

News snaps

Foodgrains sanctioned for uplift work

MADRIPUR, Jan 16: The government has sanctioned 1,280 tonnes of foodgrains for the implementation of 111 uplift schemes here under the Food for Works Programme, reports BSS.

Of the total 310 tonnes have been sanctioned for 27 schemes in sadar, 288 tonnes for 25 schemes in Kalkini, 277 tonnes for 24 schemes in Rajoir and 405 tonnes for 35 schemes in Shibchar thana. The schemes include construction and reconstruction of roads, earth-filling, development of playgrounds, excavation and re-excavation of canals. With the implementation of the schemes communication network and basic infrastructural facilities will be improved in four thanas to a great extent.

Fund shortage hampers uplift work

MADRIPUR, Jan 16: Development works of Kalkini Pourashava remained suspended for the last six months for lack of necessary funds, reports UNB.

"Properties worth about Taka five crore of the pourashava were destroyed by the recent flood, but no allocation has been made for its rehabilitation and infrastructure development," said Pourashava chairman Abul Kalam Azad. Meanwhile, the municipality authorities have submitted a budget of about Taka one crore to the concerned ministry for its development works.



JHENIDAH: Wreaths being placed at Kabirpur Central Shaheed Minar by the people of all walks of life on the Victory Day.

— Star photo

Tk 23 cr disbursed as agri-loan

MADRIPUR, Jan 16: A total of Tk 23 crore has been disbursed here as agri-loan under the post-flood rehabilitation programme, during last four months, reports BSS.

Official sources said, the loans have been disbursed for cultivation of various crops, irrigation, poultry, fish farming and poverty alleviation schemes during the period. Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Sonali Bank, Janata Bank and Agrani Banks disbursed the loan.

Work of five roads begins

SYLHET, Jan 16: Reconstruction works of five roads in the town, involving Tk 63.31,000 have begun under the Middle Town Infrastructure Development Project, reports UNB.

Sources said Tk 18.80 lakh will be spent for construction of Shahi Eidgah-MC College Road, Tk 10 lakh for Chouhatta-Kumarpura Road, Tk 5.71 lakh for Purba Kajirbazar Road, Tk 18.80 lakh for Jamarullah Road and Tk 10 lakh for Rikabi Bazaar. Sheikhhat Road, Sylhet Pourashava chairman Mohammad Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran formally inaugurated the works of the project. The reconstruction works are expected to be completed by January. Similar works to develop the roads in other parts of the town will begin soon.

Seminars on cultivation of pulses

JHALAKATI, Jan 16: Two seminars on nitric cultivation of pulses were held in Sadar and Rajapur thanas on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department organised the seminars under its pilot project to be implemented with the financial assistance of Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre and US aid. A total of 100 farmers along with 10 block supervisors took part in the seminars. The seminars focused on techniques of high yielding seed and land selection, fighting pest attack, harvest and preservation of pulses. Among others, Project Manager of Agricultural Research Institute Dr Abu Bakar, Deputy Project Manager Ali Afzal and AED Deputy Director Anwarul Alam were present at the seminars.

FP programme hampered

BANDARBAN, Jan 16: Family planning (FP) programmes are being hampered in seven thanas of the district due mainly to shortage of manpower, reports UNB.

Official sources said the activities of Family Planning Department and its centres are being hampered as 43 posts of officers and employees of the department have been lying vacant for a long time. A total of 25 posts of officers and employees in different thanas remained vacant since last 17 years hampering enormously the family planning activities. Of them, eight each are Medical Officers and Family Welfare Inspectors, four family planning inspectors and five are Family Welfare Assistants. Family planning activities of 18 family welfare centres damaged by tornado and flood respectively in 1991 and 1997 have been hampering badly due to lack of repair.

BRAC loan distributed

JHALAKATI, Jan 16: Bangladeshi Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has disbursed Tk 181.15 lakh loan among 7,982 people in the district during the last one year under its various loan programme, reports UNB.

The loans were distributed through its 160 samities, said a local manager. The official said Tk 18 lakh was disbursed among 322 people for vegetable farming and nursery, Tk 40 lakh among 850 for fish culture, Tk 5 lakh among 150 for rearing cattle, Tk four lakh among 35 people for poultry farming, Tk 50,000 among 50 people for constructing sanitary toilet, Tk 2.5 lakh among 250 for pure water and Tk 92 lakh among 4,885 people for the purpose of small business. Besides, massive programmes have been undertaken by the organisation in different parts of the district for alleviation of poverty in the rural areas.

Transport problem at SSTU

SYLHET, Jan 16: Transport problem of the students of Shahjalal Science and Technology University (SSTU) has turned acute due to shortage of varsity transports, reports UNB.

There are a total of 2,510 students in the varsity. Of them, 2,157 are male and the rest are female. The varsity has two residential halls — one for 450 male and another for 172 female students and the rest are living in the town in mess or rented houses. But the varsity has only three buses for transportation of the students which is too inadequate. No effective steps to remove the transport and residential problems have yet been taken even after four years of establishment of the varsity. The Vice Chancellor also assured the students of necessary measures for solving the transport problem when the learners observed a 7-hour sit-in demonstration recently.

