

News snaps

Immunisation Day observed

KHULNA, Dec 29: The Fifth National Immunisation Day was observed here recently as elsewhere in the country aimed at eradicating polio disease from the country by the year 2000, reports BSS.

Mayor of Khulna City Corporation Sheikh Tayebur Rahman inaugurated the day by feeding polio vaccine to children under five-year age group at the local Coronation Technical School centre. The eradication of polio disease programme here is being implemented by Khulna City Corporation along with a number of voluntary organisations.

Fishing begins in govt baors

JHENIDAH, Dec 29: About 574 tonnes of fresh-water fish, worth about Tk 2.10 crore, are expected to be caught from six government baors (marshes) in the district during the current season, according to an official source, reports APB.

The Baludhar, Joidia, Fatehpur, Morjad, Kathgara and Bengobindapur baors are under the control of the Jessore Beel-Baor Fish Development Project who began fish cultivation with modern methods in 1980 with financial help from World Bank. Baludhar is expected to yield 200 tonnes of fish, Joidia 110 tonnes, Fatehpur 38, Morjad 75 and Bengobindapur 121 tonnes. Fishing began in Bengobindapur on December 2. Different varieties of fish including Ruhi, Mrigel, Katla were cultivated in the baors.

Road repairing schemes taken up

HABIGANJ, Dec 29: Roads and Highways Department has taken up several schemes to repair and reconstruct different damaged roads in the district, reports UNB.

Official sources said the schemes will be implemented under the Post-flood Rehabilitation Programme at a cost of Tk 63.91 lakh. The schemes include repair and carpeting of 10 km at two places on Dhaka-Sylhet highway, repair of 2 km of Habiganj-Shayestaganj highway and repair and reconstruction of 7 km of Habiganj-Nabiganj-Sherpur road. The schemes are expected to be completed by the next month, the officials said.

Two lakh children are malnourished

CHUADANGA, Dec 29: Over two lakh children are suffering from acute malnutrition in Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga districts, according to health officials, reports APB.

At least 80 per cent of the families in the rural areas of these districts are now impoverished due to vagaries of nature. They have no source of income other than working for richer farmers and can not begin cultivation due to various factors including high prices of seeds and fertiliser.

Man killed in road accident

JHENIDAH, Dec 29: A middle-aged man was killed in an accident on Jhenidah-Kushtia road near Jhenidah Cadet College in the town on Friday, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Moinuddin, 45, of Saganna village in sadar thana. Family and hospital sources said the accident occurred when a speeding truck knocked him down while he was crossing the road. The victim was rushed to the Sadar Hospital where he died later. The driver fled the scene with his vehicle.



MYMENSINGH: Some rare photographs on our Liberation War were exhibited at a stall of the Victory Fair here. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Abdul Halim visited the stall. — Star photo

New policy to distribute bank loans

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 29: Bangladesh Agriculture Bank, regional office, Kishoreganj has taken up a new policy to make the process of distribution of loans among the genuine farmers easier, free from corruption and popular to general people, reports BSS.

The main features of the policy is union parishad's chairman, ward members, block supervisors of agriculture department and field workers of the bank will prepare the lists of possible loan seekers. These lists after approval by the thana agriculture loan committee, will be sent to respective branches of the bank. The bank will investigate the loan cases as usual. Selected persons will be given application forms to fill up in the field. These applicants will have to go to bank on a fixed day and will be given cheque. AGM Md Noorul Islam said, this procedure will be better and easier for distributing loan among the poor and illiterate farmers. They will get loan within a few days without any harassment.

Employees receiving salaries without work

PATUAKHALI, Dec 29: The operations of eight LSD godowns in the district remained suspended for long, but some 18 employees of these establishments have been receiving their salaries without any work, reports UNB.

Official sources said the godowns are at Rangabali, Barabaisdia, Char Biswas, Char Kajal, Kathaitali, Kanakdia, Tegachia and Lafirhat. Many of the godowns remained in dilapidated condition due to lack of proper maintenance and repair.

These storage facilities were abandoned due to various reasons including problems in transportation of foods. Local officials have already informed the higher authorities to take necessary measures about the employees now receiving salary against the godowns and requested for permission to reopen the LSD at Barabaisdia. But there was no response so far regarding this matter, the source said.

Case filed against UP chairman

COMILLA, Dec 29: A case was filed against the chairman of a Union Parishad (UP) alleging misappropriation of 900 kg wheat of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme, reports UNB.

