

Out of 365 days RU remained closed for 262 days in '95

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY. Mar 1: The troubled Rajsahi University has been closed for 262 days out of 365 days in the last calendar year, 1995. The classes remained open only for 103 days. At least 3 students were killed and hands of other 4 students were chopped off by their opponent. The university had to face unscheduled closure for 3 times and classes and examination were postponed 7 times. The university authority had to pay Taka about half a crore to repair the damaged rooms of residential halls.

The first untoward incident

took place on February 11 over the possession of three seats at Shaheed Suhrawardy Hall between BNP backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dall (JCD) and Jamaat backed Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) that left two ICS activist killed namely, Mustafizur Rahman of Islamic History of second year and Ismail Hossain Shirazee of Bangla first year. The university was declared closed sine die. Debasis Bhattacharya, a student of third year Marketing of Department, an activist of Workers Party backed Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree BCM was killed while he was travelling to his home functioning by bus on the following

day of university closure. The university resumed on 20 May after 97 days of unscheduled closure.

The second incident occurred on July 22 between JCD and ICS activist after 62 days of reopening. The clash led the authority to declare the University closed which left 4 students killed namely Abul Kasem, Asfakur Rahman Bipu and Nazrul Islam of ICS and Farhad Hussain of JCD. In middle of reopening and closing classes were held only for 39 days.

Rajshahi University was reopened on September 20 after 60 days of unscheduled

closure. University remained calm upto November 5 and classes were held only for a few weeks. From November 6 to December 2 classes were held only for 2 days though University was open. Due to tense situation authority declared the University an unscheduled winter vacation upto January 2 this year.

In total university was closed for 188 days due to student clashes. 44 days to avert clash. Among the rest of the 153 days, university scheduled vacation days were 6 days, weekly holidays 22 days and 2 days for nationwide hartal called by opposition parties.

Banks in Jamalpur start special loan distribution programme

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Mar 1: A loan disbursement programme amounting to Taka one hundred crore has been taken up by the local branches of Sonali, Janata, Krishna, Uttara, Rupali banks and other organisations in the district during the current fiscal year, according to official sources.

The loan will be disbursed under the different programmes. These banks have already disbursed an amount of over Taka 40 crore as loan in the district in the previous year, bank sources said.

Sonali Bank sources said the loan will be given under special agriculture credit programmes: Tk 25 crore under BRDB programme, Tk 40 crore under rural finance project, Taka 15 crore under irrigation equipment programme, Taka 10 crore under self-reliance credit scheme and Taka 10 crore under agri-industries credit scheme. These programmes of credit will be implemented during the current fiscal year.

It was disclosed that the banks have already distributed Taka 40 crore during the first four months of the current fiscal year under the said programmes.

The AGM of Agrani Bank, Jamalpur region said, the main objective of those credit programmes are to create self-employment and income-generating activities in rural areas of the district. The bank branches of the district have been instructed to advance loans as per requirement of the genuine applicants so that productive activities cannot be hampered for want of credit.

Gunmen kidnap 7 people from Sundarbans

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 1: Gunmen kidnaped seven people from Katakhal in Sundarbans areas on February 22, reports UNB.

The kidnapped people include woodcutters and fishermen while going to the area by a boat came under attack. The kidnapers demanded Tk 50,000 as ransom money from them.

But the whereabouts of the missing people are yet to be known. A case was filed with Shyamnagar police in this connection.

