

News snaps

Steps sought for safety of guest birds

MADARIPUR, Feb 8: Guest birds from colder regions in Siberia have crowded the water bodies like beels, canals and shoals of four thanas of the district, reports APB.

But lesser number of species has come to Bangladesh this winter, compared to previous years, bird watchers said. Local people, however, said that the number of guest birds has been decreasing over the years owing to destruction of water bodies, lack of small fish on which they survive and onslaught by hunters. Owing to increased hunting, the winged guests also stay in this country for comparatively lesser periods now, they said. Bird lovers feel that the law enforcing agencies should take appropriate actions to ensure safety of the guest birds that fly thousands of miles in search of a safe abode.

Doctors deprived of salary

HABIGANJ, Feb 8: Nineteen doctors and 63 other employees of the district General Hospital, appointed under a development scheme for 18 district level hospitals across the country, have been deprived of their salary for the last six months, reports UNB.

Civil Surgeon office sources here said, the physicians and the third and fourth class employees have been appointed in the hospital under the project during the current fiscal year. The higher authority, it said, stopped monetary allocation for the programme after their recruitment. The poor third and fourth class employees are passing their days in great distress while the physicians engaged themselves in private practice to eke out their living. They urged the authority to disburse the salary without further delay.

Pre-jamboree camp of scouts

MANIKGANJ, Feb 8: A three-day pre-jamboree camp of Manikganj district scouts concluded last week at Manikganj Government High School, reports BSS.

A total of 64 scouts and eight leaders participated in the camp. The inaugural session was presided over by F A Jabbar, District Education Officer, Manikganj, Sheikh Mozahar Ali, Deputy Commissioner, Manikganj, attended the function as the chief guest. The closing ceremony of the camp was presided over by Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Bangladesh Scouts, Manikganj district unit. Md Mahfuzur Rahman, Headmaster, Manikganj Government High School distributed certificates among the participants as the chief guest of the function.

Piracy in Bay on rise

BARGUNA, Feb 8: Piracy in the Bay has been increased in the last few days leaving the fishermen in financial hardships, reports UNB.

According to Patharghata Trawler Owners' Association, 40 trawlers and boats were looted by the pirates in last five days till Sunday. Three fishermen were also kidnapped from the Bay and Baleswar river meeting point on the night of January 29. They were identified as Sagor, 25, Shahid, 28, and Tipu, 22. The pirates demanded Tk 30,000 as ransom. The association sources also said piracy and kidnapping incidents have scared the fishermen to go for fishing into the sea. After repeated demands, no measures have yet been taken to ensure the safety of the fishermen, they alleged.

Body recovered

MUNSHIGANJ, Feb 8: Sadar thana police recovered the body of an unidentified middle-aged man from a canal near the Lohar bridge at Bara Kewar in Mahakali union on Thursday, reports BSS.

Police said the body bore marks of injury on the head, arms and belly. The victim was killed by miscreants and dumped into the canal a couple of days back, police suspected. The body was sent to Narayanganj morgue for autopsy.

12 shops gutted

CHANDPUR, Feb 8: About 12 shops were gutted in a fire at Kalia bazaar in Faridgonj thana recently, reports BSS.

The fire brigade source said, at least 12 people were injured in the fire that originated from a cotton shop. The fire brigade from Chandpur Pura Bazaar rushed to the spot and extinguished the devastating fire. It was for the fourth time that fire broke out in the same market over the last one year resulting in damage of huge property.

350 killed in train mishaps in 26 years

PABNA, Feb 8: At least 350 people were killed and 1,000 injured in 39 train accidents in the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway over the last 26 years, reports APB.

There were 40 incidents when trains narrowly escaped accidents during the period. Most of the accidents took place owing to alleged irresponsible behaviour of train drivers, linemen and gate men.

Vigilance team for peaceful polling

JHALAKATI, Feb 8: Two vigilance and observation teams have been constituted to ensure peaceful polling in the ensuing pourasava elections in the district, reports APB.