The chairman of Poyalgachha union in Barura thana of the district remained absconding since the filing of the case on December 3.

The thana administration has informed the district administration about the matter and requested for order to appoint an Acting Chairman. Meanwhile, two members of the UP, Amir Hossain and Saleh Ahmed, while speaking to the journalists at the press club here on December 24, said the development works in the union have seriously been affected due to absence of the chairman.

Menace of pie dogs

JHENIDAH, Dec 29: The menace of pie dogs has assumed an alarming proportion in the district town as well as at the thana headquarters over the last few months, much to the concern of the people, reports APB.

Local people said that pie dogs bit a good number of people including some children in the haats and bazars of the district town. Especially worried are the school-going children and their parents. Many of the parents have urged the authorities concerned to take appropriate steps to curb the menace.

Two more killed in road accident

SATKHIRA, Dec 29: Two persons were killed and another twenty injured in a road accident near Kanchannagar area on Satkhira-Khulna road recently, reports BSS.

Police and hospital sources said a Khulna-bound mini bus fell into a road side ditch near Kanchannagar area. Two unidentified men died on the spot. Another 20 persons were seriously injured. The injured persons were admitted to Khulna 250-bed hospital and Satkhira Sadar Hospital. Police seized the bus.

Rokeya Dibas observed

BARISAL, Dec 29: Begum Rokeya Day was observed here in this divisional town in a befitting manner recently, reports BSS.

Different socio-cultural organisations took up various programmes to mark the day. Begum Rokeya Dibash Uddapan Committee brought out a procession in the town from the Aswini Kumar Town Hall and paraded the main roads of the town in the morning. Discussion, cultural function, publication, essay competition and prize distribution ceremony were also included in the programme. Eight NGOs and Barisal district unit of Mahila Parishad arranged discussions at their office venues on this occasion.



NARAYANGANJ: Local press club distributed relief materials among 500 flood affected families of the adjoining areas of the town recently. State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader, local MP Shamim Osman, among others, were present on the occasion. — Star photo

In Cox's Bazar dist

Over 60 pc people do not use sanitary latrines

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 29: More than 60 per cent people in rural areas of seven thanas in Cox's Bazar district do not use sanitary latrine due to lack of proper initiative, said local sources.

According to the reports, about nine lakh people live in rural areas of seven thanas in the district. Less than two thirds of them have no access to proper sanitary latrines, an unofficial survey report said. Majority of the villagers discharge human waste in the bushes, barren land, bank of the canal, pond or river and crop land. As a result, human waste mixes with water of canals, ponds, river, beels and pollutes environment.

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) sources said they are supplying water sealed latrines equipped from their thana offices at a low cost. But due to lack of awareness people of the rural areas do not show interest to set

up water sealed latrines in their houses.

Ansarul Haque, a social worker of Matar Bari village in Mohekskhali thana told this correspondent that a large number of children belonging

1,30,000 fries, cash distributed among flood victims

MAGURA, Dec 29: The government has distributed 1,30,000 fish fries and Tk one lakh as cash among the flood-affected fish farmers of the district under the post-flood rehabilitation programme, reports UNB.

The Fisheries Department distributed fries and money among 149 farmers affected during the flood. Of the fries, 60,000 were distributed in Mohammadpur, 40,000 in Sripur, 22,500 in Sadar and 7,500 in Salikha thanas of the district, officials said.

to poor families of the village areas do not use latrines at all.

Some local leaders in village areas of Teknaf thana said, some families in their areas use kutcha latrines which mostly stand on the banks of rivers, beels and canals. By allowing human waste to fall into rivers, beels and canals such latrines pollute the water.

Local doctors said, due to lack of good sanitation rural people including children suffer from diarrhoeal diseases around the year.

DPHE observed Sanitation Week throughout the country every year, but the rural people who live in poverty are not actually motivated for using sanitary latrines and safe water due to lack of direct contact with that class of people, they alleged.

Local leaders and experts have appealed to the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for motivating the poor rural people for good sanitation.

Prices of essentials up in Gopalganj dist

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Dec 29: Prices of essential commodities including rice, pulse, fish, meat, flour, vegetables, salt, oil and species have shot up in the markets of four thanas of Gopalganj district during the holy month of Ramadan.

Reports say that the low income groups of landless peasants, day-labourers and rich-shawpullers are the worst sufferers.

