

News snaps

Relief goods distributed among flood victims

KISHOREGANJ, July 28: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman accused the main opposition BNP of launching untrue and misleading propaganda against the government for vitiating the political atmosphere, reports BSS.

Speaking across section of people while distributing relief materials at different flood affected areas of Bhalrab in Kishoreganj district, the minister said that certain quarters had become jealous due to successes made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the national life. He described the allegations of the main opposition BNP about different national issues as baseless and untrue. Rahman addressed the flood stricken people at Aganagar, Kalikaprassad, Shimul Knadi, Shibpur and Gazaria unions and distributed relief materials among the distressed.

Coconut production decreasing

NARAIL, July 28: Despite bright prospect coconut production in the district is decreasing due to lack of proper initiative and patronisation, reports UNB.

According to the local growers, climate and soil condition are favourable for the cultivation of coconut. Locals are interested to grow the coconut, but they cannot take any effective initiative due to lack of capital and government patronisation. Growers alleged that the officials concerned do not extend their helping hands in this regard. There are vast tracts of land here where the cultivation of the crop is possible extensively. Local experts urged the authority to take a massive scheme to cultivate the crop by imparting necessary training and motivation to the growers.

2 killed in Naogaon road mishap

NAOGAON, July 28: Two persons were killed and six others injured when two buses collided head-on at Dangapara in Niamatpur thana of the district recently witnesses said, reports BSS.

The victims are Shyam Babu, 70, helper of the bus and a five-year-old boy Russell, 5. The injured persons were admitted to Niamatpur Thana Health Complex for treatment.

Bridge construction work completed

NARSINGDI, July 28: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has completed construction of four bridges at a cost of Taka 2,31,44,000 in the district recently, reports BSS.

According to an official source the bridges are: 140-metre bridge on Belabo-Charbelabo road over the river Arial Khan in Belabo thana, 75-metre bridge on Narsingdi-Hasnabad road over the river Haidoa, 65-metre bridge on Narsingdi-Monipura road over Haridao river in sadar thana and 22-metre bridge on Nowa Nagar road in Monohardi thana.

23 uplift projects' work progressing

SYLHET, July 28: The Zilla Parishad has been implementing 23 development projects at a cost of Tk 1.38 crore, reports UNB. Officials said of the schemes taken up in the last fiscal year, 20 have already been completed while the rest are progressing fast. The schemes include construction of 10 km road, repair of six km road, construction of a number of culverts and ferry ghats, tree plantation and scholarship for the students. Besides, the parishad has undertaken a number of uplift schemes to improve the communication network in the district during the current fiscal year.

Anti-peace activists arrested

RANGAMATI, July 28: Police recently rounded up three persons including two anti-peace treaty activists from two different places of the district, reports BSS.

Kaukhali thana police in a drive arrested two alleged anti-peace treaty activists from Chittagong. They were wanted by Kaukhali police in connection with this involvement in anti-peace and subversive activities. The arrested persons are Anil Chakma, 30, of Luxmichhari in Khagrachhari district and Balendra Chakma, 25, of sadar thana. Another person, Shawakat Ali, driver of a bus, was caught by the mob and handed over to Kaukhali thana police as he knocked down a boy at Godarpar on Rangamati-Chittagong road.

266 deep tube-wells installed in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, July 28: Public Health Department installed 266 deep tube-wells to ensure supply of drinking water in the rural areas of the district during the last fiscal year, reports UNB. UNICEF provided fund for the sinking of 66 tube-wells and the rest were set up with fund provided by the government. Of the tube-wells, 31 were installed in Sadar, 32 in Nazarpur, 55 in Swarupkati and 23 in Kaukhali thanas. Besides, 38 were set up in Bhandaria and 87 in Matbaria thanas. The project was implemented at a cost of Tk 1,10,17,454. Meanwhile, the department also installed 33 shallow tube-wells and re-installed 209 shallows during the same period under another project. With the successful implementation of the projects pure water scarcity in the rural areas of the district has been removed to a great extent.

Man stabbed to death by thief

SUNAMGANJ, July 28: A man was stabbed to death by a thief on Saturday at dead of night at Rogargona village in Doarabazar thana here, reports UNB.

Police sources said the victim Abdul Hekim, 25, woke up from his slumber when the thief entered into his house and when he tried to round him up the thief stabbed him indiscriminately and fled the scene. Hekim died on the spot. The district Additional Superintendent of Police visited the spot on the following day. Police arrested a man named Foyjur Rahman in this connection. Further investigation is on.

