

Road accidents left 456 dead last year

JAMALPUR, Jan 24: At least 456 people were killed and over 2000 injured in road accidents in 16 northern districts during the last year, reports UNB.

According to the estimate of different hospitals and health complexes, 154 died in Bogra, 50 in Sirajgonj, 23 in Joypurhat, 24 in Gaibandha, 25 in Rangpur, 35 in Dinajpur, 11 in Thakurgaon, 8 in Panchagarh, 17 in Nilphamari, 6 in Kurigram, 2 in Lalmonirhat, 16 in Naogaon, 28 in Natore, 10 in Rajshahi, 39 in Pabna and 7 in Chapainawabganj.

By this time, about 300 injured people have become crippled, the sources said.

The main causes of the road accidents were overloading of passengers and goods, reckless driving, playing of worn out vehicles, driving by the inexperienced men, overtaking and indiscriminate violation of traffic rules.

The sources said, as the Rangpur-Nagarbari road have

been turned into highway, the drivers of the long-route vehicles who are mostly drunk care little for abiding the traffic rules.

Another reason of the frequent accidents was said to be the absence of strict implementation of the law for compensation of victims by the owners of the vehicles.

A women's college will be established at Balizuri in Madarganj thana of the district to spread the light of education among the women of remote rural areas, local people said.

The foundation stone of the college titled 'Mirza Kashem-Nurunnahar Womens College' will be laid by Mirza Azam MP, on February 2.

Meanwhile, two acres of land has already been donated by Alhaj Mirza Abul Kashem, father of Mirza Azam, for the establishment of the college. He also assured necessary fund for the institution.

Besides, Mirza Kashem, a reputed philanthropist of the

locality also established several educational and religious institutions in the district which included Abdul Alim-Mirza Kashem Senior Madrasa, Nurunnahar Hafizia Dastute Centre and Madrasa, Mirza Kashem Modern School and one public library.

A special general meeting of the district Union Parishad Secretary Association was held on Saturday at Sadar thana complex.

Presided over by Jahangir Alam it was also addressed by central president of the association Golam Rasul as chief guest and district unit secretary Nawab Ali.

A total of 65 secretaries of Union Parishads of seven thanas of the district attended the meeting.

The speakers urged the members to make the sit in of the association a success on February 5 in front of the National Press Club to press home their 4-point demand.



TANGAIL: The members of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury National Memorial Council of-firing munajat at the mazar of the late President recently.

Flourishment of folk culture stressed

SONARGAON (Narayanganj), Jan 24: State Minister for Relief Harun-Al-Rashid on Sunday said, Bangladesh has a rich cultural heritage dating back to thousand of years, reports BSS.

He said, this while visiting the week-long folk festival and crafts exhibition organised by Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation at the foundations premises at Sonargaon.

The State Minister said the present government is very keen to see the flourishment of the folk culture which are now on the verge of extinction.

Pirates loot 5 fishing trawlers in deep sea

BARISAL, Jan 24: Five fishing trawlers were attacked by some armed pirates on Tuesday night in the Bay of Bengal, about 30 kilometres south of Mahipur of Patuakhali district, official sources here said, reports UNB.

According to fishermen, the miscreants raided the trawlers one after another and beat the fishermen mercilessly injuring at least ten of them.

Fishing Trawler Association sources said, pirates looted away fish, fishing nets, spare parts and cash money worth about Taka 6 lakh.

Leaders of the association informed that a gang of armed pirates stormed the trawlers at dead of night. Pirates also tried to throw some fishermen into the Bay but when resisted they left the spot with the booty.

Two of the five ransacked trawlers are F B Champa and F B Bashir.

A group of people numbering about 10 to 15 have gouged out both the eyes of an activist of outlawed Sarbahara Party Tuesday night at Bilwabari High School ground in Kotwali thana.

According to police, Manik (35) of Bilwabari village in Kashipur Union Parishad of the district was taken out of his

house forcibly and taken to the school ground.

On information from the local people, Kotwali police recovered the victim on Wednesday morning and sent to Barisal Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Police said, Manik was the active member of the outlawed Sarbahara Party.

Dacoits swoop on fishermen, injure 10 in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 24: Ten fishermen were injured, three of them seriously, when a gang of armed dacoits attacked two fishing trawlers last night in Baleswar river near Tushkhali of Peropur district.

The dacoits, numbering 10 to 15, suddenly stormed the trawlers — Bhai Bhai 1 and 2 — and indiscriminately stabbed the fishermen on board with sharp weapons.

