

## News snaps

## Farmers' training course ends

KHAGRAKHARI, Dec 15: A three-day farmers' training course on use of appropriate technology for cultivation of vegetables and fruits in the hilly areas concluded here recently, reports UNB.

Chairman of the Local Government Council of the district Jatintra Lal Tripura inaugurated the course jointly organised by the High Land Arrangement Scheme (2nd phase) of CHT Development Board and Hilly Agriculture Research Centre. Council member Rano Bikram Tripura, insect expert Abdul Mannan, director of high land arrangement project Sudibba Kanti Khisa, Executive Engineer of Development Board Mohammad Shahjahan, among others, were present on the occasion with Dr Shabrial Uddin, Chief Scientific Officer of Agriculture Research Centre in the chair. A total of 40 landless repatriated tribal farmers took part in the course. They were given practical training on how to increase the production of vegetables and fruits by applying modern technology and high yielding variety of seeds.

## Wheat farming programme

NETRAKONA, Dec 15: District Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a programme to bring 8,747 hectares under wheat cultivation in the thanas of Netrakona district in the current 'Rabi' season, reports BSS.

An official source said, the production target of wheat has been fixed at 19,500 tonnes. The government has already taken all preparations to supply quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides among the farmers at fair price to make the wheat farming programme a success, official source added.

## Training on TOT concludes

RANGAMATI, Dec 15: A two-day training on 'Training Of Trainers (TOT)' on school sanitation and hygiene programme concluded here at the conference room of Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council, reports BSS.

The training programme was sponsored by UNICEF Consultant of UNICEF Dipa Sen inaugurated the training. A number of 20 participants including Thana Nirbahi Officers, Thana Health and Family Planning Officers, Thana Education Officers and engineers from Public Health Engineering Directorate attended the training organised by Rangamati unit of the directorate of Public Health Engineering. A Dhaka-based firm 'Communica' has conducted the training.

## Uplift works progressing

SHERPUR, Dec 15: The development works of communication infrastructure are underway in five thanas here under the post-flood rehabilitation programme, reports UNB.

Construction, reconstruction and repair works including maintenance activities of roads, bridges and culverts at a cost of over Tk 1.98 crore are progressing fast, official sources said. According to Local Government Engineering Department, some 11 projects of construction works at a cost of Tk 80 lakh and reconstruction works of bridges and culverts costing Tk 4.90 lakh has already begun. Roads and Highways Department (RHD) sources said the development works of roads, bridges including approach roads costing Tk 91.64 lakh are also being implemented in two phases.

## 2 held for purchasing diesel from Rly staff

MYMENSINGH, Dec 15: Police arrested two people, including a woman, on charge of purchasing diesel from railway staff, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, DB police raided the houses of Sajeda Khatun, 45, at Balashpur Bazar and Andre Karmakar, 35, at railway colony in the town and seized 298 litres of diesel.

## Separate incidents claim 2 lives

JAMALPUR, Dec 15: Two people were killed in separate incidents in sadar thana on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police said Hazeria Khatun, 18, daughter of Yunus Ali of Bhati Gazaria village, killed herself by taking poison. In another incident, an identified youth was electrocuted as he came in touch of a live wire at Badechandi village. Earlier on December 2, a young housewife, Sheuli, was killed allegedly by her husband at Zanakpur Talukderpara village in Bakshiganj thana.

## 501 small schemes under TR programme

NETRAKONA, Dec 15: A total of 501 small schemes under the Test Relief (TR) programme have been taken up 10 thanas and four pourashavas in Netrakona district in the current winter season, reports BSS.

An official source said, the government has allocated 891 metric tons of wheat for execution of these schemes. The work of these schemes included repair and renovation of different kutch roads and road-cum-embankments, earth work in different educational and religious institutions and repairing of bamboo bridges. The work of these schemes will start soon and be completed by June next.

