

News snaps

Cottage industries being ruined

SHERPUR, Feb 26: The traditional cane and bamboo-based cottage industries here are on the verge of extinction in absence of proper patronisation, reports UNB.

The products of these industries were very much popular all over the country. But presently these cottage industries are at moribund stage due to shortage of bamboo and cane, high prices of raw materials and lack of working capital. Thousands of workers involved in cottage industries are passing their days in great hardships. Many of them have already left their occupation. A large number of people of Sadar, Nalitabari, Jhenigati and Sribardi thanas are engaged in the age-old occupation. Female members of the family used to produce basket, *chatai*, cane chair, table, cradle and cap. The local elite urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to save the traditional cottage industries.

4 abducted students return home

KHAGRACHHARI, Feb 26: Four students, abducted by a group of tribal terrorists on Tuesday, returned to their homes unhurt on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police confirmed the return of Suman Chakma, Shanti Bikash Chakma, Pulin Bihari Chakma and Gai Chakma. Parbaty Chhatragram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) claimed that the opponents abducted the students for supporting the CHT peace accord at gunpoint. Meanwhile, PCJSS complained that the anti-peace accord group led by Prasit-Snachoy abducted another tribal man, Jagat Joyti Chakma, 20, son of Prafulla Kumar Chakma of Dacutta Mojahanpara in Malchchhari union of Mohalchhari thana on Tuesday night. The Samity strongly protested and denounced the incident.

Old man dies in road accident

SYLHET, Feb 26: An old man died in a tragic road accident at Bani village in Kanaighat thana here, reports UNB.

Police said the victim Hormuj Ullah, 60, met the tragic end when he suddenly fell down on a roadside canal from the bus while going to attend a public meeting of former president H M Ershad here on February 14. Police arrested the driver and seized the bus. The body was handed over to the relatives after autopsy at the Osmani Medical College Hospital. Meanwhile, Manik Miah, 35, son of Rois Ali of Kona village in Jakiganj district died after excessive drinking of alcohol on the same day. His body was recovered from his bedroom by his relatives, police said.

Train passengers in miseries

SYLHET, Feb 26: The miseries of the low income group of people of the region have increased following the withdrawal of 'Shovan' class from the inter-city train plying between the district and Dhaka, reports UNB.

'Shovan' was the economic class in the inter-city trains Parabat, Joyantika and Upaban. A large number of passengers prefer to travel on train rather than bus as the train journey is comparatively comfortable and safe. Following the decision of the Railway Authority the poor passengers are forced to travel on buses with comparatively higher fare. As a result, the government is being deprived of huge revenue. The local leaders urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to restore the economic class again for the interest of the poorer section of the people in the region.

3 of a family killed in road accident

CHANDPUR, Feb 26: Three persons of a family died on the spot and two others were seriously injured when a bus rammmed an autorickshaw from behind near Lunti on the Kochua-Kaliapara road recently, reports APB.

Chandrabhan Banu, 90, her son Belayet Hossain Bhandari, 50, and his wife Razia Begum, 40, were killed on the spot. Autorickshaw driver Md Billal Hossain, 28, and a woman, Fazilatunnessa, 30, were rushed to Kacuha Health Complex in critical conditions, police said. Police seized the bus, but the driver fled away.

Beauty parlours flourishing

PABNA, Feb 26: Beauty parlours are proliferating in Shal-garia, Shibrampur and Dialalpur areas in Pabna town, reports APB.

Many women and housewives have taken to this business as a source of extra income. About 15 of them have received training from professional beauticians in Dhaka. The business can be started with a capital of about Tk 50,000 only. A woman who pioneered the business in the town said she had to face problems at the beginning as it was not considered a respectable career. But it acceptable now. Women were rather shy about visiting beauty parlours and using their services, but business is picking up gradually. Their biggest clients, however, are brides, she said.

Madaripur Bar Assoc poll held

MADARIPUR, Feb 26: Election of Madaripur District Bar Association was held recently, reports APB.