18 lakh children deprived of edn

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 16: Some 18 lakh children in 16 northern districts of the country are being deprived of elementary education due to various reasons including poverty, lack of schools and awareness among the guardians, reports UNB.

Official sources said the total number of school-age children in the region is about 63 lakh. Of them, only 45 lakh have been attending the schools and the percentage of enrollment of boys is 72 per cent while the girls is 71. They said there is no primary school in about 10,731 villages of the region depriving the children of the basic right to education. These include 587 villages in Chapainawabganj, 1,100 in Rajshahi, 875 in Natore, 1,760 in Naogaon, 1,475 in Bogra, 620 in Joypurhat, 600 in Rangpur, 247 in Gaibandha, 200 in Nilphamari, 185 in Kurigram, 73 in Lalmonirhat, 1,031 in Dinajpur, 85 in Thakurgaon, 421 in Panchagarh, 660 in Pabna and 812 in Sirajganj.

Timber recovered

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 16: Cox's Bazar forest division has recovered 4,87,397 sft illegal timber worth about Taka 10 crore during last five years, reports BSS.

According to forest division sources, during the period 1994-1995 to November 1998, 3,30,382 sft valuable timber and 1,57,000 sft firewood have been recovered. Besides, 22,075 pieces of log (balli) have been seized during the same period. A total of 1,064 persons have been arrested and 4,636 cases have been filed in connection with illegal timber extraction and trading. Sources informed during last five years 236 forest officers and forest guards have been attacked and wounded by illegal timber traffickers. Of them two persons have become invalid for life.

National

50,000 attacked with arsenic related diseases in Chandpur

From Shirin Akhter

CHANDPUR Jan 16: Arsenic contents in tubewells water has created a great panic in all the seven thanas of the district.

About 50,000 people are attacked with arsenic related diseases. This was revealed by the Executive Engineer of Chandpur Public Health Engineering Department (PHED). According to him, tubewell waters of the Chandpur town are also exposed to arsenic pollution. Many tubewells in the district town are already contaminated by arsenic.

PHED has already started testing the proportion of arsenic pollution in tubewells.

Arsenic elements have been found in three other municipal areas of Matlab, Chenigarh and Hajiganj. It is posing a threat to public health.

Despite sealing off of arsenic contaminated tubewells, many people are found to use water of these tubewells for drinking purpose.

According to PHED experts

surface water, rain water, water of rivers and ponds are free from arsenic contamination.

Water of deep tubewells under 500 feet are also free from arsenic.

The local PHED has undertaken a comprehensive scheme to install 721 deep tubewells at a cost of Taka Two crore 88 laks. The work has already been started. About 50 deep tubewells have already been installed in different villages which are completely arsenic free.

While talking to A K M Mo-

hiuddin, Executive Engineer of local PHED told this correpon-

dent that steps are being taken to examine different tubewells

water in all seven thanas gradually.

People here have been suffering from various arsenic related diseases. The department has already informed the concerned ministry about the widespread arsenic contamination.

Many people are drinking boiled water. The residents of Chandpur town are also exposed to arsenic pollution. Many tubewells in the district town are already contaminated by arsenic.

UNB from Khulna reports:

Public Health Engineering De-

partment (DPHE) has identified 687 tubewells in 10 districts of the division with high arsenic contamination.

During a survey conducted by the department, water of 2,205 tubewells across the division was tested, said the officials.

They said that at least 0.10 mg arsenic was found in one litre of water of the identified tubewells.

Of the total high-contaminated tubewells, 113 are in Khulna district, 77 in Bagerhat, 135 in Satkhira, 147 in Jessor, 34 in Narail, 18 in Jhenidah, 31 in Magura, 54 in Kushtia, 56 in Chuadanga and 22 in Meherpur.

The sources said that less than .01 mg arsenic in one litre of water was found in 672 tubewells while .01-.05 mg in 495 tubewells and .06-.10 mg in 351 tubewells.

The highest number of tubewells identified as high arsenic contamination were in Khulna, Satkhira and Jessor districts.

DPHE officials feared that

many other tubewells in the division might be found highly contaminated with arsenic.

According to official

sources, there are 22,500 gov-

ernment tubewells in the district and 40,000 tubewells in public sector. According to public health experts about 80 per cent tubewells are affected by arsenic contamination.

People have urged the government to take appropriate measures immediately to save the people from arsenic related diseases.

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Five murdered in Mymensingh in a week

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, Jan 16: Five persons were murdered in separate incidents here in a week.

Sahajuddin, 29, an employee of a shop near a brothel was killed by some miscreants on December 6.

Sova Rani of the brothel filed a case with Kotwali thana in this regard.

Hasan Ali, 50, was killed by the rival group in a clash over a disputed land at village Haripur in Gouripur thana on December 13.

Police recovered the body of an unidentified woman with several injury marks from Yuubagh area in Gouripur thana in the same day.

Mobarak Hossain, 32, of village Badrighi in Phulipur thana was killed in a clash over disputed land on December 16.

Idris Ali, 36, an Awami League leader was killed by some assailants near Gouripur Railway Station on December 19.

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