

News snaps

Tributes paid to Bangabandhu

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 15: Speakers at a discussion meeting paid glowing tribute to the memory of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the members of his shaheed family on January 10, reports BSS.

The discussion meeting was organised by Narayanganj city unit of Awami League to mark the Home Coming Day of the Father of the Nation who returned to liberated Bangladesh from Pakistani jail in 1972 on this day. Presided over by Ghiasuddin Ahmed, President, Narayanganj City Awami League, it was addressed, among others, by advocate Khokhon Sahas General Secretary, Narayanganj City Awami League Anisur Rahman Dipu, Organising Secretary, Wazed Ali Khokon, Joint Secretary, Gopinath Das, office secretary and Kamal Ahmed, publicity secretary.

Workshops on modern cultivation

JHALAKATI, Jan 15: Three separate workshops on modern cultivation were held at Jhalakati Sadar, Rajapur and Kanchhalia thanas on Sunday, reports APB.

The participants were acquainted with hybrid seeds, irrigation and balanced use of fertiliser. They were also given elaborate concept on cultivation of sunflower, wheat, maize, and mungdal. A total of 76 people from the three thanas took part in the workshops organised by Agricultural Extension Department.

Teen commits suicide

JAMALPUR, Jan 15: A teenage girl allegedly committed suicide at her residence in Golapbagh area of the town recently, reports UNB.

Police said Mithila, 14, a student of class nine of Jamalpur Government Girls' High School, hanged herself at her bathroom. She allegedly took her life when her mother rebuked her for doing bad in the annual examination. She was rushed to the General Hospital where the attending doctors declared her dead.

Tk 5.65cr road repairing programme

JESSORE, Jan 15: The Roads and Highways Department has taken up a programme for repair and reconstruction of 18 roads in Jessore district at a cost of Tk 5.65 crore during the current fiscal year, reports APB.

An amount of Tk 1.50 crore will be spent for Jessore-Monirampur-Chuknagar road and Tk 50 lakh each for Jessore-Benapole and Jessore-Khajura roads, sources in the department said. The other roads listed for repair include the Nilganj-Nehalpur-Kapalia road, Monirampur-Jhikargachha road, Benapole-Bahadurpur-Porapara road, Benapole Customs Colony road, Rajganj-Chakla-Khoradah-Ferry ghat road, Monirampur-Khoradah Bazar road, Monirampur-Sundali-Noapara bazar road, Mohanpur-Chinetala bazar road, Monirampur-Kullitla-Noapara road, Swadhinata Sarak at Jessore Cantonment and Nilganj-Khajura-Roypur-Bagharpara road.

Three tribals arrested

RANGAMATI, Jan 15: Police arrested three tribal people from Chandroghona and recovered three locally made guns and ammunition from their possession recently, reports UNB.

The arrested persons were identified as Thoy Marna of village Gobangchhari, Inko Thoy Marna of Gobangchhari and Tha Sing Marna of Tharasa village. They were challenged by patrol police for their suspicious movement.

Damaged instts yet to be repaired

PABNA, Jan 15: Academic life of the students of 592 educational institutions, damaged by the recent devastating flood, in the district has become uncertain as those could not yet be repaired for lack of funds, reports UNB.

The extent of damage of the institutions caused by the flood was said to be Tk 7.87 crore. The institutions included 357 primary schools, 142 secondary schools, 70 madrasahs and 23 colleges. Officials said they had appealed to the higher authorities for funds to reconstruct the institutions. "But our appeals fell on the deaf ears," said an official.

Tk 78.61cr sanctioned for bridge

BARISAL, Jan 15: The government has sanctioned Tk 78.61 crore for the construction of a 918-metre long and 10-metre wide bridge over the river Gabkhari in the sadar thana of Jhalakati district in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) of office sources, this fifth Bangladesh-China friendship bridge is being constructed with the financial and technical assistance of the Government of China. The construction of the bridge which began in the current year is expected to be completed by 2000-2001 fiscal.