Seriously injured Harun, 27, Humayun, 34, and Sattar, 30, were later admitted to the Morrelganj Hospital of Bagerhat district.

Fishermen need fund for buying boats, nets

SAVAR, Jan 24: Fishermen of Manikganj have been difficulties due to want of funds, the scarcity of fishing material, a price-hike on inputs and pressure from the non-professional fishermen, reports UNB.

The fishermen of the area

said, pisciculture in the thanas have been affected because some of the water bodies have dried up, and the fishermen are unable to buy boats and fishing nets due to funds shortage.

Some fishermen also alleged that they could not get bank loans for making the necessary purchases and are now borrowing money from the local Mahajans who are demanding high interest rates on the loans.

Pressure from the non-professional fishermen are also mounting. The non-professionals are catching fish using force against the local fishermen and are also taking away the nets and the other fishing equipment, they alleged. They cannot catch fish even after taking lease.

They also accused that government funds allocated for local fishermen are being used by the non-professional fishermen's cooperative society.

18 get life-term for murder

NATORE, Jan 24: Eighteen people including one woman were sentenced to life term imprisonment for nine murder cases during the last year in the district, reports UNB.

District and Sessions Judge awarded the punishment in separate judgements.

The convicts are Zahir Rahman, Rizia Begum, Zarzis, Akkel Ali, Narul Islam, Amjad Hossain, Enamul, Labu, Shamsur Rahman, Isa Khan, Niran, Prasanta Ghosh, Ilyas, Hasu Halder, Afzar Ali, Belal Hossain, Gulzar Hossain and Ahmed Zaman.



CHANDPUR: Azizur Rahman, Chairman, Comilla Board inaugurating the newly constructed building of Roymunnesa Womens College at Matlab. — Star photos

District roundup

SYLHET

Mannan opens motel

Jan 24: State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan formally inaugurated a motel of Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation (BPC) here on Sunday, reports BSS.

The 'Sylhet Motel' built at a cost of Taka 1.5 crore from the corporation's own resource is located in between Sylhet town and Osmani Airport on a hillock, about 100 feet above the plain land.

It is expected to attract the tourists especially the transit passengers of Bangladesh Biman. The Sylhet Motel has twenty-six air-conditioned and non-airconditioned rooms and a 60-seater restaurant for the guests to dine, a PID handout said.

Speaking on the occasion the state minister said BPC has undertaken various steps to attract the tourists aimed at helping to boost the national economy. He said, Osmani Airport will soon be made to operate the mid-haul aircraft.

Bangladesh Civil Aviation has undertaken a project to expand the airport's runway. Ground support equipment at a cost of Taka 15 crore has been imported.

Later, the state minister unveiled the plaque of the Sylhet Motel and planted a sampling within the motel area.

Acting Chairman of BPC Abul Bashir Mia, Chairman, Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority Air Commodore Shamsur Ali, Joint Secretary the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism Aminur Rahman were among others who spoke on the occasion.

RAJSHAHI

Conference, seminar to be held at RU

Jan 24: The first General Conference of Institute of Bangladesh Studies Alumni Association of Rajshahi University and a seminar on 'Need of Studies in Higher Education' will be held on Tuesday at the seminar room of IBS, says UNB.

Prof M Anisur Raman, Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University will inaugurate the seminar and the conference as chief guest.

Prof M Azheruddin, Pro-Vice Chancellor of RU and Prof Muhammad Shahua Quarashy, Director of IBS will also attend the functions as special guests.

Prof M Amiruzzaman Khan will preside over the function.

SAVAR

Poultry diseases break out

Jan 24: Various diseases have broken out in an epidemic form in all the poultry-farms of the thana causing concern among the farm owners, reports UNB.

According to Savar Poultry Farmers Association, at least 50,000 poultry birds have already died after being attacked by dysentery, jamboree, coxidiolosis and many other unknown diseases in 300 poultry farms of the thana.

On the other hand, treatment of poultry birds is being hampered in absence BCRD vaccines at Savar.

MANIKGANJ

2 drowned while boarding ferry

Jan 24: A driver and a helper of a truck drowned Saturday morning when their loaded vehicle plunged into the river Jamuna, says UNB.

Police and witnesses said, the truck from Dhaka loaded with fertiliser while boarding the Shah Ali ferry at ghat number 3 at Aricha suddenly plunged into the river at 7am.

The helper was driving the truck as the truck driver was deep asleep in the vehicle, the sources said.

