

News snaps

Body recovered

JESSORE, Feb 15: A beheaded body of a young man, abducted allegedly by outlaws from his Naldanga village home earlier, has been recovered from a beel in Bagharpara thana, reports APB.

The body was identified as that of Abdus Salam, 35, son of Lokman Mollah, police said on Monday. Salam, who was reportedly a former member of banned Biplobi Communist Party, had returned home from Malaysia three months back after staying there for three years.

Tk one cr power bill remains unpaid

SHERPUR, Feb 15: The amount of unpaid electricity bill in Nalitabari thana here is over Tk one crore, official sources said, reports UNB.

The subscribers with whom the about has been lying unpaid include residential houses, commercial establishments, rice mills, saw mills, rural power pumps and shallow engines. Power Development Board authorities conducted special drive in November and December last year and snapped over 100 illegal power connections. They also recovered Tk 50 lakh as arrears of electricity bill during the drive. PDB sources, however, said there were still several hundred unauthorised power connections in the thana. Local sources complained that linemen and metre readers of PDB receive regular shares from the unauthorised power consumers. They further complained that a big amount of electricity bill remained unpaid for long with some officials and employees of different government offices. These government servants did not paid their bills when they left their quarters.

1,278 tubewells remain inoperative

BANDARBAN, Feb 15: As 1,278 tubewells remained inoperative for a long time, acute scarcity of pure drinking water has hit the hill district forcing the people to take pond water, reports UNB.

Official sources said the tubewells in seven thanas had been installed at a cost of Tk 12 crore and now it will take Tk 1.73 crore to repair those. When contacted, DPHE Executive Engineer said they could not repair the tubewells simply for lack of fund. Sufferings of about 2 lakh people of the hill district have intensified as rivers of the region dried up with the recession of flood water last year, they said.

Gold medal awarded

FARIDPUR, Feb 15: Meritorious students of Mahmudunnabi Secondary School at Madhikhali and winners of its annual sports meet were awarded D. Gafur Gold medal in a simple ceremony at the school recently, reports APB.

Mohammad Shahidul Hassan, LGED Superintending Engineer and Shahiduzzaman Khan, Executive Editor of the daily Financial Express attended the function as the chief guest and special guest respectively.

Gambling under cover of jatra

KURIGRAM, Feb 15: Owners of gambling rings are doing a roaring business in 60 spots in nine thanas here, reports APB.

Gambling has been going on under cover of jatra, circus and VCR shows in collusion with the police, local people alleged. These anti-social activities are going on in places including Egara, Matha in Newashi union of Nageswari thana; Berubari, Dinar Par and Onpagli bridge area in Tabakpur union of Ullupur thana; Bamanerhat, Dharanibari, Mahsalar Dighi and Bokultala in Ullupur thana and Kathalbari in Gunaigachhi union of Bakshiganj thana. Rajarhat, Bhurangamari and Fulbari are also spots noted for gambling.

Rover moot at Kaliganj

SATKHIRA, Feb 15: A grand jalsa of Satkhira District First Rover Moot was held at Kaliganj College premises recently, reports BSS.

Divisional Commissioner of Khulna Mohammad Abdul Kashem was present in the function as the chief guest. Regional Secretary of Bangladesh Scouts Sayedur Rahman was the special guest. The function was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner of Satkhira, Saiful Alam. The rovers of the moot presented many cultural items in the function.

Girl rescued

TANGAIL, Feb 15: Ghatail thana police rescued a girl, Banya Roy, 12, from South Para recently, reports BSS.

She was allegedly kidnapped by miscreants last month from her father's house. A case was filed with Ghatail thana in this connection.

Road construction work progressing

NARSINGDI, Feb 15: The work of 13 rural infrastructure development and flood rehabilitation projects at a cost of Taka 13 crore 40 lakh in the six thanas here are progressing satisfactorily, reports BSS.

According to Local Government Engineering Department, 40 per cent work has already been completed and the rest is expected to be completed by April next. The work include renovation and reconstruction of roads, culverts and bridges. After completion of the projects road communication of the district would be improved.