Member of outlawed party killed

KUSHTIA, Jan 15: A member of an outlawed party was killed and 20 others were injured in a gunfight between two groups at Kursha village in Mirpur thana recently, reports APB.

Police identified the dead as Ajab, 28, of the same village. The injured could not be identified. They were taken to different hospitals and clinics. Police said the two rival groups of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party clashed at dawn for supremacy in the area.

Shortage of IRRI, Boro seeds

JESSORE, Jan 15: The cultivation target of IRRI and 'Boro' paddy in 10 districts of south-western region is facing setback due to shortage of seedbeds and absence of necessary seeds here during the current season, reports UNB.

Official sources said government supplied 559 metric tons of seeds against the total requirement of 20,410 tons so far which was 2.73 per cent of demand in the district. Besides, the seedbeds were planned on 13,792 hectares of land, but only 4,071 hectares could be brought under cultivation so far, the sources added. Meanwhile, the total cultivation target of IRRI-Boro in 10 districts of south-western region has been fixed at 2,75,858 hectares.

Brickfields threaten environment

JHENIDAH, Jan 15: Brickfields have mushroomed in the district causing a threat to the environment and hampering fertility of arable lands, reports APB.

Brickfield owners are burning thousands of tonnes of firewood in the kilns, causing indiscriminate felling of trees. There are 37 big brickfields in the district. Innumerable smaller ones operate seasonally. Knowledgeable sources said that about 20,000 hectares of croplands have been taken over by brick manufacturers. Farmers said that fertility and productivity of the lands around these brickfields are hampered greatly and they have to keep those fallow.

Engineers deprived of salaries

CHANDPUR, Jan 15: As many as 422 engineers and office assistants of Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education have not been getting their salaries for about 18 months, reports APB.

The engineers and office assistants, 16 of them belonging to the Chandpur Zone that includes Chandpur and Luxmipur districts, are passing their days amid untold sufferings, said Sangram parishad leaders of the zone. The Sangram Parishad leaders - Aminul Islam, Micheal and Emdad - expressed their grievances at a press conference at Chandpur Press Club here recently. Despite their hardships, they said, all of them were working sincerely for 10 ongoing projects involving over Tk 15 crore and for reconstruction of over 400 flood-ravaged educational institutions of the two districts.

Indian smuggled goods seized

JESSORE, Jan 15: The district task force seized Indian smuggled goods worth over Tk 8 lakh from a market at Tulatala area in the town recently, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, the task force, comprising BDR, Customs and police personnel, raided the market area and seized the contraband items. The items included saree, shawl, two and three pieces, sweater, wine, phensidyl and cosmetics.

Winter crops farming

COMILLA, Jan 15: A total of 1,57,927 hectares will be brought under cultivation of various winter crops in the district in the current season, reports BSS.

According to Agriculture Extension Department sources, various winter crops will be cultivated in twelve thanas. The crops include 'Boro' paddy on 93,522 hectares, wheat on 22,805 hectares, potato on 15,000 hectares, pulses an 18,000 hectares and vegetables on 8,600 hectares. The growers have been provided with seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other necessary inputs to make the scheme a success. Cultivation has already been started in the district.

Fish disease breaks out

SHARIATPUR, Jan 15: Fish diseases have broken out in an epidemic form in all the six thanas of the district, reports APB.

When contacted, officials in the District Fisheries Office said the diseases were of ulcerative varieties. Fishermen and fish cultivators said they have urged the authorities to take necessary steps to check spread of the diseases. They said they are applying various medicines as per suggestions of officials of the Fisheries Office, but to no result. The fishermen said demand for fish in markets has fallen due to outbreak of the diseases.

Diarrhoea takes alarming turn in Natore, Naogaon

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Jan 15: Diarrhoea has broken out alarmingly in the flood-affected Chalanbeel areas. Terming it as a seasonal disease of the winter, season the government physicians considered 'E-Coli' bacteria responsible for the disease.

