

News snaps

Baral now a morbid stream

PABNA, Mar 9: The once mighty Baral river has lost its navigability and becomes almost a morbid stream now, affecting irrigation and business in Pabna and Bogra districts, reports APB.

Stretches of the river almost dries up in the dry season, affecting irrigation in Gurudaspur, Bagatipara, Lalpur, Baraigram, Shingra, Tarash, Chatmohar, Bhangura, Baranagar and Faridpur thana areas. The sluice gate at Charghat has become ineffective, local farmers said. During dry season, the rivers become non-navigable in about 125 kilometres from Padma to Baghabari, 20 kilometres from Jogendranagar to Gumani river, 10 kilometres from Chhoto Baral to Beshanbilsha, 50 kilometres from Atrai to Astonomisha Trimohana and 20 kilometres from Astonomisha.

Housewife burnt alive

SYLHET, Mar 9: A housewife, Salma Begum, 22, was allegedly burnt alive at Laker Par village in Goainghat thana recently, reports APB.

Family sources said, Salma, wife of Morshed Ahmed, was fatally injured as her clothes caught fire while she was lighting a kerosene lamp in the evening on March 2. She was taken to Sylhet Osmany Memorial Hospital where she died the next day.

40,677 patients treated in outdoor

CHUADANGA, Mar 9: A total of 40,677 patients were given outdoor treatment in Chuadanga Sadar Hospital during last year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, of the total patients 11,889 were male. Of them 16,606 were female and 12,182 were children. The patients were given treatment against fever, diarrhoea, eye disease, dysentery, colic pain, skin diseases, headache and diseases relating to mouth, nose, belly and ear.

Foodgrains for FWP projects

BHERAMARA, Mar 9: The government has allocated one thousand and ten tonnes of foodgrains for the implementation of 90 projects in six thanas of Kushtia district under Food for Works Programmes, reports BSS.

Of the total quantity, two hundred seventy tonnes have been allocated for 20 projects in Daulatpur thana, two hundred sixty-five tonnes for twenty-two projects in Mirpur thana, one hundred ten tonnes for 10 projects in Khoksa thana, one hundred fifty tonnes for 12 projects in Kumarkhali thana and two hundred and five tonnes for 15 projects in Bheramara thana. Sixty per cent work of the projects have already been completed and the rest is expected to be completed soon.

Training for rehabilitated people

MAGURA, Mar 9: A six-day training for the people rehabilitated in 'Arayan' project was held at Mohammadpur thana here recently, reports APB.

Thirty men and women, rehabilitated in the Mousha Arayan project, participated in the training, organised by the Mohammadpur thana parishad. The participants were imparted training on facing flood and other natural disasters, prevention of women's repression, law and order, self-employment, primary health care and family planning. The Thana Nirbahi Officer inaugurated the workshop held at the Thana Parishad auditorium.

Brickfield owners do not use coal

FARIDPUR, Mar 9: Some 60 brick fields are operating in the district, thumbing environmental rules and a ban on burning of firewood, reports APB.

Sources said none of these use coal. When contacted, some of the brickfield owners said coal and firewood cost almost the same but the latter is easily available. People in rural areas sell their trees due to poverty, they said. None of the brickfield owners abide by environmental rules, but no step has been taken by the authorities in this regard.

Theft committed

NETRAKONA, Mar 9: A theft was committed in a commercial house at Malni road here on Saturday night, reports BSS.

According to police sources, a group of thieves entered into the commercial house which belongs to a businessman of the district Alhaj Hafizuddin by breaking the window grills of the house. Then the thieves broke the lock of an iron safe and decamped with a big amount of money and gold ornaments. Police investigation is going on. None was arrested so far, police sources added.

Truck kills 3 kinsmen

SYLHET, Mar 9: A truck driven at a break-neck speed ran down three kinsmen, two of them underaged, in Golapganj thana on Sunday afternoon, reports UNB.

Hospital and police sources said the speeding truck from Zakiganj hit Abdul Ahad, 20, his brother Zahidul, 8, and niece Sazia, 5, as they got off a bus at Hetemganj Bazar. Sazia and Zahidul died on the spot while Ahad succumbed to his injuries on way to Sylhet Medical College Hospital. They were coming from Biswanath thana. Killing the three in the tragic accident, the truck sped away.

Agri-fair concludes

MEHERPUR, Mar 9: The 5-day agricultural fair concluded here on March 1 at the courtyard of Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Madaripur, reports BSS.

The fair was inaugurated by Moqbul Hasan, MP. A total of 32 stalls were set up in the fair. Agricultural and forest products and some natural objects were displayed in the fair. Prizes were distributed among the successful participants on the concluding day.

Hunt for killers of Zahur

TANGAIL, Mar 9: Bhuapur thana police is looking for the accused persons of Zahur killing case, reports BSS.