## Death anniversary

MAGURA, Dec 15: The seventh death anniversary of Abdur Rashid Biswas, a valiant freedom fighter and a great organiser of the Liberation War was observed here recently in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Discussion meetings and mild mahfils were held in the district town and at Mohammadpur thana and Khalia, the village home of the deceased, organisers said. Late Biswas, a close associate of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected a member of parliament in 1973. He was also president of Magura district Awami League. He died in 1991 at the age of 65.

## 286 applications submitted for 8 posts

SHERPUR, Dec 15: A total of 286 applications have been submitted against eight vacant posts of Union Parishad Secretary in the district, reports UNB.

Official sources said eight posts out of the total 53 posts of Union Parishad Secretaries in 53 unions have been lying vacant in the district for a long time. The Local Government invited the applications to fill up the vacant posts recently, the sources added.

## Road repairing needs Tk one crore

NAOGAON, Dec 15: Extensive damage of roads in areas under the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority has been affecting development work there, sources said, reports APB.

The six-km Abdapukur-Patisar-Saraigachhi road and about two kilometres of the Mahadevpur-Saraigachhi road were completely damaged by the recent floods, making road communication in the area very difficult. The sources estimated that about one crore would be needed to repair and rehabilitate the roads.

## 377 agri plots to encourage farmers

JHALAKATHI, Dec 15: A total of 377 display plots will be organised in Jhalakathi district during the current 'Rabi' season by the government's Agriculture Extension Department to encourage and train farmers in improved methods of cultivation, reports APB.

High yielding varieties of rice, wheat, corn, pulses, potato, mustard, sunflower, peanut and other crops and vegetables will be grown in the plots by farmers under the supervision experts. The AED will supply seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and other agri-inputs free of cost.

## Law and order worsens

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 15: The law and order situation has deteriorated further here as the terrorist activities including toll collection are on rise causing concern among the business community, reports UNB.

Traders have become hostages at the bands of the terrorists as they never dare to protest their illegal acts apprehending reprisal. Many business are passing their days in great anxiety failing to comply with the demand of a large sum of money by the extortions. The audacity of the toll collectors has been increasing day by day as the local administration failed to take any steps against them, said local people. Terrorism and toll collection have become a daily affair in Shahjadpur town since long. A gang of miscreants on Thursday night went to the grocery shop of Dilip Poddar at the main road and demanded Tk 50,000 as toll. The armed goons ransacked and looted the valuables of the shop worth about Tk 25,000 at 9 pm when the refused to pay the toll.

## Benefiting programme on children's week

MANIKGANJ, Dec 15: The local Shishu Academy chalked out various programmes to mark the Children's Rights Week in Manikganj town and other areas of the district, reports BSS.

The programmes included colourful rally, recitation, essay and debate competitions and a discussion meeting. On the concluding day a prize distribution ceremony was held at the local government high school premises. Presided over by Md Abdur Razzak, Deputy Commissioner, Manikganj the function was addressed, among others, by Sultanuddin Ahmed, Headmaster, Government High School and Md Ayub Hossain, District Children Affairs Officer. The function was followed by a musical soiree participated by children.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Skulls of martyrs collected from the killing ground situated behind Zoha Hall of the university. In 1971 the occupation Pakistani army built a concentration camp inside this hall. They tortured students, youths and freedom-loving Bengali people here. At one stage of torture the barbarous army killed them. — Star photo

## Zoha Hall monument remains battered

From Kamran Raza Chowdhury

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Dec 15: The mass graves near Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall, known as Zoha Hall mass graves situated on the university campus are yet to be protected.

The mass graves were created by the occupation Pakistan army during the War of Liberation in 1971.

The occupation Pakistan army committed massacres in Rajshahi as well as on the university campus as part of their blueprint of combating operation with a view to strangulating the hopes and aspirations of the freedom loving Bengali people.

They used to torture and kill

the pro-liberation forces, both men and women, including the freedom fighters. They also killed many innocent people. All the corpses were piled up in the mass graves situated in the paddy fields near Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall and dumped in graves.