Though diarrhoea broke out in sporadic form in the affected areas so far, it killed seven persons including two women and two child during 10 days till January 6. Of the total, five persons died at Gurudaspur thana. They are: two-year-old Sheela, daughter of Shahajan of Sath-

gari village, Johra Khatun, 32, daughter of Ahsan Ali of Dharabarisha village, Begum Beby, 25, wife of Rofiqul Islam of Catchkoin village and Shefali, 25, wife of Shahid of Nagirpur village. Two-year-old Shathi, daughter of Jahir Uddin died of the disease in Bon-belgharia area of the town. The name of other victims could not be known.

However, about 2,500 people were affected with the disease in Natore sadar, Borairam, Shingra and Gurudaspur thanas.

Physicians of the health complexes said there was a rush of diarrhoea patients everyday at the medical centres at the end of December. However, at present, the number of the patients came down to 10 per day, they said.

Some of the physicians reported shortage of physicians and lack of proper mechanism in treating the diarrhoeal patients.

Two temporary medical camps have been set up at Nagirpur and Chapla villages of the worst affected Gurudaspur

thana.

UNB reports from Naogaon: Diarrhoea claimed 40 lives and attacked over one lakh people in the district in last year, unofficial sources said.

But official sources confirmed only 25 deaths during the period and put the number of people attacked by the water-borne disease at 45,362.

They said diarrhoea erupted alarmingly in Mahadevpur thana in December last, claiming 15 lives and attacking 10,000 people.

Severe cold wave paralyzes life in Nilphamari, other N-dists

From A Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Jan 15: Severe cold wave has been blowing over the entire district for the last few days paralysing normal life of the people.

The cold spell from the Himalayas has intensified further during the last three days. People have to abstain from normal work. The vehicular movement is being disrupted seriously.

The sun was not visible for the last three days. The whole day remained dark. After sun down dew fall like rainfalls.

It has been assumed that in some places of the district the temperature fell down to three to four degrees Celsius.

In such a situation the poor and rootless people of town and village areas are the worst affected. They spend their nights in a miserable condition. They need blankets and warm clothes immediately, otherwise

the situation may worsen in near future. They are striving hard to spend nights hugging each other and burning straws or other wastages at railway stations, bus terminals or other abandoned huts of bazaars.

According to an unofficial source, a total of 34 thousand four hundred pieces of blankets were allotted for distribution among the distressed people of 12 northern districts in two phases. The allotment was made apprehending severe cold wave following floods in the districts.

A total of 2,760 pieces of blankets were allotted for 61 unions of the district including eight wards of two municipalities.

Local people have demanded immediate distribution of these blankets including more allotment of blankets.

BSS reports similar situa-

tion in Thakurgaon and other northern districts.

Agriculture experts observed that this cold wave, foggy weather and dewfalls may cause adverse affect to different crops, mainly seedlings of IRRI-Boro and potato.

Meanwhile, district administration distributed 2,280 pieces of blankets to the cold-wave victims of 51 unions and two pourasavas of Thakurgaon district.

Our Kushtia correspondent says: Kushtia and its adjoining areas experienced coldest day of the season on January 11 as mercury fell below 10 degree Celsius.

Normal life was paralysed due to severe cold spell which is sweeping the area for the last few days.

Poor and destitute people were hard-hit by the cold wave.

Flood stricken people who are still living in their makeshift structure on high land are worst affected as they could not rebuild their damaged houses for want of necessary fund.

BSS reports from Sathkhira: The district administration has distributed two thousand five hundred twenty blankets through the TNOs of seven thanas among the poor and distressed people of the district recently.

Of the total, 278 blankets were distributed in Assasuni thana 125 in Debhata, 217 in Kalaroa, 284 in Kalaganj, 347 in Sathkhira sadar, 89 in Sathkhira pourashava area, 335 in Shyamnagar, 317 in Tala and 24 in Kalaroa pourashava area.

