

Govt believes in politics of development

HOMNA (Comilla), Feb 11: Shipping Minister M K Anwar said here on Thursday that the present democratic government led by Begum Khaleda Zia believed in the politics of development, reports BSS.

The government is materialising the commitment given to the people in phases, he added.

He was addressing two separate public meetings at Itabara Primary School and Nilkhi Junior High School ground in Homna thana in Comilla district as the chief guest.

Social worker Sirajul Islam and local leaders of BNP and its front organisations also spoke on the occasion.

The shipping minister said that the government attached priority to rural infrastructural development. He said roads, culverts, bridges etc were being constructed for developing rural communication.

He said that all the villages of the country would be brought under rural electrification system by 2000 AD.

Mr Anwar said that the government has allocated highest budget for education. Sector Food for Education, universal primary education, adult education and other programmes had been launched to eradicate illiteracy from the country by 2000 AD, he added.

Tk 1.32cr power bill realised

BRAHMANBARIA, Feb 11: Power Development Board realised Taka 1.32 crore arrear electricity bills from five thanas of the district in the last month, reports UNB.

According to official sources, Taka 73 lakh was realised from Sadar, Taka 24.80 lakh from Ashuganj, Taka 12.60 lakh from Akhaura, Taka 12.50 lakh from Nabiganj and Taka 8.50 lakh from Sarail thanas.

Another report adds: Police seized smuggled Indian sarees worth Taka one lakh from Dhaka bound Mohanagar Intercity Express Train in the last week.

On secret information, police raided the train at Brahmanbaria Railway Station and recovered the sarees from the Guard Barrack coach no 7308.

The contraband item was deposited with the Akhaura customs office and a case was lodged in this connection.

RU students donate blood

RAJSHAHI, Feb 11: Fortnightly students of Rajshahi University have donated blood at a blood donation camp held at the library premises of the university, reports UNB.

Organised by Leo Club, the blood donation programme was inaugurated by its President Allma Kamal last week.

Sandhani of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital collected the blood after proper check up, campus sources said.

Allma Kamal lauded the students for donating blood and said that this was the way of service to the nation.

He urged the students to come forward to donate blood generously for the well-being of distressed humanity adding that many poor patients have been suffering badly in different hospitals as they cannot afford to purchase blood.

People urged to identify barriers for progress of women, children

SAVAR, Feb 11: State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum has urged all concerned to identify the barriers for progress of women and children, reports UNB.

She said this while inaugurating a two-day workshop on 'Culture, Women and Children: Bangladesh Perspective' at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) on Wednesday.

She also underlined the need for concerted efforts of government and non-government to remove these barriers.

Organised by BPATC with the help of UNICEF, the inaugural function of the workshop was presided over by its Rector Kazi Manzure Mowla.

Referring to the social disparity against women and children the State Minister said majority of the male community conscious about their own rights but they do not think about the rights of women.

She called upon all to shun the traditional culture which could impose social injustices to the women and children.

Some 70 representatives from different ministries, departments and non-government organisations took part in the workshop.



Begum Khaleda Zia, Chancellor, University of Chittagong and PM, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh distributing Chancellor's Gold Medal to one of the recipients on the occasion of the 1st convocation of the varsity held on February 6.

— CU photo

Frequent power failure hits economic activities

DINAJPUR, Feb 11: The economic activities of greater Dinajpur district have been seriously affected due to frequent power failure for the last one month, reports UNB.

Production in almost all the mills and factories have remained stopped while sales in shops and markets have been hampered.

Services in commercial organisations including banks and insurance companies have also been affected, sources said.

Local people alleged after sun set the entire town plunges into darkness throughout the night, giving opportunities to miscreants.

The cultivation of IRRI, Boro, wheat and other winter crops have also been affected due to frequent power supply by the Pali Biddut Samity recently.

Officials said shortage of power supply from national grid were responsible for the situation.

Local people urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and take necessary

steps to ensure regular power supply immediately.

Another report says: The production of winter crops is being hampered due to inadequate supply of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in greater Dinajpur district.

The scarcity of pesticides and fertilizers at different markets of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh has been prevailing for a long time. As a result, the production of winter crops — potato, wheat, sugarcane and boro-paddy — has dropped in the current season.

Usually, more than 50 per cent of the cultivable land is being utilised for sugarcane while the rest of the land is used for the production of potato, wheat and rice in these districts.

Farmers alleged that some dealers are selling fertilizers — MP (Murate of Potash), TSP (Triple Super Phosphate) and Urea at high prices, sometimes more than double of the usual price — to the farmers — amid high demand of the in-

puts. Local farmers said hundreds of tons of chemical fertilizers and pesticides are needed for winter crop cultivation which are not available with the bonafide dealers resulting in the rise of its prices.