The victims were identified as Mojibur Rahman (45), the driver and Julhan (25), the helper.

A case was filed with the Thibhalaya police.

SATKHIRA

Valuables looted

Jan 24: Dacoits in disguise of friends looted three houses in Satkhira Sadar and Kalaroa thana and fled with booties worth Taka nearly 1.5 lakh in the last four days, says UNB.

The robbers introducing themselves as friend, entered the houses of Nirode Ghosh in Sadar and Rampal of Murarikati in Kalaroa thana. They also broke into the house of Ashraf Molla of Ghar Chala in Sadar thana during the same period and looted valuables.

Separate cases have been filed with the local police but none has been arrested so far. Police investigation is going on.

MYMENSINGH

Programme to celebrate silver jubilee

Jan 24: Two-day programme begins here on February 8, to celebrate the silver jubilee of the Fisheries Faculty of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, reports UNB.

The Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah Al Noman is expected to inaugurate the programme to be held at the Shilpacharya Auditorium on the day.

About 100 delegates and guests will attend the 25th founding anniversary of the faculty, said a press release.

BARGUNA

Prostitution on rise

Jan 24: The number of gay girls is increasing in different areas of the town giving rise to anti-social activities, reports UNB.

Local people said, the gays are found alluring people in Katpatty, Launchghat Natun bazar and some other parts of the town.

According to a report, a middle-aged woman of Launchghat area is the main pimp of these floating girls and doing the immoral business in the town for a long time. She is allegedly collecting the poor girls from the villages on the assurance of giving good jobs and later compel them to resort to immoral activities for earning money.

The elite of the town urged the authorities to check the growing menace and take immediate steps to rehabilitate the gays so that they can lead a decent life.

Electrification work going on

BARISAL, Jan 24: Electrification programme of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) is going on in 450 villages of Barguna and Patuakhali districts under Barisal division, official source here said, reports UNB.

Financed by the World Bank, about 1350 kilometres power distribution lines are being constructed under the programme at a cost of Taka 46 crore. Meanwhile, more than 350 kilometres of the power lines have already been set up.

With the implementation of the programme, 450 villages of Patuakhali sadar, Baufal, Betagi, Mirjaganj, Barguna sadar and Amtali thanas will be brought under rural electrification network during the current financial year.

Another report says: Armed miscreants amputated hands and legs and gouged out two eyes of a prosecution witness of a case.

The victim Anwar Hossain (25) of Charkana village in sadar thana was an important witness of a case filed in the local court against some people, police said.

The miscreants kidnapped Anwar from Charkana Bazar area at gun-point on January 15 and took him to a nearby paddy field where they assaulted him barbarously.

Later some villagers found him unconscious and sent him to Barisal Medical College Hospital.

A case has been lodged with the Kotwali police and so far none was arrested.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Krishi Bank of Barisal region lodged more than 1000 certificate cases against the defaulter loanees.

Rajshahi, city of meetings

RAJSHAHI, Jan 24: Rajshahi has become the city of meetings now a days as the election date drawing nearer, reports BSS.

Mayor and ward commissioner candidates lunched hectic campaign and continued to meet the people programme for winning the support of the voters.

Candidates have started supplying the voter number with symbols in different wards and seeking blessings from them so that they could win the forthcoming city corporation election scheduled to be held on January 30.

All the contestants continued to assure the voters that if elected they would work hard for all round development of Rajshahi city.

Mayor candidates continued to visit one ward to another frequently everyday and requesting the voters to cast vote in their favour. The BNP nominee Mizanur Rahman Minu on Friday visited ward number four, nine and 21 of the city as a part of his election campaign in all the places. Minu appealed to the voters to cast vote of his election symbol 'fish' on January 30.

Awami League nominee Abdul Matin Khan, Jamaat candidate Siddique Hossain, independent candidate Siddiqueur Rahman and Jatiya Party candidate Durul Huda' also visited different wards.

Jasim mela concludes

FARIDPUR, Jan 24: With a call to patronage our own folk culture against alien one, the fortnight long 'Jasim Palli Mela' was concluded here on January 17 with much enthusiasm, says UNB.

To commemorate the 91st birth anniversary of the celebrated poet Palli Kabi Jasimuddin, the mela began here at birth place, Gobindapur, at the outskirts of the town, on January 1.



A scene of the drama 'Samadhan' staged by the Tirjak Drama Group of Chittagong. The group has staged the drama for 700 times.

