

National

News snaps

Fire incidents on rise in Noakhali

NOAKHALI, Jan 19: Valuables worth crores of taka are being burnt every year in fire incidents in absence of fire service stations in four thanas headquarters of the district, reports UNB.

According to a survey conducted by a non-government organisation, at least 40 big fire incidents occurred in the four thanas in the last year that charred property worth about Tk 3 crore. Of the incidents, eight were occurred in Hatia, 12 in Chatkhil, 10 in Senbagh and 10 in Companiganj thanas. The local people said they time and again demanded of the government to set up fire service stations at the thanas headquarters but not step has yet been taken in this regard.

Warm clothes distributed

JAMALPUR, Jan 19: Warm clothes have been distributed among the cold stricken distressed people by the allocated money of zilla parishad for Iftar party, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner Auechut Pada Goswami distributed 500 warm clothes among the shelterless people of rail junction platform at midnight on Jan 13. According to officials the district administration has undertaken drive to collect more warm clothes to distribute to the cold-hit people of other areas.

Foggy weather affects farming

GAIBANDHA, Jan 19: Cultivation of Robi crops, winter vegetables and seasonal flowers in northern districts including Gaibandha has been badly affected due to recent severe cold wave and foggy weather, reports BSS.

During survey in local vegetables markets the vegetable sellers told this correspondent that besides heavy damage of winter vegetables their supply in the market is not satisfactory. Severe cold wave is the major cause for dislocation of supply of the vegetables.

Four arrested for fishing illegally

PATUAKHALI, Jan 19: Police arrested four persons for fishing illegally from different ponds and waterbodies in Dashmania thana of the district recently, reports BSS.

The arrested persons were identified as Gobinda, 28, Mangal, 22, Rabindra, 18, and Kalu, 25. A case has been filed with Dashmania thana in this connection.

Jhenidah admin distributes warm clothes

JHENIDAH, Jan 19: The district administration distributed 1,000 pieces of warm clothes among the poor people in poorshava area on Monday, reports UNB.

Forming three teams one headed by Deputy Commissioner Aminur Rasul for ward no. 2, another by Police Super Miah Ataul Gani Badsha for ward no. 1 and yet another by Civil Surgeon Dr Sardar M Badaruddin for ward no. 3, the warm clothes were distributed. Local pourashava chairman, Red Crescent vice chairman, TNO and other local elite were also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, Red Crescent Society, Islami Bank and Rover Scouts have distributed warm clothes among the slum dwellers.

REB continues extension programme

KUSHTIA, Jan 19: Rural Electrification Board (REB) continues its gradual extension programme in six thanas covering 1,626 sq km area to give electric connection to 26,522 families in 886 villages, reports UNB.

A total of 43,693 connections have been made ready and gradually being given. Meanwhile, connections have been given to 22,944 residential, 2,171 commercial, 426 industrial, 75 deep tubewells, 307 shallow tubewells, 96 power pumps, 371 charitable institutions and 66 street lights. The board has erected 1,486 km power line including 236 km PDB line. But occasional theft of transformers has been hampering the smooth functioning of the system. So far, 60 transformers have been stolen mainly from sadar thana, board sources said.

Smuggled goods seized

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 19: Bangladesh Rifles in different raids seized huge quantity of smuggled goods, including foreign liquor, worth about Tk 20 lakh from a truck and two boats in the district on Thursday, reports UNB.

Liquor including brandy, beer, whisky and other goods including mawseeds and multi-vitamin tablets were recovered from a Chittagong bound truck at Damdama checkpost on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road. In another raid, mawseeds, beer and other kinds of liquor were also recovered from two boats near number one and two sluice gates in the Naf river. But BDR jawans could not arrest the smugglers. Another report from Sirajganj adds: Police recovered 100 bottles of phenisyl from the riverbank in Sadar thana on Friday. Police said, they seized the contraband while two youths tried to pick up these, containing in two bags, to a waiting microbus. But the youths managed to flee.