Timbers seized

SATKHIRA, Feb 15: The forest officers of Koikhal Forest Office under Shyamnagar thana in several raids in the Sundarban areas seized five thousand pieces of stolen 'sunduri' and 'poshur' timber loaded in three engine boats, worth over about Taka 15 lakh recently, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the forest officers of Koikhal Forest Office raided many places in the Sundarban areas and seized five thousand pieces of stolen 'sunduri' and 'poshur' timber. The timbers were loaded in three engine boats. Timber loaded six other engine boats managed to escape. The seized articles were handed over to Shyamnagar thana police.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Vice-Chancellor Prof. Abdul Khaleque with a cultural team of the university who departed for Gulbarga University at Karnatak in India to take part in the SAARC Youth Festival '99 there.

— Star photo

Number of leprosy patients up

HABIGANJ, Feb 15: The number of phthisis and leprosy patients in the district is increasing in an alarming rate, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said some 2,706 people were infected by phthisis while 1,791 by leprosy in eight thanas during the last year. Of the patients, 673 were attacked by tuberculosis in sadar thana while 210 in Nabiganj, 151 in Azmiriganj, 308 in Baniachang, 131 in Lakhai, 501 in Chunarughat, 372 in Bahubal and 340 in Madhabpur thanas. During the period, 122 people were affected by leprosy in sadar thana while 151 in Nabiganj, 12 in Azmiriganj, 66 in Baniachang, 34 in Lakhai, 882 in Chunarughat, 199 in Bahubal and 321 in Madhabpur thanas.

Latrines allotted free of cost

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 15: Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has allotted a total of 3,472 latrines free of cost in 107 unions of 13 thanas, here in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to PHED official sources, the thanawise break up of latrines are: 273 in Mithaman thana, 234 in Tarail thana, 217 in Itna thana, 234 in Hossainpur thana, 172 in Nikli thana, 381 in Katiadi thana, 429 in Kishoreganj sadar thana, 186 in Kularchar thana, 334 in Karimganj thana, 180 in Astogram thana, 284 in Pakundia thana, 266 in Baitpur thana and 282 in Bhairab thana. The disbursement work is going on with the help of UNICEF.

State Minister visits River Instt

FARIDPUR, Feb 15: Minister of State for Water Resources Dr. Mohammad Alauddin recently visited the River Training Institute at Faridpur, reports APB.

He saw various models for study including that of Bhairab Railway Bridge. He praised the work by experts and said the institute was of international standard.

Door to door electioneering in 3 pourasavas of Jessore dist

JESSORE, Feb 15: Brisk preparations are afoot for holding elections in three pourasavas of the district, reports APB.

The pourasavas in the fray are Jessore, Abhoynagar and Monirampur. The status of the last two local bodies were raised recently.

Eight candidates are contesting for the post of Chairman and 132 candidates for those of commissioners in the three pourasavas.

The chairman candidates are Sharif Abdur Rakib, SM Qamruzzaman and Iqbal Kabir Zahid for Jessore pourasava; Waliur Rahman, Enamul Haq Babul and SM Ashrafuzzaman Shah for Abhoynagar pourasava and M Nazrul Islam and Amad Hossain Lablu for Monirampur pourasava.

In Jessore pourasava, 45 candidates are contesting for the posts of nine commissioners, while 11 women vying for three reserved seats.

As many as 30 candidates are contesting for nine ward commissioners in Abhoynagar pourasava and eight contenders for three reserved seats for women.

In Monirampur pourasava, there are as many as 28 candidates for the men's nine seats and 10 contestants for the women's three reserved seats. A total of 41,190 male and

38,277 female voters will exercise their franchise in Jessore pourasava, 18,712 male and 16,843 female voters in Abhoynagar pourasava and 6,192 male and 5,525 female voters in Monirampur pourasava.

Attack on bidi factory in Barisal: 5 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 15: At least five people were injured, two of them with bullet wounds in a clash between a group of armed youths and the workers of a bidi factory at Sadhu's Battala area in the outskirts of the town recently.

Witnesses said, a group of armed youth swooped on the workers who refused to work at the Gazi branch of the bidi factory.

Earlier, the agitating workers of the factory at Sadhu's Battala branch brought out a procession. During the first attack at about 1 pm the workers resisted the youths. But after an hour the youths further attacked the workers. They also blasted bombs indiscriminately. Sounds of some shots were also heard during the attack.

Quality of pry edn worsens

NOAKHALI, Feb 15: Quality of primary education in the country deteriorated although the number of the school going children increased significantly, reports UNB.

Shortage of teachers, furniture and accommodation for the students are mainly responsible for deterioration of the standard of the elementary education.