Success stories of 2 edn institutions

MAULVIBAZAR, Jan 24: Poor people of Panchgaon and Rajkhola villages do no more fumble in as two different educational institutions in the area have at long last brought their aims to fruition, reports BSS.

Illiterate parents of the two neighbouring villages, who have of late conceived the importance of education in life, feel proud when they see their sons and daughters with books, tools and immaculate smiles every morning on way to these institutions.

Expressing their satisfaction to visiting BSS correspondent Shamsul Alam Belal recently, the villagers said their long prevailing frustration for low literacy, especially among girls had now gone with the establishment of Panchgaon High Schools and Rajkhola Vocational Training Centre.

Girls dominate the enrollment now with over 60 per cent in Panchgaon High School established in 1985 and cent per cent in Rajkhola Vocational Training Centre established in 1989 under Panchgaon union of Rajnagar thana.

Dr Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, a leading economist and development planner of the country, took the lead for setting up these two institutions now located at two miles distance from each other. A sense of enthusiasm is sweeping the whole area which has so long been devoid of high school education.

Local elite said, the literacy rate had now shot up to 10 per cent in Panchgaon union of 30,000 population which that in Rajnagar thana was recorded at 9.4 per cent and Maulvibazar district 14 per cent only.

Dr Ahmad collected a total of Taka 2.80 lakh from various sources both at home and abroad to set up the school to fulfil the long five decades desire of the local people. Meanwhile, special Facility Department of the Ministry of Education has chosen the school with its over 400 students for development.

Available records said, the school had scored appreciable

results since its establishment and 71 per cent success was achieved in last year's SSC examination along with a sizeable number of first division for them girl students alone. However, it was a mere dream for them before earlier.

The vocational training centre with carpentry, typing, skill development, bamboo and cane work was established under the joint collaboration of Moulvi Mofazzal Hussain Trust and Bangladesh Unnayan parishad, a Dhaka based development research organisation.

As many as 140 students, all came from poor families of nearby homes are enrolled in the available disciplines. Poultry and pisciculture have also been planned for introducing in the centre. Meanwhile, the government has recognised carpentry and typing trades of the centre.

Dr Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, Chairman of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, said the Rajkhola centre titled 'Panchgaon Vocational Training programme was floated with the philosophy of basic education skill development and organisation.

'We have devised the plan to train up poor village girls who are either illiterate or dropped out of schools for various reasons,' he said. The expertise being developed in the centre will enable these students earn their bread by doing independent or group school jobs.

The trust floated after the name of Dr Ahmad's father has donated over four acres of land with a pond and a tin-shed house at village home located near the district board road on the east. A 15-member advisory committee headed by Chairman of Panchgaon Union Parishad Abdur Rouf and four full-pledged instructors are actively working in this centre.

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, which believes in building villages as the core of development, has already launched two other such centres at Kaliganj under Narsingdi district and Madhavpur under Habiganj district. One another centre will be opened

in Gholia next month.

'We are planning to make the Rajkhola centre a full-pledged college with 18 different trades and disciplines,' Dr Q K Ahmad said. Later and computer will be installed in the next few months after the completion of the construction of the main building.

An officer will be employed to look for jobs for the trained-out while Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will try to arrange funds from various sources for those who will be interested to run independent or groupwise production units.

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, meanwhile, took up another massive plan for setting up of 25 non-formal primary schools for poor children of seven and half to ten years age groups in eight unions under Rajnagar thana.

Parishad's Director in Charge of Administration and programme Abdur Rashid Choudhury is now busy with groundwork for establishing the schools by December this year.

'We will follow BRAC model at the initial stage for 30 students with one teacher in each schools to teach basic literacy and numeracy,' Choudhury, a former Chairman of Dhaka

Board, told this correspondent.

Dr Q K Ahmad said, the establishment cost per student would be between 20 and 30 US dollars a year. 'The schools will start their classes with national anthem and end with chorus song of kandari hoshior to give a sense of patriotism and courage into their tender minds,' he said.

The village chieftains as well as students forget their political identity when they sit together for planning out a way for the development of the area.

'People of all ages irrespective of caste, creed and religion uphold mutual trust and respect beyond political affiliation in respect of any development in the area,' Dr Q K Ahmad said.

The local administration is also extending its cooperation towards the sedulous efforts of the local people there where communication network is also in good order connecting the area with the district town, ten miles away Panchgaon and Rajkhola.

'Inshallah, we will be self-reliant as early as possible,' Dr Ahmad said keeping his right hand on the head of a student of the centre.