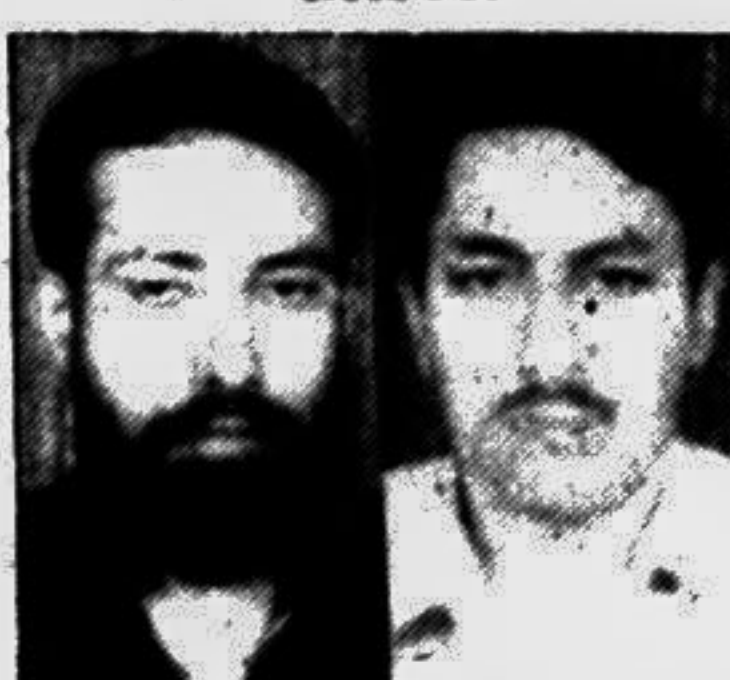
Student dies in road accident

RAJBARI, Mar 1: A student was killed and four people were injured in a road accident at Alladipur, five kilometre off the district town on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Swapn Kumar (18), an HSC candidate from Rajbari Government College was seriously injured when two tempos, one coming from Goalando collided head on at noon. He died on his way to the hospital.

All the injured people — Idris Miah, Alam Khan, Sheuli and Shahidul Islam — who were also with Swapn in a Rajbari-bound tempo were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

New office bearers of Jhenidah transport workers union



President Secretary

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Mar 1: The biennial election of Jhenidah district Sarak (Transport) Paribahan Sramik Union was held at its office premises on February 22 last.

Nazimuddin Bakul and Subodh Kumar Bose were elected president and general secretary respectively. Other office bearers of the committee are Nasiruddin, Anwar Hossain and Rezaul Karim as vice presidents. Hasan Uddin Tota, Anwar Hossain and Shukur Ali as joint secretary. Mosharrar Hossain—cashier, Mahiuddin Titu—office secretary, Sultan Babu, Abul Hossain, Mainuddin Maina and Atiar Rahman were elected as members of the executive committee.

Bus passengers robbed, stabbed

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Mar 1: Dacoits looted valuable worth Taka about ten thousand and stabbed four passengers in a Khulna-bound minibus of Padma Paribahan at about 7.15 pm recently.

According to reports, some 5 to 6 dacoits who were travelling in the guise of passengers attacked the innocent passengers when the bus reached near Raghunathpur in Kaliganj thana of the district. The armed miscreants looted valuables from the passengers and left the bus near Kaliganj.

Somewhere down the line, there's light

By Ekram Kabir back from Khajura (Jessore)

March 1: Nurjahan Akhter, a woman in her late 20s, crossing more than two kilometres from her house at Talehdhanna village to her workplace in the adjacent village of Rupnagar, is no longer a 'breaking-barrier' social phenomenon. But what may surprise many is that she brings her husband's second wife, Nafisa Akhter along with her to work at the Development of Education Skill Health and Abilities (DESHA) — an NGO working in a couple of

"Still a woman in our society is not left alone for peace — people, specially the greehas (husband rich) criticise my coming out of home, and along with it, my work," she says, adding, "I don't care. I was unhappy before I left my husband, and then of course, I had no money. I am still unhappy digesting the comments of my critics; well, it's much more comfortable to be unhappy when you can feed yourself and your kids."



DESHA handicrafts showroom in Jessore town.

fields at the grassroots.

Answering a question about how she feels being Abur Rahman's second wife, Najma blushes and says: "Bubu and I exist peacefully enough under the same roof, well, maybe not in the same room, because over time we've learnt to cope with each other; and after all we're grown-ups, aren't we?"

"Most of the time, Bubu does the household chores while I look after the children," Najma adds, smiling. Nurjahan admits that her husband did seek her permission to get married for the second time, and she didn't object, rather, she was prepared to welcome the new family member and live a happy life. But, she declined to answer to a question why didn't

DESHA's income-generating projects mostly benefit the divorced women. There are also many destitutes who were deserted by their husbands. Though the organisation emphasises on the helpless, there are provisions also for happily-married women to come and work after their usual household works.

"This give them an ample opportunity to earn extra money which bring more financial ease to their family. When it comes to adding money, thereby getting more solvent, the husbands do not oppose, rather they appreciate very much even after facing some extent of opposition from the religious leaders," says Tahmina Akhter, the In-Charge of the Project Centre.



Stitching their lives together at Khajura project site

she report it to any influential person of the village. She asks, "What's wrong? I don't see anything uneasy. I am not jealous when poltar boop (the husband) spends time with my shatin (co-wife)."

These are the stories of two happy women who work as weavers, assembling at the village sanitary centre (VSC) of DESHA. Most of the other fellow women — about 20 — do not have happy tales to tell about their life, except for how they are earning and, have become self-reliant.