A survey titled 'Food for Education Programme: Improvement or Deterioration of the Quality of Child Education' revealed that the number of school going children increased with the introduction of the Food for Education Programme.

It also found that number of dropouts decrease side by side with increase in the numbers of the school going children in the age limit of 6-10 years.

The government with the financial assistance of World Bank started the programme in July 1993 aimed at helping the poor families to bring down the

dropout rate. However, government, non-government and registered primary schools of a union from each of the 460 thanas of the country were initially brought under the programme.

Some 4,487 primary schools were brought under the programme in the first year and another 127 madrasas were also included in the next year (1994).

Some 14.80 lakh children were enrolled in these primary schools in 1994. Of them, 6.98 lakh were given food facilities. It was 47 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in 1994.

Over 1.14 lakh metric tons of wheat were distributed among poor students that was increased in the calendar years 1995, '96, '97 and '98 considering the survey reports of the respective years.

However, a steering committee comprising representatives from Primary and Mass Educa-

The Election Commission has set up 260 booths in 49 centres of Jessore pourasava, 111 booths in 18 centres of Abhoynagar pourasava and 35 booths in 10 centres of Monirampur pourasava areas.

Candidates, their supporters and workers are now busy holding projection meetings and door to door electioneering.

BSS from Kishoreganj reports: Election tempo has gained momentum in three pourasava areas of Kishoreganj district.

Candidates have started contacting people door to door. The campaigning is going on in full swing.

According to official sources, 10 chairmen, 181 commissioners and 37 women commissioners are contesting in the election.

Meeting, processions and posters are going on as usual. People of all walks of life seem to be very much interested about the election. They want the poll heat and soul.

Meanwhile, a meeting was held in the conference room of the district on February 8 with DC in the chair.

The meeting discussed about free, fair and peaceful holding of election.

All necessary steps are being taken for maintaining law and order during election.

Five killed in road accidents in 2 dists

Five persons were killed and 13 others injured in two road accidents in Gaibandha and Sylhet on Friday and Sunday, reports UNB.

Two people including a boy were killed and three others injured in a road accident at Masta in Gobindaganj thana of Gaibandha district on Sunday.

Police said the accident occurred when a microbus carrying newspapers from Dhaka collided head-on with a truck on the spot.

The victims are: helper of the microbus and an unidentified boy, aged about 10.

The injured, drive of the microbus Anwar, 30, Abdul Gafur, 28, and Majibur, 30, were admitted to the local hospital.

Police seized the microbus, but the truck driver managed to flee the scene along with his vehicle.

Another report says: Three people were killed and 10 others wounded when two vehicles collided head on at Karnaganj of Jakiganj thana in Sylhet on Friday.

According to witnesses, the mishap occurred when a Sylhet-bound bus from Jakiganj rammied a tempo coming from the opposite direction in the afternoon leaving 13, three of them seriously injured.

Of the injured, Jamal, 25, succumbed to his injuries on way to Osmani Medical College Hospital while Khalilur Rahman, 50, and Baharuddin, 15, to Jakiganj thana Hospital. All the three were tempo passengers.

Ten other wounded people were admitted to Jakiganj Thana Health Complex.

500 arrested in Sylhet in 15 days

SYLHET, Feb 15: As part of its countrywide combing operation, police detained more than 500 people from the district alone in last 15 days, reports APB.

They also recovered three homemade pipeguns, two pistols, two crude bombs, two rounds of cartridges and some other lethal weapons from 11 thanas in the district during the drive.

Police sources said, of the arrested 375 were held under GR cases, 75 under regular cases, 45 under Article 54 CrPC, and 10 fugitive offenders.

Police started the countrywide drive to round up anti-social elements as part of the government effort to improve law and order.



COMILLA: The local unit of Biswa Sahitta Kendra brought out a colourful procession here recently. A discussion meeting also followed the procession.

— Star photo by Shaheen Sarwar

A social worker plans to make Shelaidah 'Kuthibari' more attractive

From Fakhru Nessa

KUSHTIA, Feb 15: Nobel laureate Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore's 'Kuthibari' at Shelaidah stands as a monument of human excellence.

From here the great poet got the inspiration to write world famous poems. Pramathanath Bishi, a noted scholar and a close associate of the poet made the comment that this was because of Shelaidah from where the poet had flourished his poetic talents. Tagore also acknowledged himself so many times that Shelaidah influenced him very immensely.