The body of Zahur, a machine man of Kazal Cinema Hall at Bhuapur bazar was recovered by Bhuapur thana police recently and arrested one Chand Mia in this connection. Fazul Haque, a relative of Zahur filed a case with Bhuapur thana mentioning the name of nine persons allegedly involved in the murder.

Bridge being built over Chhayagram

BARISAL, Mar 9: An iron bridge is being constructed over Chhayagram river on Mahilara Paisharhat road at a cost of Tk 23.34.311 in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, a total of 58 metres long bridge will be constructed by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD). Work on this bridge will be started soon and is expected to be completed within this fiscal year.

Road construction scheme

MADARIPUR, Mar 9: LGED, Madaripur has taken up a scheme for the construction of 13,010-metre long road under Madaripur Pourasabha Flood Rehabilitation (urban infrastructure) project in the 1998-99 financial year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the government has sanctioned Taka 1,31,59,333 for the implementation of the project. The work will be completed within this year. The project includes rehabilitation of Shahid Suria Road, Shahid Manik Road, Charnuguria Kalibari Road, Charnuguria Police Bari Road, Shahid Mohsin Road, Lt Faruk Road, Dr Golam Mawla Road, Shahid Harun Road, Charnuguria Bazar Road, Puran Bazar Mosque Road, Hamid Sikder Road, Shahid Sayed Road, Kuli Samrak Road, Kalatala Road, Charnuguria Mosque Road, Madaripur Kalibari Road, Charnuguria Girls School Road, Uttaran Club Road, Puran Bazar Katcha Road, Puran Bazar Kashi Patti Road, Kulpaddi main road, Charnuguria-Kabarasthan Road.

Development works progressing

MYMENSINGH, Mar 9: The Facilities Department under the Ministry of Education has undertaken the development of eight government and non-government colleges and six non-government secondary schools of Mymensingh and Sherpur districts in 1998-99 fiscal year, reports BSS.

The Education Ministry has sanctioned Tk 3,67,84,000 for the implementation of these schemes. According to the Facilities Department, the sanctioned amount of each non-government college is Tk 37,05,000 and Tk 51,49,000 for government Muminunessa Mohila College. The Education Ministry has sanctioned Tk 9,50,000 for each of the six non-government secondary schools. The work of these schemes are progressing satisfactorily and expected to be completed by June this year.

Clash leaves 60 injured

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 9: At least 60 people were injured in a clash between rival groups at a village in Shahjadpur thana here on Friday, reports APB.

Twenty-three of the injured, including the severely wounded seven, were admitted to Shahjadpur thana health complex and Sirajganj Sadar Hospital. Police said the clash erupted after a brawl between a shallow engine owner, Abdul Bari, and the landowner, Mohammad Ali, over water supply at the irrigation project at Moukuri village on Friday morning. The groups, locally divided into political lines, used lethal weapons, leaving all the 60 injured. The damaged standing crops there.



Barisal Pourasabha dwellers brought out a pitcher procession a few months ago when an acute crisis of water was prevailing in the divisional town. — Star photo



Floating cloth shops on footpaths and beside busy roads near Barisal Pourasabha creating chronic traffic jams. — Star photo

Barisal Pourasabha in grip of manifold problems

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Mar 9: Barisal Pourasabha, one of the ancient pourasabhas in the country is now plagued with manifold problems.

At present Barisal has been turned into a divisional headquarters. As a result everything has become costly here. Population has also been increasing very fast in this divisional town. People from the adjoining areas are regularly pouring in the town area for various reasons. Most of them are job seekers, workers and labourers. They have no work in the village areas. But the facilities of housing, accommodation, jobs and transportation have not increased considerably here.

The then 'Barisal town committee' was set up in 1869 and it turned into Barisal Municipality (committee) in 1959. Later in 1972, after the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 it was renamed as Barisal

Pourasabha. It was upgraded into a first class pourasabha in 1984.

On December 12 in 1998 Prime Minister Sheeka Hasian assured the people here in a public meeting that Barisal Pourasabha would be turned into a city corporation in near future.

Abul Hasant Abdullah, Chief whip in the Jatiyo Sangsad was elected Chairman of Barisal Pourasabha in 1973. Former President Abdur Rahman Biswas was also elected chairman of this pourasabha in 1978.

Unfortunately Barisal town remained almost neglected during the period of previous governments. Though there were more than two ministers in the cabinet in each and every regime of previous governments. But no tangible development was visible. It remained

always neglected during the periods.

Till now, in the communication sector only a private airliner is in service here. But the national flag carrier Bangladesh Biman has no air service on Dhaka-Barisal route. Though its service was started earlier and continued for some time, but it did not continue its service for unknown and mysterious reasons. All initiatives taken by the local journalists and elite here failed to yield any positive result. Once Barisal Pourasabha also took an initiative in this regard.