On the other hand, an official of the local BADC said, a huge quantity of potato seeds are lying unsold in its godown, as the farmers could not buy costly fertilizers, which are essential for the crop.

Another report says: The BDR personnel in different raids seized Indian smuggled goods worth about Taka seven crore in the last year.

Twenty people were arrested and 7,984 cases filed in this connection in the same period, sources said.

Meanwhile, BDR men also sized contraband items valued at Taka 2.60 lakh in different anti-smuggling drives in bordering areas of the district during the last six days.

The contrabands goods include sugar, salt, steel utensil which were deposited with the local custom godown.

Fishermen face extinction

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Feb 11: Thousands of fishermen of greater Kushtia district, including Chuadanga and Meherpur have been facing manifold problems for a long time.

These include short supply of fishing materials like, nets, boats and unauthorised grabbing of funds of the Fishermen's Co-operative Societies by a section of powerful and influential people and sky high prices of the fishing equipment.

The vast areas of this region were once famous for different varieties of fish. But situation has now changed due to a number of reasons.

The ever increasing unplanned irrigation projects have aggravated the situation. The indiscriminate fishing by the non-professionals is posing threat to the fish resources.

It is learnt that the traditional fishermen called 'jele', 'malo' or 'halder' are on the verge of annihilation. Some of them have either left the country or scattered over the different areas of the country for survival.

They also allege that scarcity of fish and other problems forced them to leave the profession. The non-professional fishermen have their monopoly over the whole fishing profession causing concern to genuine fishermen.

There is a provision to lease out 'beels', 'jalmahals', and other water bodies to the genuine fishermen.

However, this system now only exists in paper except some rare cases. Some officials in collaboration with the local

vested groups are giving sublease to some alleged, fake fishermen. The actual fishermen cannot fish even after receiving lease in most cases. The non-professionals catch fish by force and at times take away nets and other fishing appliances belonging to the fishermen.

For want of necessary loans the poor fishermen cannot purchase their fishing appliances like nets, boats etc.

The sky high price of nylon and high charge of the carpenters and labourers have attributed much to their financial constraints.

Soil fertility reduced

Soil fertility has dramatically decreased in most areas of Chuadanga district affecting crop production.

The population boom has made an unprecedented pressure on farm lands to grow more food for additional mouths to eat.

The farmers of the district do not keep their lands fallow after harvesting of crops. They

prepare the same land for other crops soon after harvesting.

It is disclosed by the soil scientists of the regional research centre, Jessore that the production capacity of cultivable land have been diminishing gradually owing to excessive use and application of chemical fertilizers. It is also learnt that 60 to 80 per cent cultivable land of the district have lost sulphur and zinc contents resulting in 40 per cent crop shortages.

The soil scientists have advised the farmers to use sulphur and zinc fertilizer in addition to urea, TSP and MP to boost production.

There are 2,12,019 acres of land in Chuadanga district. Owing to excessive use of chemical fertilizers in soil organic value of the land has been reduced to five per cent and acidity of the land has also increased in addition to loss of manganese in the soil.

The land is gradually turning barren and unproductive it is noticed.

In the past, land were kept fallow to improve this facility but now it is not done for food scarcity for increased population.

Use of cowdung as fertilizer and organic manure prepared from plants and green leaves have been cut down, it is also noticed. A good number of farmers of the different parts of the district told this correspondent that they cannot prepare cowdung manure for want of adequate live-stock. Good results have been achieved in boosting production by using cowdung manure.

Housewife strangled to death

SYLHET, Feb 11: A young housewife was allegedly strangled to death by her husband at Lalaimaria Colony in the town on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Neighbours said Rafiquddin, a carpenter, killed his wife Rehana Parveen following a family feud early in the morning.



BRAHMANBARIA: The local police recently seized two private cars and recovered Taka 10 lakh contraband goods from the vehicles. The drivers of the cars were also arrested.

— Star photo

Sharp rise in prices of commodities

From Our Correspondent

MADARIPUR, Feb 11: Prices of essential specially rice have gone up alarmingly during the last 15 days in Madaripur markets causing great hardship to the low income group of people.

It is learnt that rice in the markets is being sold between Taka 10.00 and 10.50 per kilogram (kg) which had a recent price tag sold at Taka 9.00 to 9.50 per kg. Five variety of rice is being sold at Taka 14.00 per kg which was sold at Taka 12.50 earlier.

