

## News snaps

### Allocation for reconstruction of houses

COMILLA, Jan 9: The government has allocated Tk 85 lakh for the reconstruction of houses damaged in the district during the recent flood, reports UNB.

Official sources said the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief allocated Tk 75 lakh for the flood affected distressed families in 12 thanas. Besides, Tk 10 lakh was allocated from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to help 17,000 families for the repair and reconstruction of their damaged houses. The devastating flood damaged at least 20,000 houses completely and 1,50,000 houses partially.

### Corruption in anti-corruption bureau

FENI, Jan 9: Departmental proceedings are on against an employee of the Anti-Corruption Bureau here for his getting job with a fake certificate, reports UNB.

The accused was identified as Abdul Khaleq, a Sub-Inspector. Official sources said Khaleq got a job in the Jute department and joined his post with a fake certificate some years back. He was later absorbed in the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The man was transferred to the district as Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) and was later promoted to the post of Sub-Inspector (SI). But the authorities recently unearthed the matter and started proceedings against him. The case is now being investigated by the Divisional Deputy Director of the Bureau in Chittagong.

### Six shops looted

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 9: Dacoits took away jewellery worth over three lakh taka from six shops at Sarishakola bazaar at Shahjadpur Monday night, reports APB.

Police said, the dacoits numbering about 20, tied the night guard of the market and then looted the shops one by one after midnight. Police arrested three persons in connection with the incident. They are Sohail, 25, Ainal Haq, 45, and Altaf, 26.

### Cross-border smuggling on rise

BHERAMARA, Jan 9: Cross-border smuggling through the 22-mile Padma river belt in Kushtia district has increased to an alarming proportion, reports APB.

Local people told APB that in spite of a good number of border check posts in the area, smuggling goes on uninterruptedly right under the nose of the law enforcing agencies. The smugglers mainly use Meghna, Insafnagar, Raita and Baromail ghats as transit points. Huge quantities of urea fertiliser, Hilsa fish, electronic goods and chemicals are smuggled to India. Goods smuggled in include salt, sugar, sarees, fruits.

### Shortage of pry teachers

SHARIATPUR, Jan 9: Primary education in six thanas of the district is being greatly hampered as 164 posts of teachers are lying vacant in schools for many years, reports APB.

Official sources told that of the vacant posts, 45 are of headmasters and 119 of assistant teachers. Primary schools in Shariatpur Sadar thana needs 11 headmasters and 26 teachers, Naria thana 12 headmasters and 34 teachers, Badarganj thana eight headmasters and 18 teachers, Damuddah thana five headmasters and 15 teachers, Jagira thana six headmasters and 17 teachers and Goshohat thana needs six headmasters and nine teachers.

### Distribution of text books begins

COS'S BAZAR, Jan 9: Free distribution of text books among primary school students in the district began on Monday, reports APB.

A total of 11,17,000 books are needed for 652 primary schools in seven thanas and two pourasava areas but only 6,26,000 have been supplied so far, sources in the District Education Office said. They said that the authorities were earlier informed of the requirements.

### Autopsy of 368 dead bodies performed

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 9: Autopsy of at least 368 dead bodies have been performed at the sadar hospital here during the last year, reports UNB.

The bodies have been sent to the hospital from 13 thanas of the district and from Sadar and Bhairab Railway thanas and Nandal thana in Mymensingh district. Hospital sources said autopsies of 21 bodies were performed in January, 24 in February, 41 in March, 21 in April, 37 each in May and June, 29 in July, 35 in August, 50 in September, 31 in October, 23 in November and 19 in December. Autopsies of 319 bodies were performed at the hospital in 1996 and 316 in 1997.

### Free books distributed

COMILLA, Jan 9: Distribution of books free of cost among the students of primary schools began here recently, reports BSS.

The programme was inaugurated by district primary education officer Sadeka Begum in sadar, Burichang and Brahmanpara thanas separately. Books will be distributed among the students of 2,096 government and non-government primary schools of 12 thanas under the district as per government rules.

### TLM programme progressing

GAZIPUR, Jan 9: About five lakh illiterate people here will soon get rid of the curse under Total Literacy Movement (TLM) organised by Aurunnojil Gazipur, official sources said, reports BSS.