Huge amounts of holding and other taxes have remained pending with the government offices and elite residents in the town. Taxes are also being re-fixed soon.

The main roads are narrow in the pourasabha area. Moreover, the Chawkbazar, Bazaar

Road, Farkiapathy, Sadar Road, Hospital Road, Bagura Road, Line Road should be widened more to cope with the rush of population. Problem are also with the roadside ageold buildings and business establishments.

During office hours, frequent rickshaw jams paralyse the road communications for hours together. There are nearly eight thousand rickshaws with valid documents, but there are many more rickshaws which ply everyday in and around the pourasabha area with no valid licenses at all.

Now, with the advent of the summer season people here are being worried about the power and water supply.

Water crisis is still acute here, though the much talked about ADB financed 5-District Water Supply Development Project of 1985 has already been completed after spending several crores of taka in 1990. It helped little to ease the water supply problem in the pourasabha area. It is alleged that the works of the project were much faulty. Under this project seven overhead tanks were constructed with pump houses. A few months ago, when an acute crisis of water supply was prevailing in the pourasabha area for months together then 'Barisal Nagarik Parishad' compelled to brought out a 'pitcher procession' in the streets.

As Barisal is now a divisional headquarters, different types of shops have opened in different markets and beside the roads.

UP member arrested in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Mar 9: A Union Parishad (UP) member has been arrested for allegedly assaulting a woman, reports APB.

Ghor police arrested Luthfar Rahman Babu, a member of Baliakhora Union Parishad, for allegedly assaulting Hasina Begum, wife of Korban Ali of Dhulundi village, police said.



GAIBANDHA: Female and male workers working side by side at a project under Food For Works programme in Kamarjani union here recently. — Star photo

4 potential land ports become less attractive to businessmen

NATORE, Mar 9: The four potential land ports in the country's northern region have become less attractive to the business community bringing less revenue for a number of problems, reports UNB.

The ports are Banglabandh, Hilli, Burimari and Chilmari. Sources said Banglabandh land port, commissioned to transit goods between Bangladesh and Nepal on September 1, 1997, is not being used by the businessmen due to various reasons including India's impediment in using her route.

After the commission, India allowed both the countries to use her route on the opening day and for a week in July.

On the opening day, three trucks loaded with pulses came to Bangladesh from Nepal and 90 trucks loaded with Postodana (one kind of spice) in July. The sources said Nepalese businessmen are facing much difficulties in the transit of goods through the port for not having the necessary facilities. They alleged that they face hurdles to cross the border due to lack of immigrant and Customs facilities at the port.

Customs officials also attend their offices from Panchagarh district headquarters, 60 km from Bangladesh Port, due to lack of accommodation facilities.

The Nepalese businessmen find it more profitable to use the Mongla Port instead of Calcutta Port for the less distance of Kakarvita of Nepal from Mongla Port, which is 657 km.

The distance between Calcutta Port and Kakarvita is 1,250 km.

and the imposition of different terms and conditions on the Nepalese businessmen by India have discouraged them to use it, the sources added.

The Burimari land port in Lalmonirhat district is also plagued with various problems including had communication system making it less attractive for the transit of goods.

It is learnt that the businessmen who are using the land port have become disgusted with the alleged harassment by the Customs officials and BDR personnel.

The Hilli Land Port in Dinajpur district is not suitable for the businessmen to transit goods in absence of warehouse for storing goods, waiting room for their stay and terminal for

trucks.

Official sources informed that the government acquired three acres of land for the construction of Customs office, godowns and residential quarters in the port but the work is yet to be started.

The government remained indifferent to upgrade the land port into full-fledged one despite earning of Tk 30 crore annually from the port, officials said.

The Chilmari land port in Nilphamari district also fails to attract the businessmen for transport of goods, despite having some facilities like Customs and immigration offices, banks and telephone exchange.

The distance of Nepal and Bhutan from here is less but it

has not yet been upgraded into a transit route and a full-fledged land port.

The land port can be made attractive by opening train service that existed between Pakistan and India before 1965 war.

The communication between Chilahati and Khulna and with Haldibari of India is also better.

Teacher held for trying to supply copy to examinee

COMILLA, Mar 9: A teacher was handed over to the police when he tried to supply copies to an SSC examinee at Illiotganj High School centre in Daudkandi thana here today, reports UNB.

Police said on duty magistrate identified Deen Mohammad, an Assistant Teacher of Nabagram High School, while supplying copies at about 11:30 am. The teacher was an invigilator at the centre.

Meanwhile, an activist of pro-Awami League Chhatra League snatched away the camera of a local journalist as he took photograph of adopting unfair means by the examinees at a centre in Laksam thana.

Police said Shah Alam snatched away the camera when journalist Mohammad Billal Hossain came out of Begum Fayzunnissa Govt College centre. He also unloaded the film and damaged it.