The teams will oversee whether elections are held as per the Electoral Code of Conduct. Concerned sources said the teams have been formed following directives from the Election Commission. First class magistrate of Jhalakati Collectorate Abul Kalam has been made leader of team no-1 while another first class magistrate of the Collectorate, Abdul Gaffar Khan, will lead the team no-2.

Listeners confce of RVA

RAJSHAHI, Feb 8: The Listeners Conference 1999 of Radio Veritas Asia (RVA), a Philippine-based radio service, was held at Caritas auditorium here on Friday, reports APB.

Organised by Bandipiti, Dhaka, about 250 listeners were present at the RVA Bangla Service conference with Father Sunil Rosario in the chair. Eleven fans also spoke on the occasion where RVA officials from India, Philippines and Bangladesh were present.

BRDB loan distributed

PIROJPUR, Feb 8: The Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) has started distribution of Tk 6.65 crore loans among destitute people in seven thanas of the district, reports APB.

The loans are being distributed under its Rural Destitute Programme. The Board has, meantime, distributed more than Tk 2.33 crore among 24,823 destitute people who are members of 1,009 cooperative societies. Loan distribution programme will continue till June. BRDB sources said, The loans have been distributed for purchasing livestock, raising poultry, vegetable cultivation, rice husking, making handicrafts and country boats and doing other small business.

RMC classes resume Feb 11

RANGPUR, Feb 8: Classes of Rangpur Medical College (RMC) resumes on February 11, according to academic council, reports UNB.

The dormitories will be reopened on Sunday. The college was closed on December 27 following an attack by a group of students who failed to pass in different examinations. The students ransacked the room of the principal, damaged three private cars of physicians and furniture of the administrative building which forced the authority to close the college.

Wheat cultivation on 6,764 hectares

MADARIPUR, Feb 8: A total of 6,764 hectares in four thanas of the district has been brought under wheat cultivation in the current season with a production target of 15,118 tonnes, reports BSS.

District Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has taken up the programme to bring 1,625 hectares in sadar, 1,550 hectares in Kalkini, 1,335 hectares in Rajoir and 2,254 hectares in Shibchar thanas. Official sources said AED under its integrated 'Rabi' crop cultivation programme has taken up a programme to cultivate 'Boro' paddy on 22,869 hectares in four thanas in the current season. According to AED sources, of the total 7,100 hectares will be brought in sadar, 7,100 hectares in Kalkini, 6,350 hectares in Rajoir and 2,319 hectares in Shibchar thana.

14 non-govt jail inspectors appointed

JESSORE, Feb 8: 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 Hadiuzzaman MP, Ali Reza Razu MP, Aleya Afroz MP, Jessor Press Club president SK Zamir Ahmed, Advocate Faraz Shahadat Hossain, Pijush Kanti Ghosh, Adv Zafar Sadiq, Adv Shaikh Hassan Imam, Prof Sharif Hossain, Rtd District Judge Momtazur Rahman, Begum Lutfunnexa Ali wife of late Rowshan Ali MP, Begum Kulum Taleb, Begum Lily Hye and Adv Begum Sayeda Mahbuba Hasnat.

New convening body

SATKHIRA, Feb 8: A five-member convening committee headed by Abul Kalam Azad, Executive Editor of The Daily Satkhira Chitra was formed in a meeting held at Satkhira Press Club recently, reports BSS.

The meeting, presided over by press club president Abdul Mostafiz, dissolved the executive committee and formed the new convening committee.



SYLHET: Geoffrey Fairhurst, First Secretary of British High Commission in Bangladesh speaking at a reception accorded to him recently at Bangladesh Overseas Centre here.

— Star photo

Potato price falls beyond farming cost in Chandpur

From Shirin Akhter

CHANDPUR, Feb 8: Bumper output of potato is expected here during the current season.

According to District Agriculture Extension Department, about 25 thousand hectares of land have been brought under potato cultivation here.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation and Agriculture Extension Department supplied seeds, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs to the potato growers. Encouraged by good price of potato which was earned in the last year, the potato growers have increased the cultivation area this year. Potatoes have been grown

abundantly in Chandpur sadar, Matlab and Haimchar thanas. In some areas the target of production on per hectare exceeded more than 65 thousand metric tons in these areas.