The TLM programme, guided by Gazipur district administration, started in 1,164 schools in different villages under 44 unions and two municipalities. The movement aims at ensuring 100 per cent literacy in the district within 1999. The organisers recently appointed teachers for running TLM courses in selected 1,164 schools.



NATORE: Leaders of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad exchanging views with the journalists recently. They exchanged views on uniform family code law reforms. — Star photo

### Patuakhali jail beset with problems

PATUAHALI, Jan 9: The Patuakhali District Jail is beset with many problems, mainly lack of space and proper sanitation, reports AB.

There are 337 prisoners including 13 women and 13 Burmese fishermen in the jail against its capacity to accommodate 286 people. The food is of very poor quality and not adequate for the prisoners. Water supply is irregular and toilets and latrines always remain filthy. Despite repeated complaints to the jailer, the situation has not improved, sources alleged.

### Works on 723 uplift schemes completed

RANGPUR, Jan 9: Works on 723 uplift schemes under test relief programme have been completed in all the eight thanas and two Pourashavas here during the last six months of the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Official sources said a total of 991 metric tons of wheat were spent for the implementation of these schemes. The schemes included reconstruction of roads and embankment, re-excavation of canals, beels and derelict ponds and earth filling. Meanwhile, works on 198 schemes under Food for Works Programme (FWP) are progressing fast. About 2,525 metric tons of wheat have been sanctioned for the execution of these schemes, official sources said.

About 32 per cent of the work has been completed so far. The schemes included construction and reconstruction of roads and embankments, educational institutions, playgrounds, graveyards and earth filling.

### Agri-loans distributed

MAGURA, Jan 9: Department of Social Welfare has distributed interest-free agricultural loans of over Tk 1.25 crore among 10,000 destitute people with a view to making them economically self-reliant, reports APB.

The credit has been disbursed under such heads as poultry farming, cattle rearing, fishery projects, small-scale business ventures, tree plantation, cottage industry, procurement of rickshaw vans, and the like. The credit money was distributed among 646 in Sadar thana, 2,512 in Mohamt pur, 3,157 in Shalikhia and 3,684 people in Sirpur, the Deputy Director of the Department of Magura, told. According to official estimate, as many as 10,000 destitute families of the district would directly benefit from this credit programme.

# 20 killed in Khulna last year

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 9: Twenty persons including political leaders, teachers, contractors, women, young girls and children were killed during the last year.

All these murders were pre-planned, reliable sources said.

According to a source of KMP, none was murdered in January. But on February 5 Chhatra Maitree leader Aloke Kumar Dey was gunned down near his Daulatpur residence. On the night of February 24, a young girl Jasmin, 16, was raped to death at Royermahal in Khalishpur thana.

One February 25, Tajul Islam, a student of technical school succumbed to head injuries in sadra hospital after being severely hit by the cricket bat by one of his friends at Khulna Stadium.

On March 14, Abdul Hakim, a member of Bahirdia Union Parishad in Fakirhat thana

was poisoned to death in the residence of Dr Mahbubur Rahman on Ahsan Ahmed Road in Kotwali thana.

At about 11 pm on March 25, a youngman Jamil was gunned down by terrorists near Kapatara Market at Daulatpur.

On April 5, Anu Shaikh, a member of Town Defence Party was stabbed to death by muggers near Pallimongal High School.

On April 6, Rafiqul Islam, 36, a first class contractor was killed in bomb attack by unidentified assailants at Royer Mahal in Khalishpur PS.

None was murdered in the months of May, June and July.

On August 5, a boy named Ripon, 9, was strangled to death in the residence of a vegetable vendor Monir at Poipara in Sonadanga thana.

On August 8, Jubo Dal activist Babul Ghazi, 30, was

gunned down by some of his political rivals at Gallamari bridge.

On August 15, unidentified terrorists killed a young housewife named Nupur, 25, in her residence at Royermahal in Khalishpur thana.