A 13-member committee was elected with Md Mujibur Rahman as president and Sujit Chatterjee as general secretary. The other office-bearers are vice-presidents Gopal Chandra Sarkar and Md Badiuzzaman, assistant secretaries S M Ruhul Amin, Md Habibur Rahman Khan (Badal) and Bimal Chandra Baroi, treasurer Md Moslem Ali Akan and members A K M Foyzur Rahman Hiroo, Jalalur Rahman, Md Siddikur Rahman, Md Mahmudur Rahman and Abdul Jalil Matabbar.

Construction of schools completed

JESSORE, Feb 26: Construction of 84 non-government and 49 government primary schools here has been completed at a cost of Tk 6 crore under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance, reports APB.

The new schools will enroll about 65,000 more students, official sources said. Of the registered non-government school, 27 have been constructed in Keshabpur thana, 15 in Monirampur, 10 in Bagharpara, nine in Chougachha, six in Sharsha, two in Abhaynagar, one in Jhikargacha and 14 in Sadar thana. Official sources said 20 of the new government primary schools have been constructed in Keshabpur thana, 11 in Abhaynagar, six in Chougachha, five in Jhikargacha, three in Sharsha and two in Monirampur thana.

Science Fair concludes

MAGURA, Feb 26: A three-day district-level science fair, organised as part of the 22nd National Science and Technology Week, ended here last week, reports UNB.

A total of 30 organizations, including various educational institutions and science clubs took part in the fair held at Magura Government College. Magura District Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the fair on February 16 and distributed prizes among the winners on the concluding day. Another report says: The annual conference and sports competition of police was held at the district Police Lines on February 16. More than 100 police personnel from four thanas took part in various events of the sports competition. DIG (Khulna Range) Mohammad Lutful Kabir opened the meet while Jahanara Kabir, distributed prizes among the winners.

Road Transport Workers Union poll

SHERPUR, Feb 26: The biennial election of the district unit of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Union will be held on March 5, reports UNB.

A total of 33 candidates are contesting in the election for 10 executive posts of the union. Some 1,371 enlisted members of the union are expected to cast their votes in the election to be held at new bus terminal in the town.

Financial crisis of sharecroppers

MADARIPUR, Feb 26: Some 2,220 hectares of cropland out of 87,132 in the district remained uncultivated due to financial crisis of sharecroppers caused by price hike of agri-inputs and natural calamities, reports UNB.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, there are 83,028 sharecroppers out of 1.10 lakh farmers in Sadar, Kalkini, Rajshahi and Subchar thanas, and they cultivate nearly 95 per cent of cropland. Most of the sharecroppers, who have no land of their own, are leading the life in untold miseries, and those who have got some lands cannot cultivate those for lack of bank loan. They alleged that the land owners are reluctant to lease out lands to those who insist on agreement as per the 1984 Land Reform Ordinance. The land owners usually change sharecroppers after every two or three years and forcibly take half of the crops violating the ordinance, they further alleged.

Wheat allocated under FWP

MAGURA, Feb 26: About 1,261 tonnes of wheat have been allocated for implementation of 316 projects in the district under Food for Work Programme (FWP) during the current dry season, reports APB.

An official of the District Relief and Rehabilitation Department told this correspondent that 448 tonnes have been allocated for 127 projects in the Sadar thana, 267 tonnes for 468 projects in Sherpur thana, 298 tonnes for 64 projects in Mohammapur thana and 248 tonnes for 57 projects in Shalikhah thana. The projects include construction and repair of dams, roads and culverts, earth-filling, and development of school and madrassahs. Work on the projects is going on and is expected to be completed by June this year.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sayeedur Rahman along with other high officials of the university placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar here in the early hours of Shaheed Day on February 21.

— Star photo

Water level falls sharply

River routes threatened in southern region

BARISAL, Feb 26: The river routes in the country's southern region have seriously been threatened with the sharp fall of the water levels in many rivers and emergence of shoals at many points, reports UNB.

Competent sources expressed fear that plying of river vessels in these routes might come to a halt any time.