The occupation Pakistan army entered into Rajshahi on April 13, 1971. The brutal forces, in collaboration with the anti-liberation forces devastated a vast area of the region including the Rajshahi University campus. They captured the whole campus on the same day.

Pakistan army took shelter

in the residential halls such as Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall, Nawab Abdul Latif Hall, Syed Amir Ali Hall, Shah Mokhdum Hall and Monnuzzin Hall.

Zoha Hall was the headquarters of Pakistani army on the university campus. All the captives, both men and women, including the freedom fighters were whisked away at the hall and tortured to death. Women were also violated and killed later.

We could hear the captives, both men and women, screaming and groaning in pain, but could not do anything. Because, we had nothing to do," Abu Bashir, a witness of the Pak-

istan brutality told this to this correspondent. He is now serving as a peon in the administration section of the university. He lived at East para, a nearby residential area of Zoha Hall at that time. He described his bitterest experience of that black chapter of history to this correspondent in a gloomy mood. "The captives were brought at the hall from different parts of Rajshahi in large prisoner carriers at day time, but they were tortured and massacred at dead of night. The villagers were called at gun-point to level the mass graves, he also did the job," Bashir added.

Another witness, Abdul

Kader Molla, now a peon serving at Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall narrated the same story to this correspondent. He was also a resident of East para at that time.

His experience is more horrible than that of Bashir. "Very often, at dawn we were forcibly brought to the paddy and sugar-cane field, north of Zoha Hall to fill up with earth the mass graves or to dig the mass graves," he said. "There are about 20 to 25 mass graves in the field," he answered when asked how many mass graves are there.

The freedom fighters rescued some naked women from the hall after the retreat of the Pakistani army," he also revealed.

However, the university authority built a monument at the site. But the anti-liberation forces on the Rajshahi University campus demolished the monument. Since then, no practical step was taken to build a fell fledged monument there.

At present, a tiny tin-shed has been built where some policemen stay to guard the humble monument.

The authorities concerned should build a monument at the site so that people can pay respect to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for our cherished independence.

## Rajshahi Zoo survives amid odds

RAJSHAHIBI, Dec 15: Rajshahi Zoo, the second biggest one in the country, is in a precarious condition due to alleged negligence by its authorities and non-cooperation between two departments of the Rajshahi City Corporation which owns it, reports APB.

The day will be heralded by boozing of a 21-gun salute at one minute past midnight. National flag will be hoisted atop all government and private buildings. Police, Ansar, BNCC, scouts, girl guides, educational institutions and other juvenile organisations will hold a march past at Gazipur Stadium. Freedom fighters will be accorded a reception by the district administration.

A meeting was held here at the conference room of the district administration which was presided over by Shamsul Haque, Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur recently in this connection. High officials of the district administration and local political leaders were present.

A seven-day victory festival began at Tongi on December 10 organised by local Sammilito Sangskriti Jote.

The programme included cultural functions, exhibition of photographs, songs, recitation of poems, staging dramas and discussions every day.

### Diarrhoea kills 5 in Madaripur

MADRIPUR, Dec 15: At least five persons died of diarrhoea and over four hundred were attacked with the disease in four thanas of the district in the last two weeks, reports APB.

According to sources at Madaripur Sadar Hospital, 101 patients have been admitted to the hospital in the last 10 days. But treatment is being hampered due to shortage of oral saline, they said.

There were 279 animals and birds when the zoo was sold to

the city corporation in 1996. The number has been declining since then, sources said.

Two peacocks have died because of alleged negligence of the keepers. Some deer have met the same fate. The baboons and the smaller monkeys are also dying due to lack of medication.

Many cages in the aviary are empty and the birds are suffering from lack of sufficient water supply, not to speak of other things. In spite of their inability to look after the animals already in the zoo, the authorities recently purchased a lion and a tiger.

Observers say, with the available resources, the zoo should be in a much better financial position. But due to lack of interest, the zoo is now in a very sorry state.