Meanwhile, the farmers have started collecting potato from the field. Due to abundant supply of potato in the local markets the price of potato have come down.

Potato is now being sold at Taka 4 to 5 per kg. The price is much less than the production cost, it is alleged by the potato growers.

In absence of adequate space in cold storages, most of the

growers are not in a position to store potato for selling in future at a higher price. They are now in need of money to repay their loans and other expenses. So the poor farmers are compelled to sell their products at low price. There are only six large size cold storages in the district for preservation of potatoes. Rich people have already booked these cold storages in advance. Poor and marginal growers find it difficult to preserve potato. The middlemen are now buying potato in bulk and making preparation to store potato in cold storages. They sell these potatoes in the lean period to get much profit.



A potato field in Chandpur.

— Star photo

Half-done Rahmatkhali regulator becomes people's woe

LAXMIPUR, Feb 8: The half-done Rahmatkhali regulator constructed in an unplanned way for irrigation facilities has become a cause for suffering of 15 lakh people, reports UNB.

Water Development Board constructed the regulator over Rahmatkhali canal and at the statutory of the Meghna at Char Mohan, some 10 kilometres west of the district headquarters in 1972 at a cost of Tk 7

crore. Official sources said the regulator had been designed only to save the crops from saline waters of the river Meghna at that time.

So, the regulator has the system of pumping out water from inside, but no mechanism for entering water from the river. Now-a-days no saline water is there in the river Meghna. But due to absence of technol-

ogy, it is not possible for bringing water from Meghna through the regulator during the dry season.

As a result, cultivation on some 50,000 acres of land alongside Rahmatkhali canal is being affected adversely.

"If the project had been implemented keeping in mind the future need, it would be possible now to grow 60,000 metric tons of additional paddy by providing irrigation facilities to 95,000 acres of land," said a Water Development Board official on condition of anonymity.

According to him, in 1979 WDB had established a side-office in Laxmipur for implementation of the Noakhali North Irrigation Project, to give Rahmatkhali regulator a complete shape. But the office was closed in 1997 following an order of the Ministry concerned.

Meantime, a WDB report said the project could be given a complete shape by spending Tk 15 to 20 crore. It suggested construction of a navigation lock gate at Rahmatkhali regulator at a cost of Tk 5 to 7 crore and a pump-house at Kamtakhal costing Tk 10 to 13 crore for completion of the project.

Meanwhile, movement of river transports is not possible through Rahmatkhali canal following the construction of the regulator.

observation towers.

These relics are facing decay owing to natural, chemical and biological reasons. Only recently efforts have been undertaken to renovate the shat gom-buj mosque.

The Bagerhat Cultural Centre at a recent seminar held at the local Shilpakala Academy called for turning Bagerhat in to a tourist spot by ensuring preservation of the historic relics.

The chief Guest at the seminar, Dr Sheikh Gaus Miah, brought to light seven aspects of preservation of the historic relics. A museum should be set up here in accordance with the proposal of the UNESCO made in 1973, he said.



SYLHET: The registry maidan here has been turned into a market of warm clothes. People of low income and lower middle class groups throng here every day to purchase second hand warm clothes at a cheaper rate.

— Star photo

4 HYV crops invented using atomic energy tech

MYMENSINGH, Feb 8: Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) has invented four high-yielding variety (HYV) crops last year using the technology of atomic energy, reports UNB.

The newly invented crops included three HYV paddy — Binadhan-4, Binadhan-5 and Binadhan-6 and one HYV pulse Binamug-5.

According to Dr Ali Azam,

Publicity Secy of Nature AL expelled

NATORE, Feb 8: Publicity Secretary of the district unit of ruling Awami League Babu Chittaranjan Saha was expelled from the party on Thursday for contesting the upcoming pouira election as chairman candidate for violating the party's discipline, said party sources, reports UNB.

The decision was taken in an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the unit held at the district Muslim Institute auditorium with district unit President Advocate Sajedur Rahman Khan in the chair.