Shoals emerged at many points on the routes from Barisal to Dhaka, Chittagong, Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna making the movement of river vessels including passenger launches and steamers risky.

From the very beginning of the dry season this year, the motor launches of Barisal-Dhaka route are plying in an alternative route via Maulavir Hat avoiding Muladi.

The new route takes about 150 to 180 minutes more to reach the destination, said Abul Bashar Khan, master of a motor launch. "The alternative route

is not out of threat as the depth of river at many points is too shallow to ply a heavy vessel like passenger launch," he said.

The most vulnerable points on this route are Baushia crossing, Badarpur and the estuary (tidal mouth) of Maulavir Hat.

The launches need at least a depth of seven feet for smooth movement, but at these points water level sometime stands below six feet level causing serious problem for the water transportation, said the sources.

They said the launches sometimes have to wait for hours together for the high tide to cross these points.

On the route to Chittagong from Barisal, three points have become vulnerable making the plying of launches and steamers hazardous. The points are Shayestabad, a channel near Daulatkhan and Syedpur.

The ships and launches ply-

ing on this route always move according to the tidal cycle and a passenger vessel is to wait for at least five hours for the high tide if it arrives at these points untimely, said Abul Quasem, master of another launch.

The sources said plying of water vessels on Barisal-Bhola route is continuing with many obstacles due to the same problem.

At many points of the route, the required depth of five feet in the river is absent, said the sources.

The situation on the other routes is same due to the fall of water level in the rivers with the advent of the dry season.

When contacted, BIWTA sources here said the authorities have not taken any measure as yet to ensure smooth plying of river vessels despite the fact that the routes have become hazardous for the launches and other vessels.



GAIBANDHA: A vast tract of land has already been devoured by erosion of the river here. Now Balashi-Gaibandha road is threatened.

— Star photo

Ideal villages in Natore are no longer ideal

PABNA, Feb 26: Ideal villages in the district, set up under Swanirvar Ideal Village Project, are no longer ideal, reports UNB.

Insufficient facilities and growing terrorism in the ideal villages have brought shame on the authorities.

The number of families in the ideal villages, scattered across the district, has now come down to 748 from 3,001.

The ambitious project, aiming to rehabilitate landless and destitute families, was undertaken by the previous government.

After assuming power, the present Awami League government has taken up another project, Ashrayan, for the same purpose, but the fate of the new project also hangs in the balance.

District administration sources said there are 23 ideal villages under the Swanirvar Ideal Village Project in eight thanas here.

Some 3,001 various types of families, including 824 planned and 817 rehabilitated ones, had been settled in those villages.

As of December 1998, only 748 families were found residing in those villages, officials said.

The thana-wise breakup of the families now residing in the villages are: 163 in four villages of Sadar, 120 in five villages of Sujanagar, 65 in three villages of Sathia, 84 in two villages of Bera, 142 in three villages of Bhanganur, 70 in two villages of Faridpur, 42 in two villages of Chatmohor and 62 in two vil-

lages of Atghoria thanas.

Later, 69 more families deserted the villages for various reasons, local sources said. Of them, 38 families out of 47 in Sadarpur village and seven out of 91 in Isamati in Sadar thana, 12 out of 27 in Kadoa, 12 out of 38 in Newgi Banagram in Sujanagar thanas left the vil-

lages and settled somewhere else.

While visiting the villages, the correspondent found that the villagers were not getting the facilities as committed by the government.

"The government has failed to follow up its pledges in action," bemoaned a villager.

As per the project profile, the villagers were supposed to have provided with mass education centres, pure drinking water, Mother and Child Health (MCH) and small credit facilities.

"No government official or organisation now feels the necessity to visit the villages to see our miseries," said another resident at Sadarpur village.

He said four deep tubewells had been installed in the village for supplying safe drinking water, but unfortunately three of them remained inoperative for long.

Firefighters brought the blaze under control.

The DC of Rangamati, Shah Alam, SP Mokhesur Rahman visited the spot.

Local people said, the house was set on fire four times in the past in a sequel to political rivalry.