Fish marketing project facing setback

PATUAKHALI, Jan 19: Khepupara a Fish Processing and Marketing Project has been facing a set back for want of fund, hampering research works for development of fisheries, reports UNB.

Local people said that the project, handed over to the Fisheries Research Institute (FRI) in June last year, now is being run by the Chandpur, sub-station of FRI with limited resources. According to a report, BFDC has already handed over almost all the facilities including cold storage, vessels, fish handling centre and mini dockyard to FRI to carry on research works. An official of BFDC, unwilling to be named said that BFDC had no other alternative but to hand over the 16-year old fish project of FRI because of mismanagement in the project.

Plan to construct sub-registry offices

TANGAIL, Jan 19: A sub-registry office building will be constructed in Shakhipur thana headquarters of the district, reports BSS.

The construction work will be done under government's programme to construct 52 sub-registry office building in the country in this fiscal year. Official sources said that Taka 18,73,975 has been ear-marked to construct the sub-registry office building and its adjacent record room. The construction work will be started soon to complete it by this fiscal year, the sources added.

Radiotherapy machine out of order

SYLHET, Jan 19: The only radiotherapy machine in Sadar Hospital of the district remained out of order for the last two months, depriving nearly 100 cancer patients of their necessary treatment, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said the help of the related company engineers might be needed to repair the machine as a team from Dhaka failed to repair it earlier. Local people urged the authorities concerned to repair the machine soon and thus assuage the sufferings of the cancer patients in the region.

Condolence meeting

SATKHIRA, Jan 19: A condolence meeting at the death of advocate Asirifur of Satkhira Court was held at the judge's court auditorium on Thursday under the auspices of district bar association, reports BSS.

The condolence meeting was presided over by the district and session judge MA Shahidur Rahman. The meeting was addressed, among others, by the president of bar council advocate SM Alauddin Ahmed, principal of Satkhira Law College, advocate Alhaj Abdul Gofiar, advocates Abdur Rahim, Shamsul Haque, Gopal Chandra Bairagi and the judges.

Eye camp in Noakhali

NOAKHALI, Jan 19: A two-day eye camp sponsored by Bangladesh Jatiya Andha Kallyan Samity, Chittagong branch was held recently at Khailpara High School premises here, reports BSS.

Over 500 patients were treated free of cost. 2 cataract patients were operated upon.

Outstanding agri-loan disbursed

BARISAL, Jan 19: Bangladesh Krishibank (BKB), Barisal region has realised outstanding agriculture loan amounting to Taka 53.66 crore from the farmers of 11 southern districts of the region during the first six months of the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

The districts are: Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Rajbari and Sharatpur. According to an official source, the target of recovery was fixed at Tk. 178 crore this year in this region. Of the total, Tk. 5.92 crore was recovered from Barisal district, Tk. 2.21 crore from Jhalakati, Tk. 4.99 crore from Bhola, Tk. 4.65 crore from Patuakhali, Tk. 4.75 crore from Pirojpur, Tk. 4.43 crore from Barguna, Tk. 7.06 crore from Faridpur, Tk. 4.59 crore from Madaripur and Tk. 5.07 crore from Rajbari, Tk. 4.92 crore from Gopalganj and Tk. 5.07 crore from Sharatpur district.



MUNSHIGANJ: Acute scarcity of fish has been prevailing in the district during this winter season. As a result, price of fish has shot up. This is because a small number of fishermen came out of their homes for fishing braving severe cold, while a large number of their fellow colleagues remained indoors sitting idle. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Re-elections conclude in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Jan 19: Re-elections in seven postponed unions in the district concluded on January 8 and 11 peacefully.

Election of one centre at Jumbaran and one centre at Halia under Shahat thana, three centres at Fulchari sadar and Gajaria union under Fulchari thana, three centres at Ramchandrapur union under Gaibandha sadar thana, one centre at Khordakamarpur under Sadullapur thana and one centre at Darbantha union under Gobindaganj thana remained suspended following snatching of ballot papers and boxes.