It was reported from a survey conducted in the fish and mutton markets of Gopalganj town, hilsa fish is being sold between Tk 150 and Tk 130 per kilogram (kg), ruhi is being sold between Tk 180 and Tk 150 per kg, magur fish between Tk 150 and Tk 130 per kg, koi per kori between Tk 300 and Tk 250 (big size) and other fish between Tk 110 and Tk 90 per kg.

Price of one kilogram beef

varies from Tk 70 to Tk 80 and one kg mutton varies from Tk 120 to Tk 130.

In the markets of the district prices of the daily essentials are: Rice Tk 17 and Tk 24, flour Tk 12 and Tk 15, mustered oil Tk 65 and Tk 75, soyabean oil Tk 54 and Tk 56, salt Tk 10 and 12, milk Tk 20 and Tk 25 per kg, molasses Tk 40 and Tk 45 per kg and date Tk 45 and Tk 50.

Price of sugar has increased in the markets abnormally. The low quality Indian sugar is being sold between Tk 32 and Tk 35 in the markets. Indian sugar is coming to different markets of the district by smuggling.

Prices of all types of pulses including motor, masur have also increased abnormally. One kilogram of motor pulse is being sold between Tk 35 and Tk 38. Masur pulse is being sold be-

tween Tk 44 and Tk 46, according to the market observers.

According to the reports, prices of all types of vegetables including brinjal, potato, green chilly, onion have also shot up. One kilogram of brinjal is being sold between Tk 15 and Tk 16, potato is being sold between Tk 12 and Tk 15, green chilly between Tk 16 and Tk 18 per kg and onion is being sold between Tk 48 and Tk 55.

Local businessman Shadat Hossain said to this correspondent, price of daily essentials rose up due to shortage of supply. But reliable sources said that scrupulous traders have been creating an artificial crisis in the local markets to make profit.

The administration failed to take effective steps to arrest the trend of price-hike.

Diarrhoea claims 6 more lives in Joypurhat

JOYPURHAT, Dec 29: Diarrhoea that broke out in an alarming proportion in the district claimed six more lives and affected 2,000 others in last seven days till Monday, official sources said, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Abdul Matin, 69, and Chhatron, 40, of Bandhu union in Sadar thana and Asmatun Begum, 43, of Aolai union, Dhiren Chandra Barman, 29, and Riazuddin, 56, of Kushumba union and Sharmin Akhtar, 40, of Amia Rasulpur union in Panchbibi thana.

According to Civil Surgeon Office, since the outbreak of the water-borne disease a month back the death toll now stood at 20 and affected 5,000.

The disease is engulfing fast in new areas creating panic among the people. Panchbibi is the worst affected thana as 17 patients died only in the thana during the period.

Hospitals and health complexes cannot cope with the patients as everyday 30 to 35 patients are coming for treatment.

Official sources said medicines and oral saline packets are being distributed among the affected people to combat the menace.

Flood damaged roads yet to be repaired

COMILLA, Dec 29: Many roads damaged by the devastating flood this year in Daudkandi, Homna, Chandina, Muradnagar and Devidwar thanas of the district have not yet been repaired causing serious problem for the people, reports UNB.

The roads are under Roads and Highways Department and Local Government Engineering Department.

Local people alleged that the plying of the vehicles has become hazardous due to lack of repair and proper maintenance. The damaged roads include 18-km Homna-Gouripur road, Gouripur-Homna road, road between Homna sadar to Ghagutia launch ghat, 1.5-km road from Dhaka-Chittagong highway to Daudkandi Sadar, Gouripur to Naiarbar on Gouripur-Matlab road and Companiganj-Nabinagar road.

Three commit suicide in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent KUSHTIA, Dec 29: Three people, including a housewife have allegedly committed suicide in the district last week, reports UNB.

Police said Nazmul, 25, son of Chani Biswas of village Batikanara in Kumarkhali thana, took poison following a family feud on December 21. He was rushed to the local Thana Health Complex. There he succumbed on the following day.

Doly Khatun, 25, wife of Sohel Islam of Ziaraki and Selim, 20, son of Shahadat Hossain of Ballapur in Sadar thana also committed suicide by taking endrin following family trouble.

The bodies were sent to morgue for autopsy. Separate UD cases were registered with the respective police station.

Cattle disease breaks out in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Dec 29: Cattle disease has broken out in an alarming proportion in Symanagar and Kalliganj thanas of the district, reports UNB.

Some 50 cattle died and 2000 were attacked with the diseases during the last month, farmers said.

The disease locally as known 'Khura' is spreading in new areas creating panic among the farmers. The affected cattle can not eat and move as the mouth and feet are infected with germs.