Amena Begum in her early 30s came to work at DESHA because she badly needed to look after her two children and herself. Unlike Abur Rahman of Talehdhanna village, Amena's husband didn't even tell her that he was going to get married again. And when he got married for the second time, he stopped paying any sort of attention to Amena and the children. At times Amena and the children used to starve because of the husband showed attitude of negligence to them.

"I tried to live my life by their rules, but it

According to Tahmina Akhter, it takes 15 to 20 days for a worker to finish designing on a saree doing which one earns between Taka 200 and 250 considering, firstly, the complexity and later, the acceptance of the designs. "And when we start a nakhshee kaniha, it takes four persons with a timelimit of 20 days to complete the kaniha," she said.

After completing one kaniha, the four women those who worked on it, would receive Taka 2,000. So, when the sum is divided by four, each gets Taka 500. This sum can be designed by one woman within a month which brings her about Taka 500 at the end of the month. Overall estimate suggests that everyone at DESHA project centre earns about Taka 400 to 500 per month.

The commodities that are made at the centre located some 14 kilometre east of Jessore town, are displayed at and sold from a showroom in Jessore. The consumer items that are sold in Jessore cost half the price than those are available in some leading designer-wear houses in Dhaka.



Shahben, the mason, watering his production

Other programmes of DESHA include: education for adults, health and sanitation, social mobilisation etc. After the income-generating programmes, sanitation programme of DESHA is another success story. Despite its own resources, DESHA receives direct financial assistance from NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation, another NGO working in ensuring safe water and hygienic environment for the people in its operating areas.

NGO Forum is helping its partner organisations to sell sanitary latrines, after building them to the rural poor. At the Rupnagar VSC, Shahbenul Islam, a mason, says: "I was trained to make low-cost sanitary latrines by the Forum people, and here we sell a complete latrine set — that includes slab, ring etc — for Taka 160 only by giving the users a 25 per cent discount." Shahben is now training a woman who is expected to work with him, even independently, within a few weeks time.

Winter vegetable cultivation target exceeds in S-dists

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Mar 1: The achievement of winter crops production target in 10 southern districts was satisfactory this season, it was learnt from the official sources.

According to officials, Agricultural Extension Department (AED) planned to cultivate mustard in 62,265 hectares in Jhenidah, Magura, Jessore, Narail, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia, Bagerhat, Satkhira and Khulna districts. About 43,806 hectares of land could be brought under the cultivation programme.

AED sources said, 'masur' (pulse), was cultivated in 63,852 hectares of land against the target of 93,900 hectares. 89,000 hectares of

land was brought under wheat cultivation against the target of 108,000 hectares.

In this season, sources said, the target of vegetables was fixed at 21,400 hectares. The target, however, exceeded to 33,552 hectares. Here, the achievement was 157 per cent. As a result the prices of vegetables fell sharply in southern districts this season, it was learnt.

AED fixed their target to cultivate pulse 'Khesari' in 23,400 hectares and it was cultivated in 26,163 hectares. Further 'Maskalal' (pulse) was cultivated in 10,013 hectares against the target of 7,770 hectares. 'Mugkalal' (pulse) was cultivated in 4,443 hectares against the target of

3,850 hectares. 'Motor' was cultivated in 8,763 hectares against the target of 6,850 hectares in ten districts.

Agricultural Extension Department sources said, the farmers had cultivated potato in 13,747 hectares against the target of 12,800 hectares. The farmers show their keen interest to cultivate potato as the price they received from selling of potato was satisfactory last season.

Talking to some farmers of Saikupa thana of the district they alleged that the price of chemical fertilizers have gone up in the market. As a result the production cost of their produces was much higher than that they expected.

Tragic accident!

SATKHIRA, Mar 1: A school boy was crushed under the wheels of a running truck on Satkhira-Kaliganj road in the town on Thursday morning, reports UNB.

Police said Bjoy, 14, a student of Satkhira Government High School, met the tragic end of his life when the truck hit his bicycle from behind.

Tk 75,000 stolen from shop

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 1: A theft was committed in the shop No-234 of Md Selim Hossain at Haji Shariatullah market in the town on Tuesday last.

It is reported that the thieves at dead of night entered into the shop by breaking open the shutters and took away cash money amounting to Tk 75 thousand from the cash box kept inside the shop. A case was lodged.

Let us not see poor as a burden

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Mar 1: Abreast government initiatives many non-government and social development organisations have been playing key roles for the overall development of our socio-economic conditions in the rural areas.

