totally in contradiction to its pronounced policy for providing adequate price support to farmers.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman at the last World Bank and IMF meetings in Washington in September told the donors that the government is correcting output market imperfections that deny remunerative prices to farmers.

World Bank President Lewis Preston, who visited Dhaka last month, parried a question from a Bangladeshi correspondent seeking his comment on the deprivation of the farmers. "We hope that agricultural prices would soon respond to

## Toll collectors hurt contractor, kidnap staff

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 23: A construction contractor was injured and his employee kidnapped by a group of toll collectors here on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said the toll collectors numbering 50 to 60, failing to extract money, attacked Akhteruzzaman Khan with lethal weapons at Ziamore area in the town at 6 am.

They kidnapped Amjad Hossain (45) and looted some construction materials.

Police later rescued Amjad from Khokshapur village.

Amjad told police that the gangsters had demanded Tk 1 lakh from him as illegal tolls. They attacked Akhteruzzaman and kidnapped when refused to give money.

None was arrested till late this evening.

## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

## It is one step forward, two steps back for Homna

Mohammad Amjad Hossain

Homna was declared an upazila in the 80s and has now been reverted to the thana it was of Comilla district. Located 40 miles from Comilla town, Homna is also connected by road and river with the capital city Dhaka. But one would be well-advised not to try to reach the place directly from Dhaka. A life-time's journey it would prove.

Homna, which is spread over 64.5 square miles comprising ten unions and 206 villages, lacks the glamour and prosperity that Comilla enjoys. Comilla became known in the world because of unprecedented success stories of the cooperative system and agricultural development in mid 60s as a result of the experiments carried out by Akhtar Hameed Khan. Before that Comilla had long enjoyed an enviable cultural eminence in the subcontinent. Ustad Alauddin Khan, Sursagar Himangshu Dutta and the incomparable singer-music director S D Burman and artists like Shila Devi all hailed from Comilla.

It is sad to note that the effects of the Comilla model did not evoke enthusiasm at Homna where all cooperatives either in the agriculture or the handloom sector remained inactive. Cooperatives are there only to receive loans from the bank.

But lately Homna, with a population of 2,50,000, is making progress in respect of communication and education. The government is attaching priority to the communication sector, which was neglected in the past. The government of

Japan is assisting in building road communication and primary schools under rural development project.

Homna is rated one of the highest producers of chillies in Bangladesh but agriculturists are concerned because of the fall of price of chilli in the local market. The same concern is expressed by the farmers about the decline in price of paddy and increase in the price of fertilizer. They are contemplating switching over to the cultivation of other profitable agricultural products. It may be noted that Homna produced a bumper crop this year which makes Homna surplus in foodgrains.

However, farmers are apprehensive of a substantial fall in the production of rice next year as a result of increase in price of fertilizers. In contrast to the agricultural setting of the poor Third World, specially Bangladesh, the government of the country agriculturally richest in the world — the United States — continues to provide farm subsidy to the growers.

In the education sector, there are two colleges, but the literacy rate lags far behind the national figure at 14.71%.

One success story at Homna relates to the scheme: loan for landless of Agram Bank on the pattern of Gramen Bank. The response of the landless peasants is encouraging and there appears to be no one defaulting on repayment. This again, after the Gramen Bank experience, clearly indicates that it is the poor people that are really creditworthy.



RAJBARI: Police seized Indian yarn about Taka nine lakh here recently. — Star Photo

## Six to suffer life-term for murder

From Our Correspondent

SHYLAHET, Dec 23: The Additional District and Sessions Judge, Sunamganj A KM Anwar Hossain in a murder case found three persons guilty and sentenced them to suffer life-term imprisonment recently. Two other accused were acquitted in the same case.

The prosecution case in brief, is that, a clash ensued between some people at village Kaitkora under Biswanthapur thana over a stolen cow in the year 1988. As a sequel to this, a group of villagers called out one Nazir Khan of his house. He was given a good beating, following which, he sustained serious injuries. While he was being taken to the hospital, succumbed to his injuries.

Our Chaudanga Correspondent adds: The Additional District and Sessions Judge Chaudanga Azizul Hoque in three separate judgements convicted three persons to suffer life-term for murder

recently. The learned court convicted one Abdul Jalil son of Moksor Molla of village Khaskorora under Alamdanga thana of the district on November 17 and sentenced him to suffer transportation for life and fined Taka five thousand and in default to suffer one year more RI on charge of murdering a person. The conviction was made in absentia.

On November 23 the same court in a separate judgement convicted one Mohiuddin of village Abdul Bari under Jibanagar thana of Chaudanga district for life-term on charge of murdering his wife Nargis Khatun. The court also fined him a sum of Taka 5,000 in default to suffer another one year more RI.

In an another judgement on 25.11.92 the same court convicted one Jalal Uddin of village Panch Kamapur under Alamdanga thana for life-term for murdering his brother.

## Kuwaiti model village set up in Kurigram

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Dec 8: Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman inaugurated a model village at Shilgram under Kanthabari union of Kurigram district recently.