Local farmers alleged that the preventive and curative measures taken by the Livestock Department are not adequate. The disease has broken out due to malnutrition caused by fodder shortage.

Moreover, scarcity of medicine has been prevailing in the livestock office since long.

The farmers urged the authorities to ensure adequate supply of medicine to prevent further spread of the disease.



KHAGRACHHARI: Brick-field owners in the district using firewood instead of coal. For this purpose they are cutting trees indiscriminately resulting in environmental degradation. — Star photo

Scarcity of wheat seeds in Netrakona district

NETRAKONA, Dec 29: Scarcity of seeds has been hampering the cultivation of wheat in 10 thanas of the district during the current season, reports UNB.

The thanas are Sadar, Atpara, Madon, Kendua, Mohanganj, Barhatta, Kalkamanda, Purbadhala, Durgapur and Khalajuri.

Sources said the farmers of the district have been facing serious problems in collecting wheat seeds. The price of seeds has already gone beyond the reach of the poor and marginal farmers.

Many flood-affected cultivators could not cultivate wheat this year though they were interested in it to make up the losses caused by the recent deluge.

Their losses are heavy because a vast area remained uncultivated during the transplanted Aman season for want of seedlings and subsequently the production target could not be achieved due to massive pest attack, said agriculture officials here.

The Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a programme of wheat cultivation on 19,000 hectares of land in the district.

More than 5000 metric tons of wheat seeds would be required for achieving the production target in the district during the current season, officials said.

The farmers feared that wheat production would be affected due to shortage of seed supply.

Fate of Chitra-Nabaganga Irrigation Project uncertain

JESSORE, Dec 29: The fate of Chitra-Nabaganga rivers Irrigation Project covering croplands in Magura and Narail districts has become uncertain after 23 years of its beginning, reports UNB.

According to sources the project was undertaken in 1975 at a cost of Tk three crore.

Kuwaiti Government provided the financial assistance for the project, which was aimed at bringing 70 sq kilometre area of land on both the sides of the Chitra and Nabaganga rivers under irrigation for boosting crop production.

The entire area was divided into 306 agricultural blocks to help enable the tillers to cultivate their land easily with the help of power pumps and other mechanical facilities.

But it failed to yield any benefit for the growers despite immense possibilities. Lack of proper planning and designing

have been identified as the main stumbling blocks to it, said the sources.

Lack of proper maintenance, negligence and corruption cause damages to the expensive irrigation machinery like power pump, electric poles and power connection appliances.

Landless deprived of agri-loan

RAJSHAHI, Dec 29: The landless share-croppers of the district have been deprived of agriculture loan under the post-flood rehabilitation programme of the government, reports UNB.

A source said about one lakh share-croppers in nine thanas, who cultivate the land of others, have been hit hard by the refusal of bank officials for agriculture loan.



FARIDPUR: Habibur Rahman, Deputy General Manager of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Faridpur zone handing over loan to the farmers at Char Haziganj under the post-flood rehabilitation programme. — Star photo

Regular operation of Barisal radio station yet to start

BARISAL, Dec 29: The regular operation of the radio station here could not be started even after the completion of the construction work and commissioning of the equipment, reports UNB.

The work of Barisal station of Bangladesh Betar started in 1994. All the construction works including station bhaban, security and residential buildings and relay mast tower have already been completed.

Transmission from the station on experimental basis began from the end of 1997 following the commissioning of the equipment. Presently two hours of transmission is going on every day at 131 metre band

and 1287 kilohertz medium wave to keep the equipment operative, said the officials of the engineering department.

The authorities are broadcasting recorded programmes from the station for about a year, because there was no formal inauguration of the station, said a source.

The project period ended in June 1998 and all the components of the project profile have been completed. The only remaining work is the setting up of the central air-conditioning plant and the source said it was yet to arrive from abroad.

Besides the completion of the construction and other works, appointment of officials

and employees is also in the final stage.

Some 17 officials and employees including a Regional Director and a Regional Engineer have already joined their work at the station. Nine more will join very soon, said the source.

The total number of officials and employees for the station is 90.

Assistant Regional Director of the station said it was now ready for starting full operation. The only remaining work is the formal inauguration, he added.

The station will broadcast national as well as locally produced programmes.



PABNA: Four-day Bijoy Mela concluded here recently. Photo shows (L) young artistes rendering patriotic songs (R) Advocate Amzad Hossain, an organiser of the Liberation War and an Awami League leader delivering his address. — Star photo