

News snaps

Two extortionists arrested

BARGUNA, Feb 2: Local people caught red handed two extortionists from Patharghat thana headquarters on Saturday evening when they attempted to murder a college student who refused to give money, reports UNB.

Police said the two men, identified as Babul and Rubel of the town, demanded Tk 2,000 to Monirul, a second year student of the local college. Being refused, they brought the student to a solitary place and attacked him with sharp weapons. Following the hue and cry of Monirul, local people rushed to the spot, rescued him and caught the attackers. They were later handed over to the police. The arrested were sent to the jail.

Birth anniversary of Thakur Anukul Chandra

TANGAIL, Feb 2: A five-day programme to mark the 111th birth anniversary of sree sree Thakur Anukul Chandra began on Saturday at Pakutia in Tangail district, reports BSS.

The programme has been organised by Shatsangha, a socio-religious organisation founded by Thakur Anukul. The programme included recitation from religious books and discussion on the life and philosophy of Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Rally of Ansar, VDP

MAGURA, Feb 2: A rally of Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) members of Sreepur thana in Magura district was held on Tuesday at Sreepur Thana Parishad premises, reports BSS.

Thani Nirbahi Officer, Sreepur Mohammad Abdur Razzak presided over the rally while M Golam Mostafa, District Adjutant of Ansar and VDP was the chief guest. Prizes were distributed among the best Ansar and VDP members. The rally was followed by a musical soiree and cultural function participated by Ansar and VDP members of the thana.

Smugglers clash leaves 7 hurt

RAJSHAHI, Feb 2: Some seven people were injured in a clash between two groups of smugglers in Yusupur area of Charghat thana on Friday afternoon, reports UNB.

Two of them, Shafiq and Nazrul, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Witnesses said the clash ensued when a group of smugglers snatched away about 1,500 bottles of Phenidyl syrup from another group.

Production of molasses hampered

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 2: Unusual fall in sugarcane production, caused by the prolonged flood last year, appears to hamper the molasses production this season, reports UNB.

Sources at the Agriculture department here said molasses worth about Tk 56.42 crore were expected to be produced this season, but the chance is little to achieve the target. A total of 9,550 hectares of land had been brought under sugarcane cultivation this season, but the long lasting deluge damaged sugarcane on about 6,900 hectares of land, affecting 27,710 tonnes of molasses output worth about Tk 55.42 crore. Usually 10,000 hectares of land in five thanas of the district are brought under sugarcane cultivation every year, producing molasses worth about Tk 70 crore.

Dacoity in Tala thana

SATKHIRA, Feb 2: A dacoity was committed at Jotuabazar in Tala thana on Friday night, reports UNB.

The armed robbers looted valuables from seven shops of the bazaar. No arrest was made so far in this connection. Another report said a kidnapped girl was rescued by police from Bara Bazaar of Debhatia thana on Friday. The girl, identified as Nilofar Yasin, 14, daughter of Motiur Rahman of the thana's Khash Khamar area, was kidnapped by a group of miscreants on January 2 when she was going to a market from her house. The girl alleged that the kidnappers took her to different places in Khulna, Jessore and Dhaka and raped her.

AL meeting at Tangail

TANGAIL, Feb 2: Tangail District Awami League held a public meeting on January 30 evening at local Bindubashini High School play ground with Alhaj Abdul Mannan, MP as the chief guest, reports BSS.

The meeting, presided over by Advocate Tofazzal Hossain Mukul, was addressed, among others, by Advocate Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Joint Secretary, Bangladesh Awami League, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kh Asaduzzaman MP, Fazlur Rahman Farooque, Shawkat Ali Talukder, Advocate Alimgr Khan Minu and Tangail Paurasava chairman candidate Abtabuzzaman Khan Feroz. Abtabuzzaman Khan urged the paua voters to caste their votes in his favour so that he may get chance to serve them better.

Vegetables farming on 3,000 hectares

MADRIPUR, Feb 2: The Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has taken up programme to bring 3,000 hectares under vegetables cultivation in the district in the winter season, reports BSS.

Of the total lands brought under cultivation, 500 hectares are in sadar, 1,000 hectares in Kalkini, 300 hectares in Rajor and 700 hectares in Shibchar thanas. The target of production has been fixed at 45,000 tonnes of vegetables. AED supplied seeds and provided agricultural loans to help farmers achieve the target.

Eye camp in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, Feb 2: A four-day eye camp will be organised on the Baramachhia United High Institution campus beginning on February 2 by the Lions Club of Dhaka Supreme Garden to provide free treatment to local eye patients, reports BSS.

According to a press release of the club experienced eye surgeons and doctors of Bangladesh Lions Foundation will examine and conduct surgical operations free of charge. The club under Lions District 315A-1 will also provide medicines to the patients free of charge. The doctors will examine the patients from February 2 to 4 and conduct the operations on February 5. Dr Rustam Ali Farazi MP will inaugurate the eye camp as the chief guest.