Besides, 504 blankets were also distributed by Deputy Commissioner Saiful Alam among the poor and distressed.

Shortage of doctors in Barisal

BARISAL, Jan 15: Health services are being hampered seriously in the district as a large number of posts of physicians remained vacant since long, reports UNB.

Health officials said the total number of vacant posts of doctors in the district including those of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital now stands at 161.

They said 47 posts are lying vacant with different thana health complexes. These include three in Gaurnadi, six in Babuganj, five in Hazla, three in Ujirpur, six in Agailjhara, six in Muladi, eight in Mehendiganj, three in Banari-para and seven in Bakerganj thanas.

Besides, 110 posts out of the total 193 in Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital are also lying vacant. The vacant posts include four Resident Medical Officers, three Registrars, 10 Assistant Registrars and 30 Medical Officers.

Some 24 posts of doctors in different union health centres are also lying vacant.

Vegetables seedlings distributed

RAJBARI, Jan 15: Distribution of seedlings of different winter vegetables and spices has begun in seven flood-affected thanas of Faridpur and Rajbari districts, reports UNB.

The thanas are Sadar, Goaland and Pangsha in Rajbari and Sadar, Char Bhadrasan, Sadarpur and Nagarkanda in Faridpur district.

As part of the programme, the agriculture officials distributed 1.64 lakh seedlings in Sadar thana of the district. Horticulture Centre here produced and distributed the seedlings.

Assistant horticulturist Mohammad Nasiruddin said a total of 11.48 lakh seedling of vegetables and spices would be distributed among the flood affected farmers of the two districts.

The vegetables include cauliflower, tomato, eggplant and chilli, the officials said adding that the seedlings are being distributed free of cost.

The officials estimated that about 50 metric tons of vegetables and spices worth about Tk 9 lakh would be produced with these seedlings.

Orientation course for preparation of voters' ID cards

BARISAL, Jan 15: An orientation course for the preparation and distribution of voters' identity (ID) cards in the second phase in Barisal division was held here at the collectorate building premises recently, reports BSS.

Presided over by Divisional Commissioner Yahi Mollah, the course was attended by M A Meled, Joint-Secretary and Additional Project Director of Voters Identity Card Preparation and Distribution Project.

All the deputy-election commissioners, deputy election officers and thana election officers were present at this meeting from the six southern districts of Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna of Barisal division.



Illiterate women taking lesson at a centre of 'Udvashito Jhenidah.'

— Star photo

TLM programme progressing in Jhenidah

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Jan 15: People who never thought about education, have been provided with non-formal education from different centres of 'Udvashito Jhenidah'.

It has created a new enthusiasm for the illiterate people here. For education of the illiterate people, especially women, the district administration has opened 210 learning centres in Jhenidah Pourasabha, 98 centres in Kaliganj Pourasabha, 160 centres in Kotchandpur Pourasabha, 2,189 centres in Jhenidah sadar thana, 945 centres in Kaliganj thana and 662 centres in Kotchandpur thana.

A total of 6,290 learners have been enrolled in Jhenidah Pourasabha, 2,952 in Kaliganj Pourasabha, 4,813 in Kotchandpur Pourasabha, 65,676 learners in Jhenidah

sadar thana, 28,350 learners in Kaliganj thana and 19,865 learners in Kotchandpur thana.

The total number of learners are 1,27,946. Mohammad Tarique Alam, Assistant Commissioner, Jhenidah informed that 4,264 teachers and 285 supervisors are involved with this programme. He also informed that out of total 131,200 learners 64,616 are females. When this correspondent visited some centres of 'Udvashito Jhenidah', the learners showed their performances. They can read, write and count now.

Majeda Khatun, 31, a mother of two children said that her husband was a rickshaw van puller and he ran the family in hardship. He is illiterate but he inspired her to take lesson from Udvashito Jhenidah centres. She could not go to school before marriage as her father did

not know the benefit of education.