1062 minor projects implemented

NETRAKONA, July 28: A total of 1062 minor projects, taken under Test Relief (TR) programme of the government, were executed in 10 thanas and three pourashavas of Netrakona district under the supervision of district relief and disaster management department during fiscal 1997-98, reports BSS.

An official source said, the government allotted 1872 tonnes of wheat for implementation of the test relief projects. The projects included repair and maintenance of different Kutcha roads and road-cum-embankments and earth work in different educational and religious institutions.

Fisheries Week observed

TANGAIL, July 28: In observance of Fisheries Week Madhur Fisheries Department released 500 fish fries in the pisciculture farm of Madhug Barabadi Yatim Khana on July 22, reports BSS.

Subir Kishore Chowdhury, Thana Nirbahi Officer released the fries of carp varieties of fishes. Mozammel Hossain, Thana Fisheries Officer, Ashraf Ali, Thana Samaj Seba Officer, Zakir Hossain, and local union parishad chairman attended the function on this occasion.

Maulana Mohammad Iman Ali, Superintendent of the orphanage said that for self-sufficiency of the orphanage they have a programme to release one lakh fish fries. Meanwhile, 50,000 fries were released.

Pass-books distributed among old people

BORKAL (Rangamati), July 28: Dipankar Talukdar, MP, chairman of the Task Force on Tribal Refugee Rehabilitation Affairs, distributed 450 pass-books to 450 distressed old people of the thana in a formal function held at Borkal thana auditorium recently, reports BSS.

The pass-books will give the recipients access to the old-age allowance programme, introduced in the country, fulfilling the government's election pledge. Thana Nirbahi Officer of Borkal thana, Mohammad Muzibur Rahman presided over the meeting, attended by chairman of Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council Ching Kieu Roaza, Deputy Director of Rangamati district unit of Social Service Directorate Arati Chakma and acting president of Rangamati district unit of Awami League, Mahbubur Rahman as special guests.

20 held while being trafficked to India

SATKHIRA, July 28: The BDR arrested 20 persons including six women and four children from Vadiali border area while they were trying to cross border to go to India on Sunday, a BDR source said, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off the BDR personnel raided the Vadiali border area and arrested 20 Bangladeshi nationals while they were being taken to India by a trafficker. They are inhabitants of Dighulia thana of Khulna district. A case was filed with Satkhira sadar thana in this connection.

Man beaten to death by elder brothers

MAGURA, July 28: A man was beaten to death allegedly by his elder brothers at Mortuzapur village in Sripur thana on Friday night, reports UNB.

Family sources said two sons of Kadam Ali Molla named Sayeed and Zahid picked up a quarrel with their father and at one state while they took an attempt to assault him their younger brother Shamim came to his rescue. Then the angry brothers became furious and started beating Shamim mercilessly causing his instantaneous death. The two cruel brothers before fleeing the scene hanged the body with a rope to prove that he committed suicide. The murder has created sensation in the locality. Police sent the body to hospital morgue for autopsy.



NARAYANGANJ: An inundated village of Sonargaon thana in the district.

— Star photo

River erosion takes a serious turn in several Kushtia thanas

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 28: The river Ganges and Gorai are now in spate due to onrush of hilly water from the upper riparian and incessant rainfall during the last few days.

It has caused waterlogging at several places of the district making large number of people marooned in eight unions of Daulatpur thana, three unions of Bheramara thana, one union of Mirpur thana, three unions of Kumarkhali thana. A total of 15 dwelling houses of Bandpara adjacent to Kushtia Railway Station and four business establishments situated on the bank of the river Gorai near Barobazar have gone under riverbed. Six other business establishments of Barobazar are threatened by the surging tide of the river Gorai.

Waterlogging occurred in Kushtia town due to faulty drainage system constructed by Kushtia Pourashava authority. Heavy rainfall created waterlogging in a vast tract of crop land causing partial damage to standing crops in Mirpur thana within the Ganges-Kobadak Project command area. Water Development Board (WDB) officials admitted the fact and said that engineers have been working for drainage of excess water through Escape Channel for saving the crops. Sagarkhali sluice gate of Ganges-Kobadak Project (GKI) in Mirpur thana has developed trouble due to waterlogging. Concerned engineers have rushed there to cope with the situation.

All ponds and other water bodies have become overflowed due to heavy rain. The people of Daulatpur thana have become panicky as water level of the river Ganges has been rising fast everyday inundating more areas and devouring a vast tract of land.