The committee gave nomination Advocate Kamrul Islam (former JSD and Gano Forum leader who joined AL recently) for contesting the poll as chairman.

Saha, known as a dedicated leader of the party, decided to contest the poll as an independent candidate.

Property worth Tk 3 lakh gutted in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Feb 8: Property worth over Taka three lakh gutted in a devastating fire that broke out recently at village Uttar in Saghata thana.

According to a delayed report at dead of night on the fateful day, a fire originated from the cow-shed of Rahim Mia of the aforementioned village. Soon the flame spread to the adjacent dwelling houses. A total of eight houses including all its belongings were reduced to ashes. The loss was estimated to be over Taka three lakh.

The inmates of affected houses rendered shelterless and staying under the open sky.

Meanwhile, the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Saghata thana distributed food and clothes among the fire victims.

'Hashish' recovered

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Feb 8: Gaibandha Detective Branch (DB) of police in a drive recovered five pieces of 'hashish' plants and two kilograms of finished 'hashish' recently from village Dharmapur in Sunderganj thana.

On getting a secret information, police contingent raided the house of Abdur Rashid of the aforesaid village. Police recovered five pieces of large size 'hashish' plants and two kilograms of dry 'hashish' from the spot.

The accused persons were cultivating 'hashish' illegally since long. Police could not arrest the accused person. Price of recovered 'hashish' was estimated to be about Taka 50,000.

Attack on office colleagues by driver

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Feb 8: Two office assistants of Gaibandha Maternity complex sustained severe injuries when its driver hit them recently with a sharp weapon during working hours.

Police said, according to the confession the driver named Amir Hossain, the victim named Rezaul Hossain and Lutfar Naher Luchi were found meeting intimately in a lonely room during office hours. The driver who is also one of the admirers of Luchi became very furious observing this scene. At once he attacked them with a sharp weapon. As a result, Rezaul sustained severe neck injuries and Luchi cut injuries. Both of them were at first removed to Gaibandha hospital. Later they are removed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in a critical condition.

Police arrested the accused driver from the spot.

Birth anniversary of Guru Rabidas

From A Correspondent

COMILLA, Feb 8: Guru Rabidas Mission of Jorjarkon, Comilla organised a prayer and discussion meeting on the occasion of 622nd birth anniversary of Guru Rabidas.

Guru Rabidas is the religious leader of the Rabidas community. Held in a befitting solemn atmosphere, the meeting was chaired by Khir Mohan Rabidas while Kanai Lal Rabidas Mohanta, Director General of Bangladesh Gur Rabidas Mission attended as the chief guest.

The speakers eulogised the life and deeds of Guru Rabidas who attained spirituality through long perseverance and showed the way of freedom to the oppressed lower castes in the Hindu community. They also condemned the recent oppression of the scheduled castes in Bihar state of India and called for greater unity among mankind irrespective of caste and creed in the interest of peace.

The function concluded with a session of religious songs.

the inventor of the paddy varieties, Binadhan-4 can be cultivated during 'Aman' season. Life cycle of the paddy is 130-135 days and the average yield is 4 to 4.5 tons per hectare.

Both Binadhan-5 and Binadhan-6 are cultivable during the 'Boro' season. Cultivation method of the newly invented paddy varieties is less expensive.

Life cycle of Binadhan-5 is 155-160 days and average production is 5-6 tons per hectare while life cycle of Binadhan-6 is 160-165 days and average production is 5.5 to 6.5 tons.

"Through proper nursing it will be possible to grow more than eight tons (90 maunds) of Binadhan-6 on each hectare of land, ever highest production of any HYV paddy invented in the country," Dr Ali Azam claimed.

Inventor of Binamug-5, Ziauddin Ahmed said, the pulse is cultivable in dry season.

According to him the newly invented HYV 'mug' will have the highest production capacity among the existing 'mug' varieties with average production of 1,480 kilograms per hectare.

Another HYV 'mug' in dry season — Binamug-2, and three HYVs in winter season — Binamug-1, Binamug-3 and Binamug-4 — invented by Ziauddin are now being cultivated across the country.