Agri-loan disbursed among 6,680 persons

CHUADANGA, Feb 2: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Chuadanga region has disbursed Taka 7,46,83,000 as agriculture loan among 6,680 persons under the post-flood agriculture rehabilitation programme and normal loan disbursement programme of the bank during the first six months of the current financial year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, BKB has fixed a target to disburse Taka 10,68 crore in the current financial year as agri-loan in Chuadanga district. The loan disbursement programme is being implemented through 10 branches of BKB in all the four thanas of Chuadanga district.

Free style activities by quacks

JHENIDAH, Feb 2: Public health is been threatened in the district due to 'free-style activities' by owners of unlicensed drug stores, quacks and roving 'kaviraj', reports APB.

Unlicensed drug stores have mushroomed in and around those stores is not uncommon, it is alleged. One estimate shows that there are some 2,000 unlicensed pharmacies. Unqualified persons run these medicine shops and sell drugs as per prescriptions issued by incompetent doctors and quacks. Owners of such drug stores have underhand deals with officials concerned, it is alleged.

14 non-govt jail inspectors appointed

JESSORE, Feb 2: Fourteen elite of the town have been appointed as non-government Jail Inspectors at the district Central Jail here, reports UNB.

The appointments were given to supervise the Central Jail for the next two years as per the memo of the Divisional Commissioner of Khulna Division on December 24. The appointed persons are : Shah Hadizuzzaman MP, Ali Reza Razu MP, Aley Afroz MP, Jessori Press Club president SK Zamir Ahmed, Advocate Farazi Shahadat Hossain, Pijush Kanti Ghosh, Adv Zafar Sadik, Adv Shaikh Hassan Imam, Prof Sharif Hossain, Rtd District Judge Monirur Rahman, Begum Lutfunnexxa Ali wife of late Rowshan Ali MP, Begum Kulsum Taleb, Begum Lily Hye and Adv Begum Sayeda Marhaba Hasnat.

Acute scarcity of fodder

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 2: Acute scarcity of fodder in different thanas has been causing serious problem for the farmers, reports UNB.

Farmers and local sources said the scarcity was created following the deluge last year as the floodwater engulfed vast areas damaging standing 'A's' and 'Aman' paddies and other crops and they could not preserve hay, the main fodder. Flood also damaged many grazing fields. The price of hay has gone up in the rural markets and 100 bundles of hay are being sold at Tk 130 to Tk 150 farmers said. Prices of oil cake, bran, bean and pumpkin have also gone up making it almost impossible for poor people in the villages to maintain their cattle. Many poor and marginal farmers could not buy fodder due to the price hike, said the sources adding that their cattle became bonny without supply of adequate daily intake.

Massive 'Boro' farming programme

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 2: A massive 'Boro' cultivation programme was taken up by the government in the district during the current season to cover the losses due to the flood last year, reports UNB.

Official sources said the target of 'Boro' cultivation in all the 13 thanas here has been fixed at 1,38,171 hectares of land. Of the total land, 1,29,882 hectares would be brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) cultivation while the rest 8,289 hectares would be brought under local variety cultivation, the officials said. The production target has been fixed at 3,37,139 metric tons.



MAGURA: Transplantation of IRRI-Boro saplings going on in full swing. Local farmers striving hard to recoup the losses of last year's flood. — Star photo

In Chuadanga

Political parties allegedly sheltering criminals

CHUADANGA, Feb 2: Law and order has deteriorated alarmingly in the district and the main topic of discussion among the people is incidents of killing and abduction, reports APB.

Twenty people were killed in 20 days, according to police. The number was 74 last year.

People say their nights are spent in state of dread suspense. A knock at the door may mean that death is imminent, because the terrorists and criminals are most active during night.

The terrorists move about freely right under the eyes of police and other law-enforcing agencies because they are allegedly sheltered by political parties.

A police officer told that they are aware of the situation but can not do anything because the terrorists enjoy political support.

Ashabul Huq Asha, an Awami League activist, was killed in broad daylight. Police are yet to take any action against the murderers. A journalist and an industrialist were kidnapped last year and they could not be traced till now.

On January 9 Abu Hossain Musa, 38, and Shamsul, 35, of Sadar thana were hanged at night. On the same night, Shahidul, 32, of Kutali village near Begumpura was dragged out of his house and slaughtered.

Local people say that unless the politicians disown the criminals and sever all ties with them, the crime rate will continue to rise.

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They have failed to make the municipal polls a political issue by their call to boycott the elections as candidates from different parties have submitted their nomination papers amid enthusiasm, he told an Awami League workers' rally here.

He added that those who could not hold local government polls or dissolved the existing local government bodies during their tenure, were now opposing the municipal elections. This only proves their disrespect towards independent election system and people's verdict, he said.

In Comilla
Paddy, rice procurement drive to fail

COMILLA, Feb 2: The ongoing paddy and rice procurement drive in the district looks set to fail due to crop failure caused by the country's worst flooding and massive pest attack, reports APB.

Officials said they had a target to procure 80 metric tonnes of paddy and 500 tonnes of rice this season, but they failed to procure any grain since the drive began two months back.