Waterlogging in Bheramara has caused immense difficulties for people particularly people of Bheramara Pourashava. Standing crops on 3,000 acres of land in three unions of Bheramara were affected. The river Gorai eroded a vast tract of land at Kumarkhali including part of Pourabazar, old M N High School, Kumarkhali Degree College. The Gorai has been threatening a number of handloom industries and other institutions.

A report from Bheramara said, waterlogging has taken place in Barisal khal as the mouth of syphon has been silted up. As a result several hundred acres of land with standing crops have gone under water. Similar crisis is being faced by the people of Bahrichar and Mokaripur unions of Bheramara thana where a vast tract of land with standing crops have gone under water.

Farmers have blamed the GK Project officials for not taking proper steps for draining out the water accumulated due to heavy rainfall. Farmers have lost huge crops due to the negligence of GK Project officials in this respect.

Meanwhile, erosion of the rivers Ganges and Gorai has taken a serious turn in Daulatpur and Kumarkhali thana. The Ganges has already devoured 30 educational institutions, 50 mosques, three cattle markets, 25 hats and bazaars, five BOP camps and eight kilometre long Raita Mohiskundi Flood Protection Embankment. Besides, 20 thousands acres of cultivable land have been devoured by the river Ganges in Daulatpur thana. The affected unions are: Adabaria, Pragpur, Boalia and Arta, Philipnagar, Ramkrishnapur, Maricha and Chilmari.

Meanwhile, the erosion, victims of the river Ganges have been passing their days in agony and leading a sub-human life.

As a precautionary measure, a 12-mile-long Raita Mohiskundi Flood Protection Embankment was constructed in 1972 by WDB. But the embankment has already been devoured. It is due to direct effect of Farakka Barrage constructed by India. The uprooted people have no land to live in or cultivate. They have got no money or source of income to maintain their families. The thana administration has been facing problem to rehabilitate the unfortunate people. Relief materials so far distributed among them were too inadequate to meet the demand.

They have no job at the moment and as a result a considerable number of erosion victims have sailed for unknown destination. Some of them have already engaged themselves in works like rickshaw driving, plying of push cart and other odd jobs. Aged and unable people have resorted to begging for mere survival. Most of the people have been suffering from malnutrition. They easily fall prey of various diseases. The victims have urged the authorities concerned to take proper steps to stop river erosion and save Daulatpur thana.

Our Magura Correspondent reports: The river Madhumoti in Muhammadpur thana devoured nearly 110 houses of three unions in last two weeks. About 110 houses in Balidia, Babukhali, and Muhammadpur Union Parishads under Muhammadpur thana have been devoured by the river Madhumoti. Official sources said, homeless people have

sifted to safer places.

Meanwhile, erosion of river Gorai at Langalbandh bazaar in Sripur thana has taken a serious turn. It is apprehended that the bazaar area might go under water if the erosion goes unabated.

UNB reports from Jamalpur: Over one lakh people of 20,000 families in six thanas here have been rendered homeless due to erosion of the mighty rivers Jamuna and Brahmaputra that intensified further during the onslaught of the current flood.

Over a hundred villages of 22 unions have so far been affected by the erosion while many villages have already disappeared into the river.

According to the official sources, the Jamuna affected seven villages in Dewanganj thana, 27 in Islampur thana, 12 in Sarishabari and 15 in Madarganj while the Brahmaputra affected three villages in Islampur thana, four in Sadar and one in Bakshiganj thana. Besides, people of 13 villages in Bakshiganj were evicted from their land due to erosion by the river Dashedi.

A vast tract of crop land, dwelling houses, educational institutions, mosques were devoured by the river. The worst affected thana is Madarganj.

Meanwhile, Madarganj thana office was shifted to another safer place. Offices of the thana Parishad, hospital and post office in the thana and Gatal bazar in Islampur thana may erode at any moment, local people apprehended.

The shelterless distressed people took shelter on embankments and high roads and are passing their days in great hardships in absence of adequate relief and financial support.

Child labourers on rise in Mymensing district

MYMENSINGH, July 28: There is an alarming rise in the number of child labourers all over the district, reports UNB.

Most of the child labourers, aged between eight and 12 years, are orphans, abandoned by the father or the members of poor families. They have been dropped from their schools due to poverty and compelled to work hard to earn their bread.

An estimate revealed that there are at least 25,000 child labourers engaged in different types of odd jobs in the district.

They include waiters and workers in the hotels and restaurants in the district town and other thana headquarters, bus or tempo helpers, rickshaw-puller, workers in different types of workshops and factories, helpers of mason and street vendors.