On August 24, terrorists killed four persons by spraying bullets while they were sleeping at night on the roof of a house at Gaikurh in Daulatpur thana. Those killed were later identified as Porina Khokon, 23, Abdur Rahim, 24, Asadul, 22, and Ibrahim, 22.

On the same evening, Anowar Hossain Kamal, 27, Joint Convenor of Khalishpur thana unit of BCL was gunned down at Khalishpur following an intra-party feud.

No new was murdered in September.

At about 9 pm on October 5, Jubo League activist Jamal, 19,

was beaten to death near Erfan market in Sonadanga thana.

On the night of October 6, Ramzan Ali, an employee of Khulna Power Station was also beaten to death by some of his friends.

On October 7, a school teacher named Shagar Kumar Mondol was stabbed to death in the staff quarter of Daulatpur Agriculture College.

On the night of October 18, JCD central Vice President Wahiduzzaman Chanchal was brutally killed in the residence of ML leader late Mohammad Ali of West Baniachamar.

At about 8 am on October 31, a vegetable vendor Jamshed, 53, was stabbed to death by a Jubo League activist at Bagmara in Kotwali thana.

But fact remains that investigation of murder cases have been making any headway.



SHERPUR: Valuable white stones are being wasted due to lack of proper maintenance. Local people usually collect stones through unscientific methods. Afterwards they pile it up on land in a careless manner. The picture was taken recently from Garo hills in Jhenaigati thana. — Star photo by Ratan Chowdhury

## 80pc young men of Chuadanga town are phensidyl addicts

CHUADANGA, Jan 9: Nearly 80 per cent young men of this town have become phensidyl addicts, according to unofficial estimates made by some local social organisations and NGOs, reports APB.

Around 20 per cent of the addicts are women and young girls.

A good percentage of the addicts are educated youths who even take recourse to selling moveable assets of their houses to take phensidyl.

Addicts call phensidyl with such symbolic names as 'Dile', 'Fency Maal', 'Jinish', 'Shab Thik Achhey', 'Bholanath' and 'Nishi Raat'.

A section of businessmen and traders have been getting their supply of phensidyl from across the border and netting good profit.

According to local people, thousands of bottles of phen-

sidyl have been entering into the country through borders in Darsana, Jiban Nagar, Dhopa Khali, Khalishpur, Rajpur, Singhnagar, Santoshpur, Karpashdanga, Thakurpur and Munshipur.

Some influential political leaders and law enforcing agency personnel were involved in the smuggling, they claimed.

Recent drives against smuggling of phensidyl proved ineffective, mostly owing to the corrupt practices by some members of the law enforcing agencies, it was alleged.

One bottle of phensidyl is being sold at Tk 80 to 90. It is now available even at small tea stalls.

There are at least 30 phensidyl selling spots in Chuadanga town. These include Jiban Nagar bus stand, Chandmari Math, Pura Para, Baro Bazar, Daulatdia bus stand, Ra-

hela Khatun School ground, Government Girls' School ground, Srimanta Town Hall, Masjid Para, Jhenidah bus stand area, Huq Para, Farm Para, Jafarpur Government College ground and Shantipara Ambagan.

Some influential persons, including political elements, are also allegedly operating clandestine phensidyl business.

Smuggled bottles of phensidyl are sent to different destinations on board inter-district buses.

The Department of Narcotics Control has been playing the role of a silent spectator. Officials of this department said they were not in a position to raid the dens of hoarders and sellers of this banned item for want of legal backing.

The department is also not adequately staffed, they said.

## Indian adulterated pesticides have flooded rural markets

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 9: Indian adulterated pesticides have flooded the rural markets of the northern districts, reports UNB.

According to local Agriculture Department, the powder insecticides are illegally being smuggled into the country through different border points and its wide scale application is responsible for the erosion in

fertility of land.

One type of insecticides known as 'gama' is a patent of recently banned US pesticide 'habta clor', it added.

A local agronomist said the 'habta clor' was particularly suggested to use on sugarcane fields and tea gardens to control the white ant menace.

It is alleged that unscrupulous traders have been forcing the growers to use this pesticide on their potato and winter crops alluring them for achieving better harvest.

Agriculture officials said use of adulterated pesticides in land not only affect the fertility of soil but also the health of people who use foodgrains or vegetables of that field.