Vegetables like potato is being sold between Taka 11.00 to 12.00 which was sold at Taka 9.00 per kg only a few days back. Korolla is being sold at Taka 16.00 against Taka 12.00, brinjal is being sold at Taka 8.00 against Taka 6.00,

sweet gourd at Taka five against Taka 3.50 and green banana at Taka 6.00 per kg against Taka 4.00.

Pulses like masur is being sold at Taka 30.00 per kg which was sold at Taka 25.00 per kg a week ago. chhola at Taka 26.00 against Taka 22.00 per kg, kheshari is being sold at Taka 22.00 per kg against Taka 18.00 per kg. Onion is being sold at Taka 22.00 per kg which was sold at Taka 18 per kg, garlic is being sold at Taka 40 per kg against Taka 36.00, green chillies at Taka 30.00 per kg against Taka 20.00 per kg, pepper at Taka 60.00 against Taka 50.00, beef at Taka 50.00 a kg and mutton is being sold between Taka 75.00 to 80.00.

Tk 74 lakh for uplift of 5 educational institutions

MAGURA, Feb 11: Facilities Department has sanctioned Taka 74.24 lakh for construction and development of five educational institutions in the district during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

According to official sources, Taka 43 lakh has been sanctioned for construction of science building of Magura Government College.

Of the rest amount, Taka 7.81 lakh each has been sanctioned for the construction of Satritzipur High School, Binodpur High School, Nakail High School and Bunagati High School.

The work on the project is progressing fast and is expected to be completed by June next.

Another report says: District Primary Education Office has distributed 1,57,900 sets of text books among the students of 377 primary schools of six thanas in the current academic session.

According to officials, the books were distributed free of cost under the Compulsory Primary Education Programme of the government.

Class-wise distribution of

books: Class I — 43,500 sets, Class II — 36,600 sets, Class III — 32,000 sets, Class IV — 24,100 sets and Class V — 21,700 sets.

Besides, 220 metric tons of wheat were distributed among 4,932 students of 37 selected primary schools in the four thanas, under the Food for Education Programme.

JP leader accuses govt of sheltering 'mastaans'

MAGURA, Feb 11: Jatiya Party leader Shah Moazzem Hossain Tuesday accused the government of promoting terrorism by giving shelter to armed 'mastaans' (hooligans), reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at Par Nandauli High School ground, the JP leader said, the people are now made hostage of the 'mastaans'.

The days of BNP government are now numbered', he said, and called upon the people to rally round Jatiya Party.

Help free society from the curse of poverty

SYLHET, Feb 11: Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda called upon the members of the Old Cadet Association here on Thursday to help free the society from the curse of poverty, reports BSS.

The information minister was addressing the second reunion of Old Cadet Association marking the 15th founding anniversary of Sylhet Cadet College as the chief guest.

Barrister Huda urged the members of the cadet association to devote themselves to the cause of poverty alleviation and help improve the socio-economic condition of the masses. He said the government attaches top priority to the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme.

He expressed the hope that organisations like Old Cadet Association would come forward to work as supporting force to help implement the poverty alleviation and employment generation programmes of the government.

Among others, principal of the college Lt Col Sohrab Ali and President of the association Masud Razzak spoke on the occasion.

The information minister said ensuring five basic needs of the people is the political programme of the government. Barrister Huda said the government has been striving to institutionalise the democratic process in the country. He stressed the need for collective efforts of the people to help establish Bangladesh as a self-respecting nation by turning the vast population into human resources.

2 dacoits get life-term for possessing arms

BARGUNA, Feb 11: District and Sessions Judge and Senior Special Tribunal Judge Barguna Mohammad Baharul Islam on Tuesday found two inter-district dacoits Hajrat Ali Gharmai (35) and Abdur Sobhan (35) guilty of possess-

ing illegal fire arms and ammunition and sentenced them two life imprisonment and fine of Taka ten thousand each in default to suffer one year rigorous imprisonment more, reports BSS.

The prosecution story is that these two persons were wanted in a number of sensational dacoity cases.

Acting on secret information, Barguna police arrested dacoit sarder Hajrat Ali Gharmai from a jungle of Charakgachia village of the said police station. On interrogation Hajrat Ali Gharmai confessed to have concealed illegal fire arms and ammunition in the house of his accomplice and brother-in-law dacoit sarder Abdus Sobhan at the village Charakgachia. The confession led to the recovery of a huge number of fire arms and ammunition such as shot guns Chinese rifles.

A case was registered with the Barguna Police Station in this connection. The police held inquiries and submitted charge sheet.