In another incident, a BCL worker was injured when a BNP activist chopped him with a sharp weapon outside Monwariganj High School centre in Laksam thana today.

Folk sculpture at RU demolished by extremists

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Mar 9: Some extremist assalants recently demolished a folk sculpture installed in front of the university central library by Gano Shilip Sangstha, a folk culture organisation on the campus.

The sculpture was installed there on the occasion of its 15th anniversary festival scheduled to be held on 11-12 March. The assalants also attached a banner inscribed with Arabic letters over the banner of the sangstha.

Khan Mazharul Haq Khan Lipu, convener of the festival implementation committee in an interview with The Daily Star alleged that the crime has been committed by the 'extremists on the campus. He did not specify anyone.

Meanwhile, all the wings of cultural organisations on the campus including Sammlito Sangskritik Jote have severely criticised the incident. The jote brought out a procession on the campus with banners and placards denouncing the attack. They also staged a sit-in

demonstration in front of the VC's office chanting slogans and singing patriotic songs.

However, the university authorities have not taken any action so far against the responsible persons till the filing of the report.

SSC candidate commits suicide

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 9: An SSC candidate of Shahjadpur Government Girls' High School allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan at her house at Dariakul in the town on Sunday, reports APB.

Police identified the victim as Rekha Pervin, daughter of Golam Mostafa.

Police quoted her family members as saying that she was expelled during English first paper examination.

Noakhali Municipality beset with problems

NOAKHALI, Mar 9: Noakhali Municipality is beset with manifold problems depriving its 1.26 lakh inhabitants of civic amenities since its inception in 1977.

In the three wards of 17.11 square feet area of the municipality, water logging is the main problem for the very beginning and paucity of drinking water has turned acute.

The townsmen are facing problems due to bad condition of roads, drainage system, dumping of garbage here and there and lack of recreational facilities.

About 100-km roads out of 220 km of the municipality is still terra-cotta and potholes and cracks have developed on most of the remaining pitch-coated roads. These uneven roads become totally unfit for pedestrians in the rainy season.

In absence of streetlights many areas have become the dens of anti-socials.

Bad odour comes out from 15,000-metre drains of the municipality causing health hazards to the poura dwellers. Only 1.52-kilometre drain out of 26.47 is pucca.

Most of the seven canals in the area are filled with garbage and silts. These canals are mostly occupied by vested quarters who erected shops and business establishments.

Mosquito menace is another problem for the tax paying townsmen as no measures were taken to control the menace since the inception of the municipality.

Although the region is arsenic contaminated one, only two per cent of the poura people are getting the supply of pure water from the water supply project funded by DANIDA.

The inhabitants urged the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry to take necessary measures to improve civic amenities for them.



DAUDKANDI: Veteran freedom fighter Major General (Retd) Subed Ali Bhuiyan addressing an Islamic conference at Singula Madrassah ground as the chief guest on March 4. He called upon the affluent section of the society to stand by the poor people and urged all to come forward to protect social and religious values for peace and stability.

Chandpur farmers demand adequate water for irrigation

CHANDPUR, Mar 9: Hundreds of farmers of Chandpur Irrigation Project (CIP) area have expressed concern over short supply of water during the current peak season of IRRI-Boro cultivation, reports APB.

The farmers have laid siege to the Water Development Board offices at Fairdganj, Raipur and Ramganj over the past few days demanding adequate supply of water for irrigation.

The project covers 15,000 hectares of land in Chandpur, Haimchar, Fairdganj, Raipur, Luxmipur Sadar and Ramganj thana.

The just-planted saplings, of Irri-Boro on 15,000 hectares of land in the CIP area are withering into grey due to acute scarcity of water.

A Water Board official said six pumps run by the WDB remained inoperative for most of the time due to erratic power supply, fluctuation and low voltage of electricity causing interruption in the supply of water in the irrigation belt.

Board officials said they had sent an urgent telegraphic message to the concerned authorities in this regard but no effective measures were taken. Local farmers fear if urgent steps are not take to ensure sup-

ply of adequate water during the current season, the target of production would not be achieved.

The project was implemented during 1977-78 at a cost of Tk 80 crore in order to meet the food deficit and to improve the overall conditions of the farmers in the area.

3 including 2 children killed in truck mishap

SYLHET, Mar 9: Three persons including two children died under the wheels of a truck at Raipur in Gopalganj thana on Sylhet-Jakiganj highway on Sunday, reports APB.

They were identified as Safa Begum, 7, daughter of Rahmat Ali of Raipur village in Gopalganj thana, Abdul Ahad, 20, son of Zainal Mian of village Rama Pasha in Biswanath thana and his nephew Faisal, 8.

They were killed while crossing the road, police said. The driver fled with the truck. Local people blocked the road interrupting traffic for about three hours.