Expressing his satisfaction over the new inventions, BINA's Director (Research) Dr SM Rahman said the agriculture scientists of BINA will continue their efforts to invent more new HYV crop varieties for greater interest of the country.

Dr M Idris Ali, Director General of BINA and also a renowned nuclear agricultural scientist, hoped that the new inventions would play a supplementary role in mitigating the country's food shortage.



MANIKGANJ: ADAB chairperson and Proshika president Dr Gazi Faruque Ahmed on Sunday addressed a massive rally of grass-root poor here. The rally was organised by the local regional committee of Trinomul Janosangathan in cooperation with the Manikganj chapter of ADAB.

— Star photo

Target to produce 40,000 tons of gram in 10 dists

KUSHTIA, Feb 8: Authorities of Agriculture Extension Department here have set up a target to produce a total of 40,000 tons of gram in 10 districts of Khulna division during the current season, reports UNB.

AED has taken up a scheme to bring 47,300 hectares of land for cultivation of the crop. Of the land, 15,000 hectares will be cultivated in Chuadanga, 10,000 hectares each in Jessore and Magura, 16,000 hectares in Jhenidha, 1500 hectares each in Narail and Satkhira, 7,000 hectares in Kushtia, 400 hectares each in Khulna and Bagerhat and 3,500 hectares in Meherpur districts.

A total of 2,500 ponds and eight baors will be brought under intensive fish cultivation to help develop the socio-economic conditions of 10,000 fishermen of the areas.

The Local Government and Engineering Department with the financial assistance from IFAD are jointly implementing the project.

and Chuadanga for the successful implementation of the scheme.

Another report adds: The government has undertaken an ambitious programme for development of fish resources in seven districts of southern region at a cost of Tk 108 crore. The districts are Kushtia, Jhenidha, Magura, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jessore and Faridpur.

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Banana farming gains popularity in Dinajpur

PANCHAGARH, Feb 8: Banana cultivation in grater Dinajpur district has opened up scope for farmers to be well off and the country to earn foreign exchange, reports APB.

The delicious fruit is cultivated on about 2,000 acres of land in 23 thanas of greater Dinajpur district now and the area is increasing because it is more profitable than other traditional crops like pulse and jute. Agricultural Extension Department (AED) said.

During a visit to Panchagarh Sadar, Debiganj, Thakurgaon Sadar, Ranisankail, Dinajpur Sadar, Parbatipur and Birol areas, farmers told this correspondent that yield has increased because adoption of im-