Ahmed Ali, another learner of an Udvashito Jhenidah centre said that at first he felt shy as he was an aged man. But the tension was over when he saw that many aged people like him were attending the classes.

The DC of Jhenidah and Chairman of Udvashito Jhenidah said that initially they had taken Jhenidah sadar, Kaliganj and Kotchandpur thanas under Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme and in his district TLM was titled as Udvashito Jhenidah

To make the TLM programme a success, the district administration involved many government and non-government organisations, institutions who are serving without any remuneration, said the DC.

Work on preparation of voters' ID cards in Pirojpur yet to start

PIROJPUR, Jan 15: The work on preparation of voters' ID cards in the district has not yet started creating doubt of reaching the same to the people in time, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the contractor for the

Phensidyl seized

JESSORE, Jan 15: A total of 212 bottles of Indian phensidyl syrup and eight bottles of Indian beer were recovered on Monday night here, reports UNB.

Narcotics Control Department officials and police in a smuggler Bisesy, son of Fazlu Mia of village Faridpur in Kotwall thana in this connection.

Acting on a tip-off, a contingent of police and members of Narcotics Control Department raided the house of Khodeza, wife of Shahajan of Raizgate Paschimpara in the town, and seized 112 bottles of phensidyl and eight bottles of beer.

district under voter's ID card preparation project has not started taking photograph or other works under second phase of the project.

They said in other parts of the country, the work under the second phase started from November 21, 1998 and will continue till May 22 this year.

The number of voters in three constituencies of the Jatya Sangsad during 1996 general elections was 4,92,863. Among them, 3,15,163 have got the ID card under first phase of the project.

Local authorities said the contractor should prepare the rest 1,77,702 cards along with another 60,000 for those who have become new voters in these constituencies during the last two years.

The sources said the time for the implementation of the second phase is only five months, whereas the contractor is yet to start its work including taking photographs of the voters, pasting and laminating these and distribution of cards among the voters.

Some people said Padma Computers, the contractor for the district, earlier distributed cards among the voters with incorrect information about the name of the holder of the card, his father's or husband's name or age.

Sources said bills of the contractor amounting to Tk 23 lakh remained outstanding with the concerned department and this was one of the main problems for starting the second phase work of the project.

Urs mobarrak

From A Correspondent

NOAKHALI, JAN 15: The 140th Urs mobarrak of Shah Sufi Syed Zakiuddin Al-Husaini (Baba Shyampur) will be held from January 19 to 24 at Shuampur Dayera Sharif, Lakshimpur, Noakhali.

The main munajat and concluding munajat will be conducted by Shah Syed Golam Hakkani Hussaini on Friday (January 22) and Sunday (January 24) respectively.

Dull Eid shopping in Gaibandha

From K M Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, Jan 15: Eid shopping did not pick up here in this season as the fixed income group, farmers and day labourers are facing financial hardship.

Acute joblessness has been prevailing throughout the district. Incident of crop damage has aggravated the situation. Most of the villagers are now living below the poverty level. Farmers are running shortage of hard cash as 'Aman' crops have been damaged completely due to prolonged floods of the last year. On the other hand due to crisis and higher prices of seeds the farmers could not even cultivate 'Rabi' crops. Besides, farming of IRRI-Boro crops will start soon, but the farmers are yet to arrange the minimum cost of this cultivation. On the other hand the farm labourers have no work at present as the cultivation of IRRI-Boro is yet to be start.

A cloth shop owner Mallik

said bitterly, "Eid festival is only a few days ahead, but it is surprising that the customers rarely visit the shops, but last rarely we remained busy with brisk business 15 days before Eid festival. Similar situation is prevailing in shoe, cosmetics and stationary shops. The turnover of customers has increased slightly in readymade garments shops for children.