Two other Indian banned pesticides named 'Konahex' and 'Thiodin' are being sold at random in the labels of 'Agricultural Brand'.

After investigation, it has also been revealed that the chemicals that are used in the insecticides are harmful for human body.

A vested quarter is supplying home made adulterated pesticides side by side the Indian ones to the markets of the northern regions for making windfall profit.

Farmers have urged the authorities concerned to take punitive action against those who are involved in such heinous acts.

### Pest-attack on 'Rabi' crops

MADARIPUR, Jan 9: Massive pest attack on 'rabi' crops in the district has created panic among the growers, reports UNB.

A farmer of Laxmiganj village of Sadar thana said his tomato and wheat fields have been invaded by the pest for the last 20-25 days and the prospect of good harvest is bleak.



MYMENSINGH: A massive winter vegetables cultivation programme has been taken up recently in Trishal thana. — Star photo

## Consumption of adulterated spices

# 3,000 suffering from intestinal diseases

NARSINGDI, Jan 9: About 3,000 people have fallen prey to various intestinal diseases due to consumption of adulterated spices which are usually sold in powdered form in almost all the huts and bazaars of the district, reports APB.

Health Department sources said these spices, available in colorful and attractive packets, do not have the approval of the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

Nowadays demand for powdered spices, which save the labour of grinding, has gone up considerably and the unscrupulous traders and businessmen have taken full advantage of this preference.

Many of them have been preparing and processing these

spices in dirty and unhealthy premises and mixing them up with all sorts of adulterants and colouring materials which are not only inedible but also pose as veritable health hazard.

Allegations are there that some of them mix crushed bricks with powdered dry chilies.

People buy those because they are sold at low prices, compared to pure and genuine ones. They are sold in packets weighing from 100 grammes to one kilogrammes and are widely available.

The concerned authorities have so far not taken any action against the malpractice despite widespread complaints and sufferings of a vast number of people.

## Illegal power connection

# Govt deprived on Tk 20 lakh every year in Kushtia

BHERAMARA, Jan 9: The government is reported to be deprived of Tk 20 lakh per year due to illegal power connections in Kushtia's three thanas — Bheramara, Mirpur and Daulatpur, reports APB.

Some unscrupulous employees of the Power Development Board (PDB), in connivance with local authorities, allegedly give illegal connections which are usually attached to the metres of genuine customers. Hidden consumers' bills are added to their own, locals complained.

Dishonest PDB personnel have under-hand dealings with hundreds of mill-owners, industrialists, businessmen and households.

It has been reported that they earn Tk 3-5 lakh per month from the beneficiaries of these illegal connections.

Sufferers said many PDB employees and officials did not carry out their duties properly. Some of them alleged that during the last two years a huge