They attributed the failure of the procurement drive to sharp fall in Aman output due mainly to the prolonged flood and pest attack in 11 thanas of the district.

The thanas are Chandina, Debildar, Muradnagar, Daudkandi, Homna, Sadar, Burichar, Brahmapara, Chowdhuram, Nanggolkot and Barura.

Meanwhile, the foodgrain prices continued to show the upward trend despite the arrival of new harvest to the market.

Market sources said coarse variety of rice was being sold at Tk 15 to 15.50 per kg and while paddy at Tk 8.50 to 9.00 per kg while the government's purchasing rate was Tk 12 and Tk 7.60 respectively.

The unreasonable gap between the market price and the government rate was said to be another reason behind the failure of the procurement drive.

Opposition fails to make municipal polls a political issue: Zillur

BOGRA, Feb 2: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman today termed the opposition decision to boycott the municipal elections as 'political adventurism' as candidates from different parties submitted their nominations amid enthusiasm, reports BSS.

They have failed to make the municipal polls a political issue by their call to boycott the elections as candidates from different parties have submitted their nomination papers amid enthusiasm, he told an Awami League workers' rally here.

He added that those who could not hold local government polls or dissolved the existing local government bodies during their tenure, were now opposing the municipal elections. This only proves their disrespect towards independent election system and people's verdict, he said.

The present government has re-established the right of franchise after long 21 years and now working relentlessly for poverty alleviation and economic freedom," Rahman added.

The dead was identified as Chan Mia. The injured have been listed as Hassen Sheikh, 20, Mohammad Kawsar Sheikh, 16 and Mohammad Khorshed, 16.

Critically wounded Hassen Sheikh was sent to Barisal for treatment while the others were admitted to Pirojpur Hospital.

Local people said that the incident was a sequel to an armed clash between two groups of villagers over paddy harvesting six weeks ago.

Morelganj thana police on Thursday raided the house of Latif Howlader and arrested three people in connection with the case.

But the villagers tried to snatch away the three accused from the custody of police who fired several rounds of shots in self defence, leaving one dead.

The dead, Chan Mia, a Textile Mills worker in Dhaka had been on Eid holidays to his village home, they said.

His body was sent to Pirojpur morgue for post mortem.

— Star photo

One killed in police firing in Morelganj

PIROJPUR, Feb 2: Police opened fire in self defence, leaving one killed and injuring three others, when a group of villagers tried to snatch away some arrested people from their custody at Bolepur Bazaar in Morelganj thana on Thursday night, reports APB.

The dead was identified as Chan Mia. The injured have been listed as Hassen Sheikh, 20, Mohammad Kawsar Sheikh, 16 and Mohammad Khorshed, 16.

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Madaripur-Shibchar road link snapped

MADRIPUR, Feb 2: Road communication between the district headquarters and Shibchar has remained snapped since July when the road suffered extensive damage during the prolonged floods, reports APB.

The crucial Madaripur-Shibchar road has not been reconstructed even after six months of the century's worst floods.

Sources said the Beelpadma bridge on the road was damaged in the floods while the Jilchar-Chowdhurirhat bridge collapsed.

Steps are yet to be taken for repair of the bridges, nor any alternative arrangements been made for movement of traffic.

As a result, some 12 lakh people of Madaripur, Sharibpur and neighbouring areas find it very hard to go to Shibchar. Kaorakandi and Dhaka. They have to travel an extra distance of 20 kilometres on foot or on board rickshaw.

No admission test was held in the institute since 1997 due to campus violence. But the process to hold admission test for the 1998-99 academic session is underway," said an official, wishing anonymity.

Crimes on rise in N dists

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Feb 2: Crimes have increased alarmingly leading to deterioration of law and order in the northern Bangladesh.

At least 796 persons were killed in the 16 northern districts last year.

No person, however, was killed in political clashes, sources in police said. Among other reasons, family dispute, feud over land, previous enmity were the main reasons behind most of the killings.

The districtwise break-up of the killings are: 39 persons were killed in Natore, while 44 persons in Rajshahi, 70 in Naogaon, 33 in Chapainawabganj, 60 in Pabna, 103 in Bogra, 93 in Sirajganj, 29 in Joypurhat, 69 in Rangpur, 60 in Gaibandha, 43 in Nilphamari, 26 in Kurigram, 18 in Lalmonirhat, 57 in Dinajpur, 30 in Thakurgaon and 22 persons in Panchagarh district.

There was no political killing in the northern regime last year despite incidents of sporadic political clashes. Most of the killings occurred due to feuds over land, family dispute and abduction.

A country made revolver, three big knives were recovered from their possession. Later the arrested snatchers were handed over to Kotwali police.

Meanwhile dacoits looted valuables worth about Taka 20 thousand from a house of village Raghunathpur in Phulbaria thana on January 24.

Another report says: Miscreants snatched away Taka four thousand from Mujibur Rahman and three brothers at village Rammagar while they were returning home from Asim Bazar in Phulbaria thana.