A "Kuwaiti model village" has been set up with the financial assistance of the people of the oil rich Gulf state to accommodate 30 erosion-hit families of Kurigram.

Chief of Kuwait Mutual Relief Committee, Yusuf Al Hiji, Kuwait Zakat House Chief Abdul Kader Al Ajil, Kuwait Ambassador Md Al Nazran and Chief Coordinator of Mutual Relief Committee of Bangladesh Dr Sharful Anam among others were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Kuwaiti official Yusuf Al Hiji attached importance on the growing friendship between

the two Muslim countries. The foundation stone of "Kurigram District Red Crescent Society Market" was formally laid by Sayed Sahidul Haque Zamal MP, Chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in presence of a large gathering recently.

The foundation laying ceremony was chaired by Shafiqul Islam, Deputy Commissioner, Kurigram while it was addressed, among others, by M A Jalal, Member, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Khademul Islam Mondol Secretary of local zila unit of Red Crescent Society, Sayed Sahidul Haque Zamal MP, Shafiqul Islam, DC and Aman Ukil.

Two saplings of Krishnachura were also planted at the compound of the market by the chief guest.

## An Irony of fate!

HABIGANJ, Dec 23: An irony of fate! A youngman, accused of attempting a murder, himself was murdered on Monday by the vengeful plaintiff, reports UNB.

Azman Ali (25) was stabbed to death near the local bus stand allegedly by a band led by Tajul Islam, the complainant of the attempt to murder case.

He was rushed to the sadar hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Azman, who was on bail, was returning home after appearing before the court of Additional District Magistrate when he met with the fate around 1:30 pm.

He was sued on charge of attempt to murder Tajul of Bahubal thana on September 9 last year. Tajul recovered from serious stabs and filed the case against Azman.

A case has been filed against four people in this connection with Azman killing. None was yet arrested.

## Old man, housewife commit suicide

DINAJPUR, Dec 23: An old man allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in Hakimpur thana in the district on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Alhaj Reazuddin (80), of Boaldar thana under Baigram union. Reason of the suicide is not known.

Another report adds, one housewife allegedly committed suicide by taking poison at Parbotipur on Thursday. She was identified as Fenchel Ara Begum (22), wife of Shahidul of Haldibari village in Parbotipur thana of Rangpur district.

Family sources said Fenchel Ara committed suicide as a sequel to family brawl. Her husband was absconding from the house.

The body was sent to the hospital for autopsy and a case has been filed with the local thana.

## Youngman killed

A youngman was killed in a clash over a land dispute at Badarganj thana in Rangpur district.

The dead was identified as Bakul (25) of Parbotipur thana.

## Dams needed to protect crops from saline water

PATUAKHALI, Dec 23: Crops over hundreds of acres of land in char areas of Galachipa thana of the district are being affected by saline water intrusion from the Bay of Bengal each year, reports UNB.

Local leaders said, due to absence of protection dams, thousands of acres of arable land in 13 unions of Galachipa thana are flooded by sea-water.

Water Development Board constructed several dykes and dams in the area but the sluice gates, and the pipe culverts in the polders are not operating.

As a result, saline intrusion occurs at Panpatty, Dakua, Ratandi, Taltali, Galachipa, Gokhali, Amkhola, Bakulbaria, Char Montaz and char areas of Rangabali.

The concerned authorities have been urged to construct sufficient number of embankments in the char areas of Galachipa thana of the district and repair the sluice gates in the area.

At least, 15,000 acres of land in Galachipa and Dashmina thanas of the district are likely to remain fallow in the rabi crop season due to acute shortage of bullocks.

According to sources, about

1.60 lakh acres of land in 20 unions of the two thanas are suitable for rabi cultivation but due to shortage of draught animals and other agricultural inputs, farmers are not in a position to bring the entire land under cultivation this season.

The marginal farmers generally sell their draught animals after the aman crop and borrow money from the local mahajans at a high rate of interest for the next rabi season.

The commercial banks of

the area do not lend money for cattle purchase, which is financed by Bangladesh Krishi Bank through its eight branches in Galachipa and Dasmina.

But so far, out of a total allocation of Taka 40 lakh for distribution as cattle loan, BKB distributed only Taka 10 lakh.

The farmers urged BKB to expedite the disbursement of cattle loan in the area to boost production in the rabi crop season in the two thanas.

## Cold wave claims three lives in Jessore

JESSORE, Dec 23: Severe cold wave claimed three lives at Fatehpur village in Moheshpur thana of the district on Thursday night, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Jalaluddin (60), Prembala (70) and Hayatunnesa (65).

Social workers said the cold wave has been sweeping the thana and the adjacent areas for the last few days. The poor class people are the worst victims as they cannot afford to

buy warm clothes.

They urged the authorities to distribute winter clothes among the poor people of the district without further delay.

Another report adds: A total of 370 schemes under food-for-work programme have been implemented in eight thanas of Jessore district during the current season.

An official source said the schemes include reconstruction of Kutchra roads.



RANGPUR: The Bangladeshi and Australian scouts are working on Extended Programme of Immunization (EPI) at Azizulla Model Village under Sadar thana of the district recently. — Star Photo