MYMENSINGH: Prof. Mohammad Hossain, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University conducting the oath taking ceremony of Bangladesh Agricultural University Central Students Union (BAUCSU) recently. Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim and Secretary General of Bangladesh Krishibid Institution Abdul Mannan are also seen on the dais.

Two children burnt alive in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Feb 26: Two children were burnt alive while their parents along with some neighbours were injured in a devastating fire incident at Partalsa village in Natore sadar thana on February 21.

One year old Anju Ara was burnt to ashes and her five-year-old brother succumbed to his serious burn injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital when their mosquito-curtain was set on fire from a lamp. They were sleeping during the incident. Father of the children Hanif Ali and his wife along with some of their neighbours received burn injuries while they were fighting to extinguish fire.

This incident has created a hart-rending scenes at the locality.

Outbreak of chicken pox in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 26: Chicken pox has broken out in an epidemic form in different areas of the district recently.

People of all ages, especially children, are being attacked with chicken pox. The symptoms are fever, headache and pain over the body.

The disease is spreading at Alipur, Luxmipur and Tepakhola in the town, Char Hajiganj and Rotobir Char in Char Bhadransar and Pajkhal and Babur Char in Sadarpur thanas.

A doctor said that chicken pox has no preventive measure but it required cautiousness.

Because of teasing

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Feb 26: Swastipur High School, six miles away from Kushtia town has been declared closed sine die from Monday in protest against teasing girl students.

According to guardians, the girl students are being teased by the boys regularly and they have lodged protest against this sort of activities. Guardians have become frustrated when no action was taken by the school authority. On February 14 the girl students came to the school to receive their stipend money. On the day the girl students were heckled in many ways. After the incident president of the school governing body and chairman of Alampur union has given directives to the Head Master to close the school sine die.

Alleged criminal arrested

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 26: Bandar thana police arrested an alleged hardened criminal wanted in more than 10 cases including three murder cases, from the Dewanbug area of Dhaka-Chittagong highway on Saturday.

The arrested, Nazim, 29, invoked suspicion of police while passing the area by a private car without registration plate at around 1 am.

Police also arrested one Nasima Akter Popi, 20, from the car. Popi claimed that she was Nazim's wife but police said they found reasons not to believe the claim.

Police later on sent Nazim and Popi to Demra thana with which cases against Nazim were lodged.

Appointment of doctors at Rangamati stayed

RANGAMATI, Feb 26: The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs has issued a stay order regarding appointment of doctors on an ad-hoc basis in the Rangamati Health Department, reports APB.

The order by the ministry has caused agitation among the doctors.

The stay order was designed to sort out complications in the matter of appointment of some doctors.

Chairman of the District Council has acknowledged receipt of the stay order. "We have completed the procedure for appointing 70 doctors in Rangamati district with the approval of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, he told APB.

The health care system of Chittagong Hill Tracts has almost collapsed, as most of the thana health complexes in the hill districts have no doctors.

Kushtia BMA poll held

KUSHTIA, Feb 26: Doctor M A Quasem and Doctor Moynuddin Ahmed were elected uncontested recently as president and secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Kushtia unit respectively, reports BSS.

41 murderers awarded life term imprisonment in Nilphamari

From Our Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Feb 26: A total of 41 persons were awarded life term imprisonment recently on charge of murder, arson and dacoity.