A large number of child labourers, mostly girls, are engaged as household aides in urban and well-off rural families. Farm labourers also include a considerable number of chil-

dren in their group.

Another group of child labourers are working as porters in the bus, train and launch stations. Besides, some dishonest businessmen use some children in their business of contraband items like phenisidyl syrup.

These children earn a very small amount of money despite their hard work without any fixed working hours. Even in some rural areas of the district, the child workers do not receive any wages and work only for food, shelter and clothes.

They face torture in some cases or are forced to work in hazardous conditions without knowing the risks involved.

They are the children of destitute and poor families and remain deprived of the access to education, one of the basic human rights.

Some of these unfortunate shelterless children pass their nights at the rail station or office corridors in a distressed condition.

6 killers get life-term imprisonment

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, July 28: Six persons were sentenced to life-term imprisonment recently in the court of Abdul Kuddus, Additional Sessions Judge in Barisal for killing one person.

They were also lived Taka 5000 each, in default, to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The prosecution story, in brief is, the convicted persons jointly beat mercilessly Mossaraf Hossain Howlader of Sundarganj village in Agaljhara thana on March 7, 1995 due to previous enmity over the land of a pond.

On March 8 Mossaraf Hossain was admitted to Sher-e-

Bangla Medical college Hospital (SBMCH) in a critical condition.

The next day Mossaraf died in the hospital. Mossaraf's brother filed a case against 31 persons with Agaljhara thana in this connection.

Police after proper verification charged several. After examining 30 witnesses the judge pronounced the verdict recently in a crowded court.

The convicted persons are: Alamgir Mollah, Ruhul Amin Molla, Selim Mollah, Rahim Mollah, Harun Mollah and Maqbul Hossain Mollah. Twenty-five other accused persons have been acquitted.



COMILLA: Local unit of Biswa-Shahitya Kendra recently arranged a musical programme on Rainy season at Comilla Town Hall auditorium. Local artistes enthralled hundreds of audiences for two and a half hours.

— Star photo

Stolen water level recorders recovered

NETRAKONA, July 28: Netrakona detective branch police recovered two stolen water level recorders worth about Taka 30,000 from a ditch near Netrakona Stadium on the night of Saturday, reports BSS.

Police sources said, acting on a tip-off, a team of plainclothes policemen led by DB police Sub-Inspector Sasti Charan Sarker arrested Babul from Satpal railway colony here and on the basis of his confessional statement recovered two stolen water level recorders.

The two recorders were stolen from the local BADC fertilizer complex here on July 20. A theft case was recorded with Netrakona Kotwali Police Station against the arrested person, police sources added.

Young man killed by miscreants

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 28: One young man of village Radhanagar in Paba thana was killed on Saturday night by a group of miscreants.

Police sources said, Selim Reza, 16, son of Meser Ali of Radhanagar village and a student of class eight was awakened at midnight on Saturday by the sound of his pet pigeons at the courtyard of his house.

Selim came out of his room and saw seven people were engaged in stealing his pigeon. At that time he managed to catch a thief by hugging and raised a hue and cry. The fellow thieves managed to escape, but one of them hit Selim from behind with a sharp knife on his throat and on his thigh before escaping.

He was immediately rushed to Drausha Health Complex where the attending doctors declared him dead. Mother of the victim was able to identify three of the thieves, but police refused to disclose their identities for the sake of investigation.

A case has been filed with Paba thana in this connection. No one has yet been arrested. Another report says: Godagari Police on Saturday night recovered one pistol with three rounds of bullets from a field at Abhaya village.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team headed by Zakirul Islam went to Abhaya village on Saturday night and recovered the pistol and bullets from a field. No one has arrested in this connection.

Timbers worth Tk 5 lakh seized

SATKHIRA, July 28: The Kadamtola and Koikhal Forest Station officials in two separate drives seized huge quantity of Sunduri, Poshur and Dhundul timber worth about Taka five lakh from Pagolgerhat and Mirganj areas in the Sundarbans under Shyamnagar thana recently, reports BSS.

The forest officials also seized 11 boats and arrested six persons in this connection.

According to official sources, acting on a tip-off Kadomtola Forest Station officials raided the Pagolgerhat area and seized eight boat loaded with about 30 tonnes of Sunduri and Poshur timber recently. The forest officials arrested Piarali of village Gorkompor, Suratoli, Abdul Jalil and Nuru Mian of Village Pakhimara and Nurislam of village Padmapukur in Shyamnagar thana in this connection.