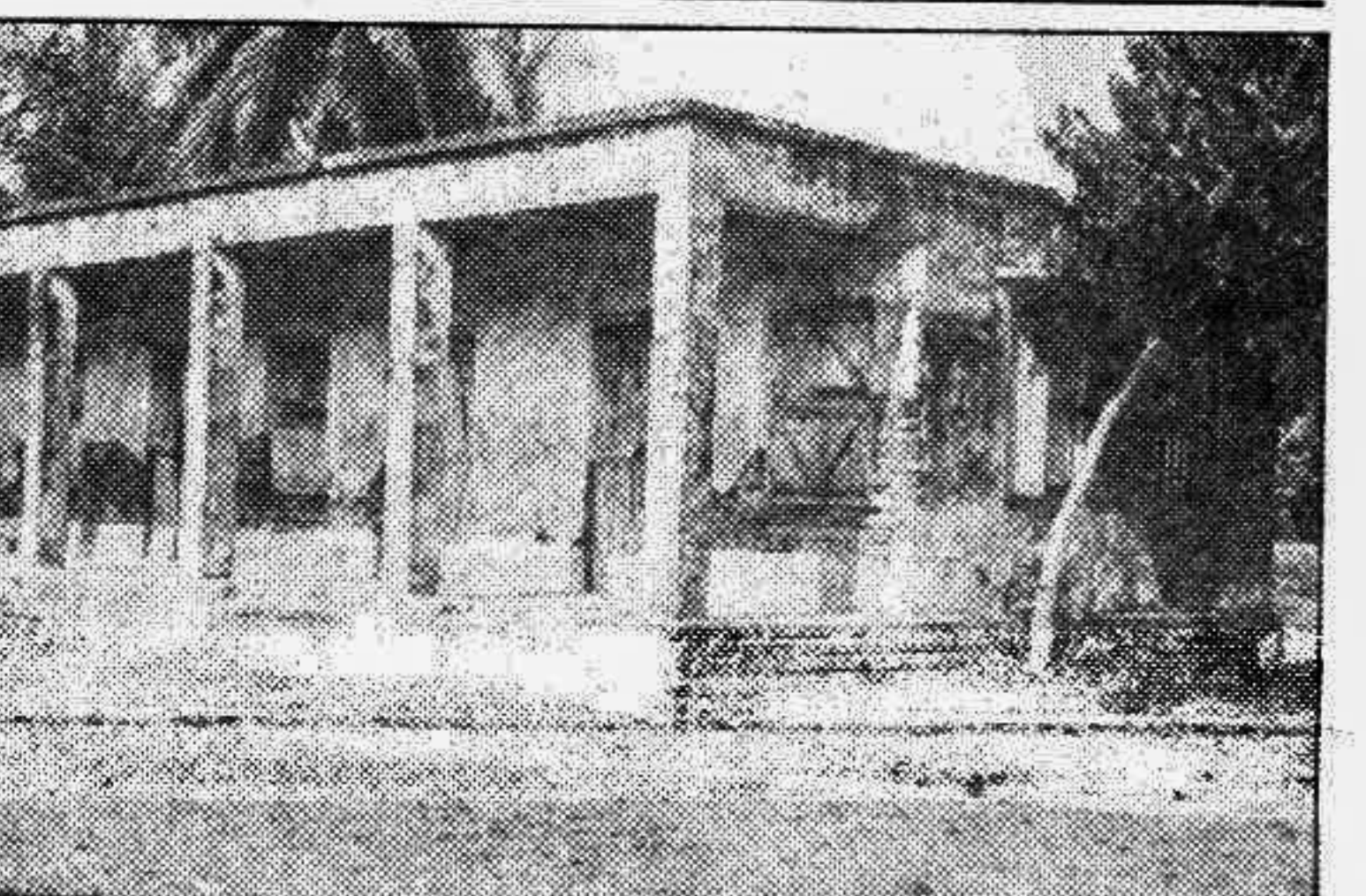
quantity of electrical equipment like wire, cables, metres and other spare parts were sold out in the black-market.

Hundreds of outraged consumers have protested against highly inflated bills of PDB, but the officials refused to take any action. Locals urged the concerned authorities to crack down on the shoddy deal by power board staff.

## Three with smuggled cumin held

NAOGAON, Jan 9: CID police arrested three people along with 220 kg smuggled Indian cumin on Friday from Sahapur area of Dharmohat thana here, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Erfan Ali, Raisuddin and Mohammad Aamir of Gopalpur village in Badalgachhi thana.



JHENIDAH: Dilapidated condition of Bogura Union Parishad building in Sailkupa thana. It may collapse at any moment. — Star photo



JHENIDAH: A graveyard where seven martyrs of the Liberation War are sleeping. It remained unprotected for a long time. Recently Sailkupa thana administration has given a fencing around it. — Star photo



JHENIDAH: VGF wheat being distributed among the distressed people recently at Bogura Union Parishad. — Star photo

## Rice price not showing any downward trend

NARSINGDI, Jan 9: Price of rice is not showing any downward trend although harvest of new 'Aman' paddy is almost complete in different areas of the district, reports APB.

Coarse varieties of rice are being sold at their previous prices of Tk 15 to Tk 16 per kg. Finer quality of 'Aman Pajam' is being sold at Tk 19 to Tk 20 per kg while the medium quality is available at Tk 18/19 per kg. Kataribhog is being sold at Tk 28 to Tk 32 per kg.