The tribunal examined fourteen witnesses in this case and sentenced the dacoits life imprisonment and fine of Taka ten thousand each in default to suffer for one year more.

A large number of people from far flung areas of the district gathered at the court premises to hear the judgement.



MUNSHIGANJ: Wing Commander (Retd) Hamidullah MP opening the digging work of Balma-Basira Canal in Louhaganj thana. The local DC, SP and BNP workers were also present on the occasion.

— Star photo

District roundup

C'NAWABGANJ

Strict measures against demands of dowry urged

Feb 11: Anti-dowry Act remains confined within the law books local people alleged, reports UNB.

Thousands of guardians of Shibganj, Nachol, Gomostapur, Bholahat and sadar thanas said they are unable to arrange marriages of their daughters due to high demand of dowry.

According to a statistics, there are more than 26,000 marriageable girls in these five thanas of the district.

Most of them belong to poor farmers families and their financial condition has deteriorated to a large extent since the independence as the past governments have increased different taxes on the farmers.

The present government has also increased the prices of agri inputs which have now gone beyond the purchasing capacity of the poor farmers. On the other hand, prices of jute, paddy and other agri products have gone down.

It is learnt that many housewives were killed by their husbands for non-payment of dowry committed earlier.

Many poor guardians finding no other way out agree to give dowry on instalment basis but subsequently under compelling situations they cannot afford to fulfill their commitment resulting in torture and killing of their daughters.

Local leaders have urged the authorities to come forward to implement the Anti-dowry Act strictly to save the lives of the poor housewives from the hands of their greedy husbands.

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MADARIPUR

Stipends for female students

Feb 11: The Multi-Purpose Development Society (Bohumukht Unnayan Society), a non-government organisation in Nabagram of Kalkini thana has been awarding stipends to female students of 43 secondary and junior schools of the thana, reports UNB.

This was disclosed at a seminar on the female students stipend-scheme of the organisation held at the thana parishad auditorium on February 2.

Presided over by President of the organisation, Principal Ganesh Haldar, it was attended by H M Rshiduzzaman, TNO and Hamidul Haq Gazi, Thana Education Officer, as chief and special guests respectively.

The Director of the society Gilbert Binitmoy Sarker said the stipend scheme was started in 1987 under the auspices of Asia Foundation to encourage female education and so far 6181 female students have been awarded stipends. He said, another 2000 girl students would be brought under the scheme during the current fiscal year.

He also informed that stipends are being given at the rate of Taka 65 to class VI, Taka 70 to class VII, Taka 75 to class VIII, Taka 105 to class IX and Taka 110 to class X students.

The stipend is being disbursed through the Education Directorate and the NORAD of Norway.

PATUAKHALI

Implementation of CPEP delayed

Feb 11: At least 3194 children of 5-10 age group of sadar thana could not be brought under Compulsory Primary Education Programme even after two years of its implementation, reports UNB.

According to a recent survey conducted by some social welfare activists, at present 46,084 children out of 49,278 of the same age group of sadar thana are attending the schools.

Parents of the poor children said, the very existence and survival is more important to them than education as they are suffering from acute poverty.

The report also revealed that many teachers of primary schools are not taking interest to attract children to remain in the schools.

Local elite said Food for Education Programme should be geared up and attitude of the teachers should be changed in the changing circumstances to make the compulsory primary education programme a success.

KUSHTIA

Drug addicts increasing

Feb 11: The concern among the elderly people of the district has intensified as the number of drug addicts, particularly the youths, are increasing rapidly, reports UNB.

Local people alleged the addicted youths are between the age group of 18-30 years. Unemployed youths, transport workers, young shopkeepers and students are the main drug users, they added.

The addicts are also reported to be involved in the anti-social activities. The guardians alleged that the drugs are being sold openly before the nose of the law enforcing agencies.

The drugs, including Indian Phenidyl and pathedine, are available in the medicine shops and different areas of the town.

Local people urged the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to check the growing trend of drug addiction.

MAJDEE COURT

Fishermen facing problem due to lack of loans

Feb 11: Fishermen community of the district have been facing manifold problems to run their age-old occupation due to lack of fund, scarcity of fishing materials and price hike of inputs, reports UNB.

According to a survey conducted by some social welfare activists, about 30,000 fishermen maintain their livelihood by fishing at the rivers, beels and canals of Hatya, sadar, Senbag, Chalkhil, Begumganj and Companiganj thanas.

The fishermen alleged that they are not getting loan facilities which are being grabbed by non-professional fishermen and other so-called societies. As a result they are compelled to borrow money from the local money-lenders at a high rate of interest.