Re-election of five centres in four unions was held on January 8 and five centres of three unions held on January 11.

Those who were unofficially re-elected as chairmen in narrow margin are Fulchari union — Azizur Rahman, Gajaria — Shafail Islam Saju, Jumbaran — Shajahan Ali Saju, Haldia — Shabuddin Hossain, Khordakamarpur — Shafail Alam Prodhan, Darbastha — Tajur Islam and Ramchandrapur — Abdul Kalam Azad.

Tribal spiritual leader welcomes CHT peace accord

RANGAMATI, Jan 19: A tribal spiritual leader on Thursday welcomed the peace agreement on Chittagong Hill Tracts, saying that everybody wants peace and any kind of jealousy should be avoided for the sake of humanity, reports UNB.

"Jealousy, greed, injustice and repression can't bring peace anywhere — this world or in the world hereafter," said Srimat Sadananda Mahasthavir Banabante, the principal of Rajbari Bihar in this hilly town.

The Buddhist leader, who is regarded as very respectable among the tribal people in the hill districts, made the comment while addressing a function marking his 79th birth anniversary.

Newly appointed minister Kalparjanan Chakma attended the function and sought Banabante's blessings for the implementation of the agreement, signed between the government and the tribal leaders early last month.

The spiritual leader asked the minister to take steps for setting up mills and factories in the district to generate employment for the unemployed youth.

Chakma king Raja Debadish Roy, Dipankar Talukder MP, and the chairman of the local government councils of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban also attended the functions.

Crimes on rise in Patuakhali

PATUAKHALI, Jan 19: Crimes are on alarming rise at the town and its suburbs causing concern among the peace-loving people, reports UNB.

Crimes like burglary, dacoity, murder, abduction, rape, gambling and prostitution have vitiated the serene atmosphere of the town.

The dwellers find it difficult to reside in the town. They here can not move freely due to the alarming rise in the incidents of mugging.

Criminals move freely on the streets as the law enforcement agencies do not take any action against them.

Besides, law and order situation has deteriorated with the increase in the number of murder cases in the district. The situation aggravated further with the post-election clashes and violent activities between the supporters of the winners and defeated candidates.

As a result, life in both the rural and urban areas have become miserable.

Extreme poverty and price spiral of essentials left many people destitute forcing the distressed women specially the young girls into anti-social activities causing erosion of the moral values.

Local people said the miscreants killed him after dragging him out of his house and left his body on the roadside.

Separate cases were filed with the respective police stations.

Extortion, abduction on rise in Bandarban

According to the local Boat Owners' Association, boat looting has turned into a regular feature in Sangu river, but authorities are yet to take any action in this regard.

A higher army official, however, said that he had not yet got any information from the authorities about the anti-social activities of the Burmese, adding that, BDR and police forces have been deployed in the hills to take the advantage of development works of the region, the major development works of which are likely to be implemented by the NGOs.

Meanwhile, people expressed concern over the mushroom growth of fake NGOs since the signing of the peace agreement between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity on December 2.

Local leaders said after the agreement, a bright prospect of implementing development workers with financial assistance from donor countries has been created. A number of fake NGOs have already sprung up in the hills to take the advantage of development works of the region, the major development works of which are likely to be implemented by the NGOs.

They also urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to combat the growing terrorism in the region.

Unscrupulous owners of hotels and restaurants are doing brisk business.

Kalpa Ranjan urges residents of hill region not to be misled by opposition

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 19: Minister without portfolio Kalpa Ranjan Chakma called upon the residents of the hill regions not to be misled by the opposition propaganda against the peace agreement on Chittagong Hill Tracts as it was signed considering the interests of all, reports BSS.

"All must realise that the accord has been signed keeping in mind the interests of all communities in the hills to establish permanent peace in the region," he said at a public reception accorded to him at the Panchhara thana under the hill district.

The minister said there is no scope for any misunderstanding particularly for the Bengali speaking people as the accord has ensured all their constitutional rights including their rights on land and franchise.