Prices of vegetables declined somewhat but those of other food items rose slightly.

A 2-kg packet of flour is being sold at Tk 31/32. Gram is being sold at 30/32 per kg. Locally produced musur (pulse) is sold at Tk 43/44 per kg but the imported variety is slightly cheaper. Mug is being sold at Tk 42/44 per kg and Khesari at Tk 18/20 per kg.

Potatoes are being sold at Tk 12 per kg. Prices of various sweet water fish registered a nominal rise, but those of beef, mutton and chicken remained unchanged. So are the prices of eggs.

## Eight including 5 Rajshahi College students held

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 9: Eight people, including five students of Rajshahi University College, were arrested from different parts of the northern city on Thursday, reports APB.

Mothar police in a midnight drive held six students of the college from a drug den near the campus.

Hasibur Rahman, Shafiul Alam, Mahfuzur Rahman, Golan Hadi Mia, Mahfuz Akhter Robin and an outsider terrorist, Berhan were arrested in a drunken state, police said.

Police informed that the addicts were also involved in other anti-social activities. They were sent to court jail.

Mothar police arrested an unidentified terrorist at night. Sarwar Jahan was nabbed with firearms and smuggled sares from RDA Market area in Boalia thana in the afternoon.

A case was lodged with Boalia police in this connection.

## Acute shortage of teachers in SBMC

BARISAL, Jan 9: Academic activities are being greatly hampered in the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College (SBMC) due to acute shortage of teachers, reports APB.

Though there are 20 posts of professor, 26 of associate professor, 32 of assistant professor and 34 posts of lecturer, only three professors, 13 associate professors, 28 assistant professors and 16 lecturers are working in the college.

But appointment of most of them has not been regularised in several years.

The students of SBMC are facing great problems, but the Health Directorate has done nothing so far to appoint more teachers, rather, they have transferred some senior lecturers from the college.

Informed sources said most of the medical colleges outside Dhaka are also suffering from shortage of teachers.

## Deadlock in communication system in Madaripur

MADARIPUR, Jan 9: The Madaripur-Shibchar road link is yet to be re-established causing boundless sufferings for the travelling of 12 lakh people of the area here in the last six months, reports UNB.

Movement of vehicles on the road remained stopped from last July as massive damages were done to the road by the recent devastating flood and collapse of the Bilpadma Bridge by the strong current of the flood waters.

The Silarchar Choudhury Hat Bridge of the road also suddenly caved in after its post-flood emergency repairing. No steps were taken to repair these bridges causing deadlock in communication system.

Local leaders urged the authority concerned to take immediate steps to take up the necessary works for the interest of the commuters.

## Drastic cleansing drive of Jessore police

JESSORE, Jan 9: Police in the district are now living in a state of fear. Some of them have been sacked and many have been charge-sheeted or closed, reports APB.

Official sources said this long over-due attempt at house-cleansing started soon after the present Police Super took over charge in Jessore in last October.

The new SP has so far taken action against 50 officers and constables on charges of corruption, dereliction of duties and other irregularities.

Already three constables — Islam (No 230), Saidur Rahman (No 179) and Motaleb (No 199) — have been discharged. They were accused of allowing an infamous terrorist, Altaf, to escape from custody.

GRO Abu Bakar, constables Atiar Rahman and Oliur Rahman also lost their jobs for reportedly allowing Batul, a Sar-

bahara activist, to flee. Shah Alam and Ahmedul-lah, OCs of Monirampur and Bagharpara thanas, were closed for failing to improve the law and order situation in the respective thanas.

About 17 corruption charges have been brought against 12 SIs and vigorous investigations are also on against a number of others, the sources said.

The accused officers are Aminul Islam Shahin, Sohan, Mahbubur Rahman, Farukh Hossain, Nasir Uddin, Mizanur Rahman, Belayet Hossain, Emadul Haq, Nazrul Islam, Akkas Ali, Lutfar Rahman, Sekandar Ali, Abdul Mannan, Saidur Rahman, Abdul Hakim and Shahidur Rahman.

This is for the first time such a drastic cleansing operation is being carried out and local people hope that they would be able to live in peace in the district.