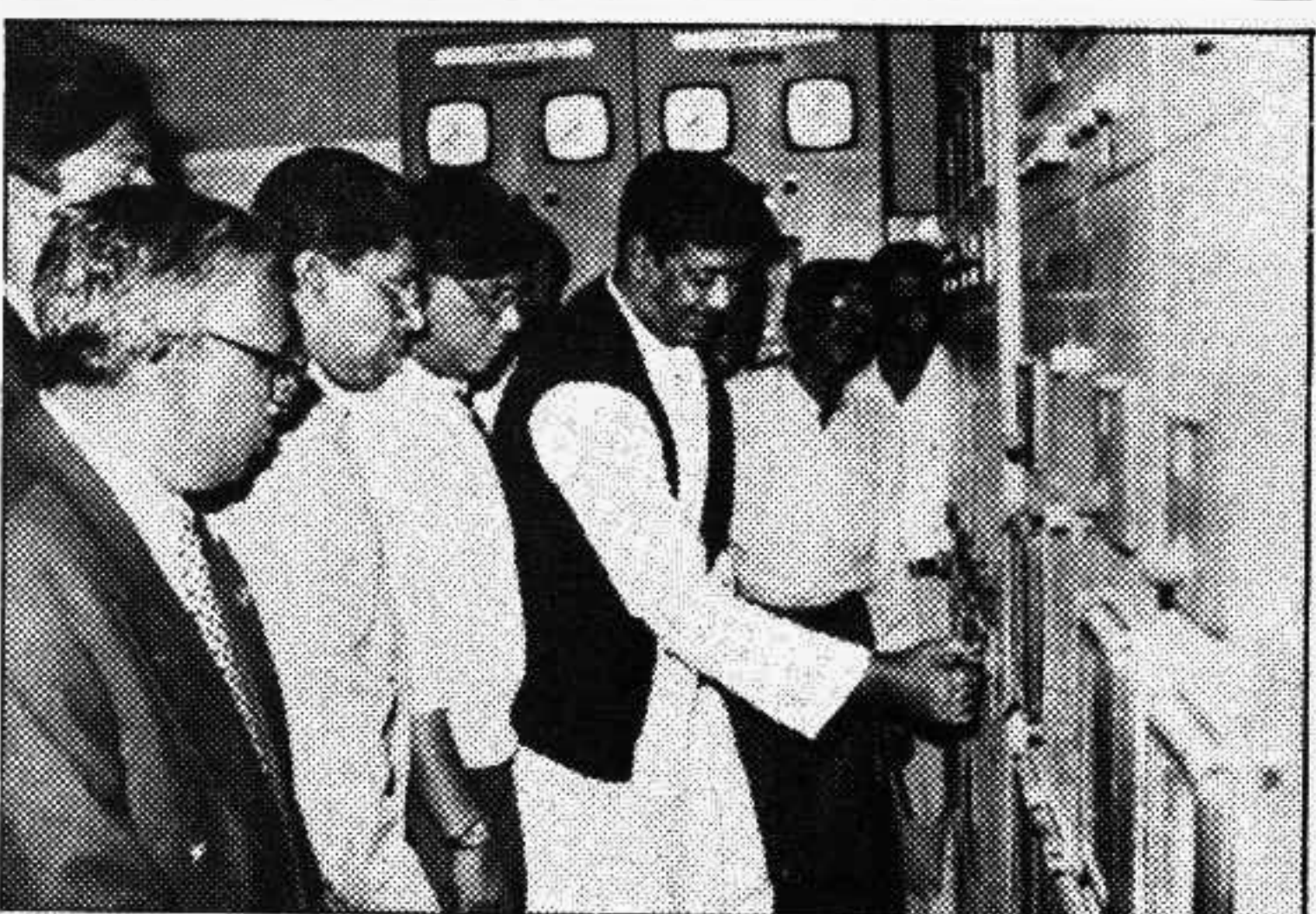
Md Nurul wadud, District and Sessions Judge, Nilphamari in a verdict awarded each convict life term imprisonment and a penalty of Taka 1,000 failing which imprisonment for one year more. Four persons were freed as the charges against them were not proved.

According to the history of the case, in the morning of November 2, 1994 a gang led by Nader Ali and Eunus Ali forcibly entered into the house of Mozammel Haque of Jhunag chapani union in Dimla Police Station (PS). They were armed with fire arms and other

lethal weapons. Then they became engaged in looting and arson. They hit Mozammel Haque, his uncle Mohammad Hossain Ali with sharp weapons injuring them fatally. Mohammad Hossain Ali died on the same night in the hospital. A case was filed with Dimla PS accusing 45 persons for murder and chargesheet was issued against all of them.