Unnayan Dhara (UD), a Jhenidah based non-profitable organisation, established by a group of young and energetic men and women to help the poor and underprivileged people, has started its function in 50 villages of Jhenidah sadar, Saikupa and Harianakunda thanas of the district.

Talib Bashir Nayyan, Director, UD informed that they had taken group formation, education, agriculture and water and sanitation programmes so far.

UD organised the poor and underprivileged people into groups in order to enable them to carry out socio-economic programmes, individually or collectively, the Director said. 37 groups with 938 female members were formed. During the project year 1995 UD group members accumulated a total of Taka 2,06,544 as their savings, he informed.

Mass education programme of Unnayan Dhara includes adult, adolescent, and pre-primary education. Under the programme UD is running three male, 14 female, 17 ado-

rieched with newspapers, books, sports magazines and periodicals. Each community centre is run with a volunteer, Tulip said.

To remove illiteracy UD has been implementing Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) with the financial assistance at technical assistance from BRAC-ESP. UD opened five schools in Abadipur and Nityanandapur unions of Saikupa thana. 150 children, including 107 girls are taking lessons in UD's NFPE schools. To make the programme a success UD has arranged par-

house premises.

UD's vegetables farming programme is running smoothly on 30 plots in ten villages of Jhenidah sadar thana. About 150 people including children and women were benefitted from the programme. Talib Bashir Nayyan said.

To ensure health for all by the year 2,000, UD started sanitation programme. They have so far established two village sanitation centres at village Harisankarpur and Saganna in Jhenidah thana. A total of 529 sets of sanitary la-



JHENIDAH: Lutfunessa Tulip, Programme Organiser, Human Development, UD attending a class on human rights with the members of Bagdi community of Surjamukhi Mahila Samity at village Harisankarpur in sadar thana. — Star photo

lescent and ten pre-primary schools under the financial assistance from Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

Lutfunessa Tulip, Programme Organiser (PO), Women Development and Azizul Mohajem Milon, Area Manager, UD informed that in 29 adult education centres 870 students attended lessons successfully. In 11 adolescent centres 324 out of total of 330 and in 20 pre-primary schools 581 out of total of children attended 600 lessons successfully. UD further had opened five community education centres in order to assist those learners to continue their study programme as well as community activities. These community centres were en-

establishing a nursery at its centres. To grow awareness among the rural people UD had supplied 30 sets of the sanitary latrines at a subsidiary rate among 30 families of village Harisankarpur and Padmakar in sadar thana, the Director said. Further they had arranged 30 discussion meetings and two seminar UD, has so far arranged nine school programmes to make the programme a success.

Halima Khatun, a group leader of Shapla Mahila Samity, UD told that under the environment network programme of Dhaka Ahsania Mission they are trying to gear up the activities.

Asaduzzaman, a core farmer (CF) of village Harisankarpur in Jhenidah thana has been able to change his life pattern by



JHENIDAH: Hasina Khatun, a teacher of Pragati NFPE School taking class of pre-primary standard students. — Star photo

One sentenced to 10 yrs for smuggling

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 1: Sk. Ranaul Islam Judge Special Tribunal Court convicted one Abdus Sabur Ali Mondal of Dumuria under Khulna District on charge of smuggling and sentenced him to suffer rigorous imprisonment for 10 years recently.

The prosecution story in brief is that the accused Sabur Mondal while coming from India and reached near at Babulia bazar under sadar thana. The BDR personnel on duty caught him red handed on December 4, 1994 and recovered Indian clothes worth Taka about 13,000 from his possession. A case was lodged with Satkhira police station.

One killed in road accident in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 1: One Nil Kamal Das, 18, son of Mahusudan Das of village Budhhata under Assassuni thana was killed in a road accident that occurred near at Satkhira Fire Brigade Station on Satkhira-Assassuni road recently.

It is reported that the victim, by profession a gold smith, while returning home and reached the place of occurrence, a Assassuni bound minibus knocked him down. He died on the spot. A case was lodged with Satkhira PS.

12 passengers injured in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 1: At least two persons were injured, two of them seriously in road mishap here Tuesday last.

It is reported that a speeding passenger bus belonging to Pushpa Paribahan dashed against the Bailey bridge at Sadipur on Faridpur-Char Badrasan road and fell into road side ditch injuring twelve passengers.

Two seriously injured passengers were admitted to Faridpur General Hospital and the rest were released after first aid.