Tagores had their 'zamindari' at Shelaidah, eight miles north-west of Kushtia town across the river Gorai. Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of the poet bought the 'zamindari' in auction in 1800 AD. Earlier this was held by the great Sitaram Roy of Muhammadpur in Jessore. Afterwards it was handed over to the 'Maharaj' of Natore, King Bahadur, an appointee of Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan.

Rani Bhavani of Natore also founded a temple at Khorshedpur adjacent to Shelaidah 'Kuthibari'. The village, Khorshedpur is named after the great jeshi saint Khorshed Shah who lived and died there.

Shelaidah stands by the side of the once mighty river Padma. During the British period there lived a tyrant indigo planter Shelley and the village Shelaidah is believed to have been named after him. Tagores bought the 'Kuthibari' from Shelly and his associates. When it was badly affected by the erosion of the river Padma Rabindranath Tagore with the help of his elder brother Jyotindranath Tagore decided to shift the 'Kuthibari' to the present site.

Rathindranath Tagore, the only son of Rabindranath Tagore, reconstructed the present 'Kuthibari' with a different design and structure as imagined by the world poet. The 'Kuthibari' is spread over six bighas of land and an artistic boundary wall reflects the ripples of the Padma. The 'Kuthibari' is a two and-a-half

storied building with 15 rooms. The bed room of the poet is on the eastern part of the first floor overlooking the Padma and the vast mangroves have been bought from one Upen of Shelaidah. Tagore immortalised him in his poem 'Dui Bigha Zami'. He has small room on the top floor. It was his writing room and many a time he lived here like a hermit. There was a terrace at one side of the 'Kuthibari' where lived Professor Lawrence who used to teach Rathindranath Tagore, the poet's only son. CF Andrews also lived with the poet for some time at the 'Kuthibari' along with the famous scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose. Poet Dilendra Lal Roy, Lokendranath Palit (ICS), Poet Pramatha Choudhury, Poet Mohitlal Majumdar and Sister Nibedita. Noted social workers also visited him a number of times at Shelaidah. Tagore also

founded a primary school here after the name of his son's wife Pratima Devi.

He also initiated cooperative movement at Shelaidah and set up a folklore museum. The great boat by which the poet moved here is missing. The steam boat is still there. Tagore loves, writers, artists, educationists visit Shelaidah 'Kuthibari' not only on Baishakh 25, but also at any time throughout the year.

Efforts are yet to be taken by the government to make it a tourist spot. Visitors who come from home and abroad have to face manifold sufferings during their stay here. The problems were published in the national dailies, but Parjatan Corporation is indifferent about it. There is no good Motel, Cottage, Rest House or any standard restaurant here. Visitors have to face a lot of problems here.

A local philanthropist and

social worker named Alauddin Ahmed has come forward with a master plan to make Shelaidah 'Kuthibari' more attractive. The plan includes construction of park, picnic spot, construction of 12 Cottages (most of them Air-conditioned), arrangement of pure drinking water, transport facilities, restaurants and police outpost for security. This complex will spread on over 50 bighas of land. The plan has been highly acclaimed by Prof. Kabir Choudhury, Dr. Anwarul Karim, Prof. Kayesuddin, Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University and journalist Monoranjan Ghosal.

Local elite have expressed the view that a section of bad elements are trying to shut down this noble venture. They have appealed to all to come and see the project and place their opinions to the government for the greater interest of the country.



KUSHTIA: Kuthibari of Rabindra Nath Tagore at Shelaidah, eight miles off the district town.

— Star photo



MAGURA: Early cultivated onions have arrived in the local markets abundantly. As a result prices of onion have also decreased to a great extent. At present one maund of onion is being sold at Taka 400 which was sold earlier at Taka 1,000 a month ago. This picture was taken last week from a rural market.

— Star photo

In 4 Rajshahi villages Terrorists have unleashed reign of terror

RAJSHAHI, Feb 15: Terrorists have unleashed reign of terror in four villages of Durgapur thana forcing the villagers to pass their days in great insecurity for the last few days, reports UNB.

People, particularly the males of Brahmapur, Suthandighi, Kaliganj and Anulia villages of Joynagar union gather to their villages in day time and leave after sundown for fear of life.

Some 25 families have so far been compelled to leave their houses due to the terrorists' threat and demand for tolls and over 50 people were assaulted or tortured by them in the last six months.

Local people alleged that terrorists numbering 50 to 60 of Abdul Majid, chairman of the union and his rival Belaluddin Sarker groups are in constant

fight for establishing supremacy in the villages.