A moderate crowd is visible in the old garments' hawker markets where poor people have been compelled to procure wram clothes at a lower cost just to fight the chilly winter.

Meanwhile, the rich people as well as the government employees are somehow trying to warm up the markets, but the number of such groups is very limited.

However, the businessmen of the district could not do well in this year from the Eid season's dull business.

RU BCU protests attack on processionists at DU

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 15: Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Rajshahi University unit, protested the attack on the students who were protesting the sexual harassment of the students in the main campus by some 'so-called' conscious students.

The BCU activists brought out a protest procession on the campus here from the organisation's tent which ended at the 'Tapan Chatter' after parading the main thoroughfares of the campus.

They also protested the RU authority's decision to diminish the number of seats in the first year honours course and price hike of the first year honours form.

Later they arranged a rally

at the end point, which was addressed, among others, by the BCU unit president of RU Taslim Sakhawat Hossain and Moazzem Hossain.

The speakers demanded exemplary punishment to the attackers. They expressed their solidarity to the agitating students. They also urged the DU authority to publish the probe committee's report on the sexual harassment of female students by some teachers immediately and take stern action against the responsible persons.

They also demanded immediate serapping of the decision to increase the price of the first year honours form and reduce the number of seats.

Role of Gram Police in maintaining peace in villages underscored

JESSORE, Jan 15: Education Minister ASHK Sadique has said that the role of Gram Police in maintaining law and order in the rural area is very important, reports BSS.

The Gram Police can easily identify the anti-social elements including criminals as they reside with the people," he said while addressing a gathering of Gram Police at Keshabpur Upazila Council auditorium on January 13.

Presided over by Thana Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Gaus, the function was addressed, among others, by thana Awami League president Ruhul Amin and officer-in-charge of Keshabpur thana.

The minister said the Gram Police are contributing to the national development for many years through performing their duties.

He stressed the need for better training and facilities to the

Gram Police for maintaining law and order in the country.

The minister said that the resources of the country is limited, but the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is trying to ensure the maximum facilities to all citizens including the Gram Police.

In a separate rally of local Awami League at the same venue, the education minister said that the four-point demands of the opposition political parties are illogical.

He said there is no people's interest in the demands, only it will create anarchy in the country.

The minister urged the leaders and workers of the party to remain alert against the conspiracies of the vested quarters.

Later, the minister distributed saree, lungi and warm clothes among the distressed people of six unions of the thana.

Four killed in three days in Faridpur dist

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Jan 15: Four persons were killed and two others injured in three separate incidents in the last three days in different parts of the district.

Yunus, 25, of village Darja in Bhawal union of Nagarkanda thana was brutally killed by his younger brother Indu, 22, recently.

It has been reported by the locals that the murder was a sequel to a longstanding enmity between the two brothers over the partition of their paternal property.

In another incident mother and her five-year-old son met the tragic end of their lives when the rickshaw they were riding on was dashed by a heavily loaded truck which was coming from the opposite direction on Faridpur-Jessore highway near Mahim High School in the town recently.

The victims were identified as Sefali Begum, 32, and her son Selim Fakir of village Adampur in the sadar thana. Police seized the killer truck and arrested the driver Mamtaz Ahmed.

In another road accident one person was killed and two others were injured when the driver of a Madaripur bound private car lost control over the steering of the car. As a result it rrammed into a roadside tree on Faridpur-Madaripur highway at Bhabukdia in Nagarkanda thana recently. The victim was identified as Abdul Halim, 28,

Prospect of ground-nut farming bright

NARSINGDI, Jan 15: The prospect of ground-nut cultivation is bright in Narsingdi sadar thana and Raipura thana here, reports BSS.

A vast area of sandy land across the river bank and shoal areas is suitable for ground-nut cultivation.

A survey team revealed that the ground-nut cultivation is one of the main cultivation of the farmers of Narsingdi sadar and Raipura. About 1000 acres have, so far, been brought under the cultivation in the two thanas.

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