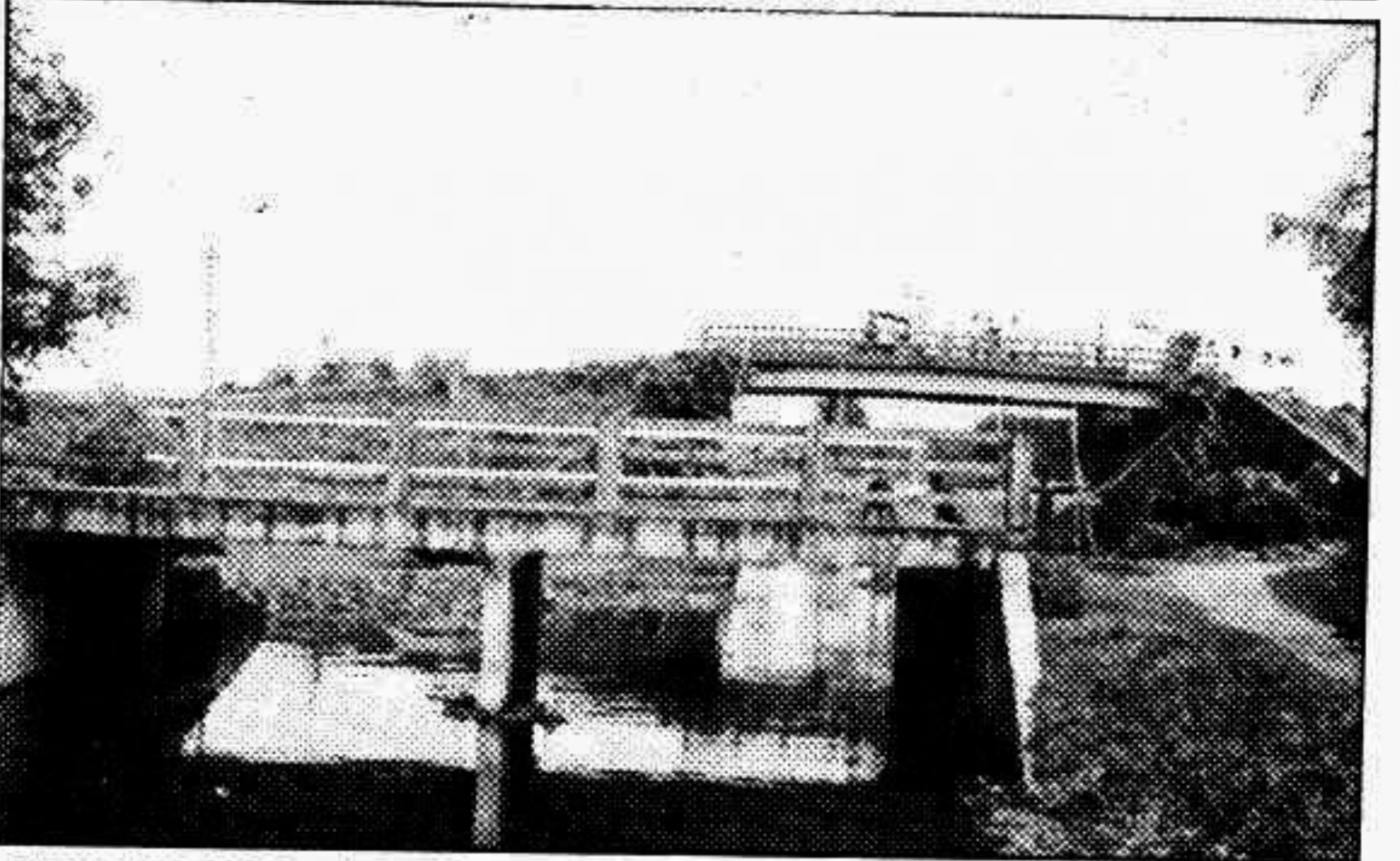
proved methods of cultivation.

They said production of export quality banana of different varieties like sagar and sabri can be increased manifold if they get loan facilities, insurance support and better training by agricultural experts.

Banana cultivation on one acre of land costs at least Tk 15,000 and the crop can be sold at Tk 23,000 to Tk 25,000, they said.

AED field supervisors said rich farmers have started taking banana cultivation and they can be encouraged more with government support.

There is good prospect for more export as the quality of the fruit is better than those of other countries, they said.



CHANDPUR: An alternative bridge constructed at a cost of Taka 40 lakh three years ago on Chandpur-Faridganj road could not be opened for movement of transport vehicles as yet. This is because of absence of a link road.

— Star photo

Gross irregularities in Laxmipur telephone deptt

LAXMIPUR, Feb 8: Gross irregularities are prevailing in telephone department of four thanas including Sadar causing untold sufferings to the subscribers, reports UNB.

The linemen cut off the telephone lines if they are not given bribe on monthly basis and the operators refuse to talk to the prospective subscribers if they do not receive money as gratis.

Local subscribers said government is being deprived of huge amount of revenue due to the malpractice engaged by a section of officials and employees of Laxmipur, Raipur and

Ranganj exchanges. The overloading is being done to the auto exchange of 500 lines of analogue system in Sadar thana. According to the system, 10 per cent lines should remain empty but there have been 498 connections out of 500 capacity resulting in cross connection, wrong dial tone, engage signal, disruption while talking.

The exchange with the capacity of 400 lines with analogue system was replaced by old NWD channel from the Feni 8+8 line of which 4/5 lines remain inoperative.