"The agreement is completely within the purview of the constitution," said Kalpa Ranjan, the first cabinet minister from the tribal community since Bangladesh became independent in 1971.

Afforestation drive being hampered in Bandarban

BANDARBAR, Jan 19: Works of two projects undertaken by the local Forest Department to rehabilitate *Jumia* tribal people and afforestation are being hampered due to deterioration of law and order situation in the district, reports UNB.

Sources said field level activities of these seven and five years long projects have come to a standstill with the increasing incidents of toll collection by a certain group and abduction of field workers.

It is reported that field workers are scared to go to the field, particularly after the abduction of Ruangchhari Forest Ranger recently.

The projects are being implemented to build up a forestry through the partnership of *Jumia* people and for afforesting the Nara hill, reserve and natural forest to maintain ecological balance.

According to local Forest Department, the seven-year long project to protect soil from erosion, rehabilitate *Jumia* tribal people and preserve forest areas with *Jumia* partnership was supposed to begin in June last but the work could not be started in full swing due to the adverse situation created by the terrorists.

The Asian Development Bank funded project will rehabilitate 1,000 *Jumia* families, afforest 10,000 hectares of hilly lands and produce two lakh saplings for the afforestation of government organisations.

Under the second five-year project began in 1995-96 fiscal, 123.50 acres of land have so far been brought under the afforestation programme.

Moreover, price spiral of essentials including rice and ato and lack of job opportunities forced them to leave their own areas to eke out their living. In the absence of nutrition many of them have been suffering from various infectious diseases.

Finding no other way out, most of these floating people have resorted to begging to maintain their livelihood. It is alleged that many of the young women beggars have resorted to immoral activities for their survival giving rise to anti-social activities in the town.

The town dwellers have urged the authority concerned to take immediate steps to rehabilitate these destitute people in the urban areas.

Warm clothes distributed among needy

From Our Correspondent

NARSINGDI, Jan 19: Warm clothes were distributed to poor people at Narsingdi railway station platform by Narsingdi Rotaract Club recently.

The president of the club Md Obaydul Rahman, vice-president Aminul Islam, Secretary, Shohidul Islam and other Rotarians were present there.

GOPALGANJ: A total of 210 pieces of warm clothes were distributed among the cold wave victims of Latifpur union under Gopalganj sadar thana on January 11. Fakrul Bashar, the newly elected chairman of Latifpur Union Parishad inaugurated the programme.

— Star photo

In 16 N-dists Paddy procurement drive may not be achieved

PABNA, Jan 19: The procurement targets of Aman paddy and rice in the 16 northern districts including Pabna may not be achieved this year as the official procurement price is much lower than the market price, reports UNB.

The month-long official procurement drive kicked off on January 8, but no procurement in many centres was reported even after two weeks.

The government has fixed the price of Aman paddy at Tk 280 per maund while the existing market price is between Tk 300 and Tk 310. Local farmers are not going to the food godowns to sell their crop below the market price.

According to official sources, the target of procurement in Pabna has been fixed at 3,559 mts of paddy and rice at 1,696 mts. In Sirajganj paddy 3,678 mts and rice 1,696 mts, Natore paddy 3,800 mts and rice 1,500 tons, Lalmonirhat — paddy 7,726 mts and rice 3,537 mts, Kurigram — paddy 5,228 mts and rice 1,228 mts, Gaibandha — paddy 12,000 mts and rice 4,616 mts, Rangpur —

— paddy 13,165 mts and rice 10,822 mts, Joypurhat — paddy 7,636 mts and rice 3,759 mts, Bogra — paddy 6,707 mts and rice 2,833 mts, Rajshahi — paddy 6,035 mts and rice 4,054 mts, Panchagarh — paddy 10,996 mts and rice 5,067 mts, Thakurgaon — paddy 13,259 mts and rice 4,185 mts and Dinajpur-paddy 33,180 mts and rice 11,171 mts.