After examining and cross examining them the District and Sessions Judge convicted 41 of them and released four others.

The case was conducted for the state by PP Advocate Anwar Hossain. Advocate Abdul Wahab, Alimuddin and Abdur Rashid Chowdhury appeared for the accused.



NARAYANGANJ: Local member of parliament (MP) Shamim Osman recently inaugurated a 33/11 kv electric sub-centre in Fatulla industrial belt.

— Star photo



NATORE: A local artist rendering songs at the publication ceremony of Poet Alek Sheikh's book of verses 'Shaw-O-Roudra Khungi Tare' recently.

— Star photo

'Gazni Abakash Kendro' can be developed as tourist spot

SHERPUR, Feb 26: The 'Gazni Abakash Kendra' at Jhenagati thana at the foot of the Garo Hills, some 23 kilometers off the town, has grown into an attractive tourist spot, reports APB.

Gazni, endowed with natural beauty, has been known as a picnic spot since the British period. A rest house has been constructed on top of a 200 feet hill, surrounded by an attractive ambience.

Picnic parties crowd this spot during winter and spring every year.

The Indian state of Meghalaya is just two kilometers away from here across the border.

The spot has another special attraction to the people because freedom fighters were trained here during the Liberation War. Tribal people like Garos, Koch, Hajang, Banai, Bhalu and Adhis live in an around the area.

Two lakes were recently dug at the Gazni tourist spot, with the waters flowing down the Garo hills. Sight seeing towers have also been constructed. Arrangements have been made for rowing in the lakes. Tubewells have been sunk to ensure supply of drinking water.

Remarkable changes have been made in the communication system in the area with the

construction of feeder roads with the financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank. One can now reach Gazni from Dhaka in three to four hours by car.

Local people told that in view of the increasing number of tourists crowding Gazni, it needs to be expanded and more such tourist spots need to be developed.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) can help develop this spot to encourage foreign tourists, they said.

Foundation of Sainik Club laid

By Staff Correspondent

Veteran freedom fighter Maj Gen (Retd) Muhammad Subed Ali Bhuiyan laid the foundation stone of 'Sainik Club' at Daudkandi Gram Unnayan Complex in Juranpur on Saturday.

The club will be set up for the retired members of Army, Navy, Air Force and BDR. Some 300 retired personnel of the forces were present on the occasion.



DAUDKANDI: Maj Gen (Retd) Muhammad Subed Ali Bhuiyan laid the foundation stone of Sainik Club at Juranpur here on February 20 by digging a spade of earth.

Addressing the foundation laying ceremony as chief guest, MSA Bhuiyan said different forces always gives the teaching to the personnel to maintain peace and discipline and refrain from all sorts of crime.

The soldiers after their retirement need to utilise the training which was given during their service life, he said and added that many problems of the society can be solved if the retired soldiers maintain their teaching and training.

The Sainik Club will now provide financial assistance to the families and bear educational expenses for the wards after the death of any soldier at Daudkandi thana. The foundation laying ceremony was followed by a milad mahfil and special prayer seeking divine blessing for the peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

Undertrial escapes from police custody

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 26: A handcuffed under-trial prisoner Tayebur Rahman, 30, escaped from police custody from Batiaghata thana court on Thursday noon.

He was arrested by police on Wednesday last from Pankhali village along with four others in connection with a dacoity case filed with Batiaghata thana on January 27 this year.

The prisoner managed to escape from the court *haat* housed in the Khulna Collectorate building in presence of a lot of people and throwing dust into the eyes of three police constables who have already been placed under suspension.

Police hunt for the escaped prisoner is going on.

Stray bullet kills woman

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 26: One woman identified as Kadhi Banu, 60, met her tragic death when a bullet hit her neck during a clash between two rival groups of Jubo League at Al-tapole lane in Kotwali thana on Thursday night.

She was passing by the lane when the two groups were locked in clash, police said.

According to eye witnesses, police recovered her dead body from the road after one hour of the incident. None has filed any case till writing of this report.