In another drive Koikhal Forest Station officials in another drive raided Mirganj area in the Sundarbans and seized three boats loaded with about 10 tonnes of Sunduri and Dhundul timber recently.

2 probe bodies to help restore peace at IU formed

KUSHTIA, July 28: The Islamic University (IU) authorities have formed two committees to help restore peace in the campus and to probe into the incidents of violence last week, reports UNB.

A 7-member reconciliatory committee, headed by Dr Ashraf Ali, will hold dialogue with the rival student groups including Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) and Islami Chhatra Shibir to bring back congenial academic atmosphere on the campus as soon as possible.

The other committee with Dr A N M Rezaul Karim as its convener will probe into the incidents of violence on the campus on July 22 and 23. The probe committee will submit its final report to the authorities by August 6.

The committee has asked the witnesses to give information to the committee by August 3.

At least 15 people were injured in a series of clashes between BCL and Shibir activists following which the university was closed for five days from July 25.

Punishment to killers of Rubel demanded

From Our Correspondent

BHOLA, July 28: More than 100 people led by local BNP leader Mosharref Hossain Shahjahan on Monday started a fast unto death here demanding the trial of those responsible for the death in police custody of a university student named Shamim Reza Rubel in Dhaka.

The fasting began in the morning at the premises of Poet Mozammel Haque Town Hall where the BNP leader also addressed a public gathering.

A former state minister in the then BNP government, Shahjahan told the gathering that the Home Minister must resign if he fails to check frequent deaths in police custody.

Meanwhile, some cultural activists submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding exemplary punishment to Rubel's killers. Earlier, they staged a demonstration in the town.



RANGPUR: Erosion of the river Teesta has taken a serious turn in Gangachhara thana despite protective measures taken by the Water Development Board.

— Star photo

Satkhira fishermen in miseries

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 28: A large number of fishermen in seven thanas of the district are passing their days in much hardship.

There are four haors, 24 beels, 28028 ponds and 346 canals in the district. The district has a population of about 18 lakh. Of them 2,15,000 are genuine fishermen.

The vast areas of beels and haors were once famous for different varieties of fish. But the situation has changed due to a number of reasons. A good number of haors and beels which were rich with various kinds of fish have silted up now.

Once famous haors and beels like Kazirhat haor, Khordo haor, Banshadha haor, Dat Bhanga beel, Keshro beel, Sarulia beel, Jhhodanga beel, Budhhata beel, Murarikati beel, Ailpore beel, Moutala beel, Betanriver, Ichhamati river, Kabodak river, Kakshiali river

and Bhalrab river can now hardly be recognised as rich waterbodies.

Their shrinkage has threatened fish population. Besides, indiscriminate fishing by non-professional fishermen has been posing a threat to fish population.

Some fishermen of Binerpota area told this correspondent, the traditional fishermen who are called 'jele' or 'Bagdi' are on the verge of extinction. Some of them have either left the country or are scattered all over the country for their grim battle of survival.

They also alleged, scarcity of fish and other problems forced them to leave their ancestral profession. Non-professional fishermen have established their supremacy over the professional fishermen.

Water bodies of the district had once been famous for fish of various kinds. A large quantity of fish was supplied to vari-

ous parts of the country and fishermen of the district used to earn enough money for their livelihood. But those days are gone. At present most of the local species of fish like Koi, Magur, Boal, Kalbaush, Shol, Shingi, Katla and Pangash are on the verge of extinction. Depletion of fish resources occurred due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers on crop fields near water bodies. About 75,000 fishermen families in the district were dependent on fishing for their livelihood.

Tarapada Biswas, a fisherman of village Binerpota the sadar thana said, 'He has been forced to leave his ancestral profession and at present he has been engaged in trading with shrimpi fish in the area'. Rafiqul Islam of Assassuni thana said, 'What can I do other than fish related business. My forefathers were fishermen. They were all really very happy.

But now we are facing bad times. How can I survive with my family who is thrown out of my ancestral profession'. Karik Chandra Das of Kalganj thana has opened a betel leaf and bidi shop at Kalganj bus stand. He narrated his miserable story in tear-choked voice.

There is a provision to lease out waterbodies to genuine fishermen. But some 'jaradars' in connivance with the local vested groups are giving sublease of the waterbodies to some fake fishermen. Genuine fishermen cannot fish even after getting lease in most cases.

Non-professionals catch fish by force and even take away the fishing nets and other fishing materials of genuine fishermen, some fishermen alleged. They also alleged that they had informed the concerned authorities about the malpractice, but no step has yet been taken in this regard.