The cages, many of which are empty, have not been properly designed. A tiger managed to escape and a deer got its neck stuck up between the bars and suffocated when it tried to escape, it was alleged.

The surrounding areas are in a mess and visitors have to hold their noses to avoid stink. There is a signboard prohibiting use of mikes and loudspeakers in the zoo premise, but the authorities themselves have hung soundboxes throughout the area. Animal lovers say this constant noise harms the zoo inmates and disgusts visitors.

The number of visitors, fortunately, shows no signs of declining. Last year, the zoo gate was leased for 8 lakh taka, which was increased to Tk 10 lakh this year. The entrance fee has also been raised to Tk 3 from Tk 2.

## Supporter of UP chairman candidate shot at

JHALAKATI, Dec 15: A young supporter of a chairman candidate in a union parishad (UP) poll at Rajapur thana here sustained bullet injuries in a clash with the workers of his opponent on Thursday, reports APB.

Witnesses said the supporters of two rival candidates in the Baraiya union parishad election were locked in a clash at Chalish Kahunia on Thursday night which left Sirajul Islam, 17, wounded.

Several gunshots were heard during the clash. One bullet hit Sirajul at the leg.

The victim was first rushed to Rajapur Thana Health Complex and then shifted to Barisal Medical College Hospital.

### No Senate meeting of RU in 2 years

RAJSHAHIBI, Dec 15: There is no Senate meeting of Rajshahi University (RU) during the last two and a half years seriously hampering different academic and administrative activities of the university, reports UNB.

Official sources said the last Senate meeting was held on June 23, 1996. According to the University Act 21 (1) it is compulsory to hold meeting of the Senate at least once in a year.

Some 33 representatives of teachers to the Senate were elected on last September 7. Before the election, Vice Chancellor Prof. Abdul Khaled had told journalists that the session of the Senate would be called after the election.

## Shaheed Bashir's mother waiting to meet PM for over one year

From A Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Dec 15: The mother of Shaheed Captain Bashir, a distinguished martyr of the Liberation War has been waiting eagerly for over one year to meet with the Prime Minister, but Captain Bashir rejected the Pakistani rulers' offer. At his rejection General Tikka Khan became very upset.

He ordered his men to torture him brutally. Brigadier(Retd) Abdullah is a living witness among others who saw the inhuman torture perpetrated on him by the brutal army. Brigadier Abdullah the then Major and Captain Bashir were staying in the same concentration camp in Dhaka, said Bashir's mother.

In the first phase of the liberation War Captain Bashir's name was announced by Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra of Kalurghat in chittagong. Students, young people along with police, BDR and Army men were asked to report to Captain Bashir and other young Bengalee Army officers. Rabindra Nath Tripathi, a former Deputy Principal Information Officer (DPIO) of the Press Information Department (PID) wrote an article in a Victory Day supplement of the Daily New Nation a few years ago revealing this historical event, Bashir's mother disclosed. She also disclosed that Captain Bashir shot down a helicopter of Pakistani army in the month of April.

Rizia Asir Uddin Ahmed, mother of the shaheed army officer sought permission to meet the Prime Minister long ago. She has duly submitted the necessary papers in the Prime Minister's Office, but the 75-year-old mother of Shaheed Bashir did not receive any positive response till now.

According to Rizia Ahmed, she wants to meet with the Prime Minister not for any monetary benefit, but to appeal to her for officially awarding gallantry awards posthumously to her son in recognition of his role in the Liberation War.

Bashir first hoisted the national flag of Bangladesh atop the parambulator of his baby daughter following the historic March 7 address of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971. Then he pushed the parambulator around Chittagong Cantonment. Such an act of bravery of Captain Bashir made the then Pakistani authorities furious. Many of his Bengali comrades witnessed this event. Some of them are still alive, while some of them are dead. The names of the then Captain Bhuyan, Major(Dr) Rezaur Rahman and Major Mohsin are worth mentioning. During his captivity the then Pakistani rulers offered him to become a state witness against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who

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