Common people are the victims of their conflicts. The enmity of both the groups deepened recently over submitting the tender of the embankment over the river Barnay.

Ransacking, setting on fire in the houses of the common people and physical torture by the terrorists of the two groups on flimsy grounds are the regular phenomena in the recent days.

However, police or thana administration failed to take any action due to their political influences and shelters, said the local people.

A police official of Durgapur thana said despite having a lot of allegations and cases against Majid chairman we could not go for action against him as nobody dares to appear as witness.

5 killed in 4 dists last week

MANIKGANJ, Feb 15: Five people, including three women, were murdered in four districts of the country in the last week, police said, reports UNB.

Shiblalaya police in Manikganj district recovered two unidentified bloodstained bodies, including a female, on Sunday.

Of them, the floating body of a teenage girl was recovered from under a bridge at Falmatia area of the thana on Dhaka-Aracha highway.

Police suspected that the girl might be raped and killed in a planned way.

In another incident, police recovered the body of a 30-year-old man from a field at Tetraibari village of the thana. The body bore marks of in-

juries.

In Jessore, Muniruzzaman, 25, son of Akbar Biswas, was kidnapped by outlaws from his Sada thana residence and stabbed to death at Jhumhumpur BSIC area in the town on Saturday night. Police recovered the body the next morning.

In Mymensingh, Nur Bhanu, 30, wife of Shamsu Mia of Golokpur village in Gouripur thana was beaten to death while she went to resolve the discontent among a neighbouring couple on Saturday.

Besides, fishermen of Manda thana in Naogaon district recovered the body of a young girl from Katatara beel recently and handed the body over to police.

Rickshaws without licence increasing in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Feb 15: The number of rickshaws without licence is increasing alarmingly in the city creating unwanted traffic congestion in many roads, reports UNB.

Officials in the City Corporation here said the total number of rickshaw licence issued by them is 12,003. But they said that the total number of the three-wheelers plying on different roads is much higher than the licensed ones.

Local leaders of different rickshaw workers' unions said that the number might be over 20,000 and it was increasing everyday. They said the migration of rural poor to the city was one of the main causes of the gradual increase of rickshaw.

Rural poverty, erosion by the river and lack of job opportunity were some of the reasons behind the migration, they added.

Many of the rural migrants prefer rickshawpulling as their profession because of its easy availability and lower level of skill needed.

The migrants usually take shelter at different places at Dargapara, Pathanpara and slums in Gorhanga railway colony, Shirol, Ramchandrapur, Mahishbathan, Rajshahi Court and Haragaram areas.

The inmates of the shanties in these areas are mainly the migrants from Gaibandha, Malopara, Sonadighirmoar, Malopara, Kadirganj, Greater Road, Rajshahi Shirol station, Bus terminal and Medical College areas of the city.

The situation further aggravates with the irresponsibility of the traffic police, taking of bribe by them from the rickshawpullers and negligence of duty of the city corporation.

Science Week at Brahmandi High School

NARSINGDI, Feb 15: A three-day National Science and Technology Week began here at Brahmandi KKM Government High School compound on Sunday, reports BSS.

Science and Technology Minister Lt. Gen (rtd) Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan opened the week with a call to the students to devote their energy to keep up pace with the development in modern science and technology.

Presided over by the president of the 22nd National Science and Technology Week Observance Committee and deputy Commissioner of Narsingdi Rafiqul Islam the inaugural function was also addressed among others by Additional Deputy Commissioner Narsingdi Abu Bakar Mohammad Shajahan and Secretary of the committee and headmaster of Brahmandi KKM Government High School Md Emdadul Hoque.

Obituary

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Feb 15: Md Moniruzzaman Biswas (Moni Mia), a senior advocate of Chuadanga district bar died at his Chuadanga court para residence due to old age ailment on January 21. He was 96.

Advocate Monir left behind five sons and four daughters and a host of relatives and advisers to mourn his death. He was buried at the graveyard adjacent to the local railway station.

The death of Moniruzzaman was condoled on January 24 at the 'Ejlash' room of the District and Sessions Judge, Chuadanga, Ansaruddin presided over the condolence meeting.

Another condolence meeting was held at the bar association hall of Chuadanga on the same day.

It may be noted here, Advocate Moniruzzaman Biswas is the father of Advocate Quamrul Arefin. The Daily Star correspondent based at Chuadanga.