

News snaps

Telephone subscribers' woes

JAMALPUR, Mar 19: Telephone subscribers in Sarishabari thana here have been facing various problems with their telephone connection due to old machinery at the exchange, reports UNB.

About 100 subscribers, out of the total 128, can not use their telephone connections properly due to frequent line disorder, unwanted sound and cross connection. Most of the lines remain without dial tone for hours together. Besides, getting connection through, the operators of the exchange to the desired number is very hard because of limited number of cords, which remain operative presently. The subscribers alleged that the thana remain totally detached from the outside world due to poor telecommunication service as it took many hours to get a line to the capital. Irregularities and corruption by some officials and employees aggravated the situation, they alleged.

110 uplift schemes being implemented

RAJBARI, Mar 19: A total of 110 uplift schemes are being implemented in four thanas under the post flood rural infrastructure reform programme, reports UNB.

The works, initiated by Disaster Management and Relief Ministry under food for works programme, included reconstruction and renovation of roads, educational institutions, mosques and madrasas and earth filling of the educational institutions in Sadar, Pangsha, Goulunda and Balakandi thanas. Most of the work has already been completed and the rest will be completed in the next month. Another 258 development schemes costing Tk 1.7 crore are also underway in four thanas during the current fiscal year. The schemes included development of communication, agriculture, education, physical infrastructure and construction and reconstruction of bridges and culverts.

Scheme to cultivate Aus paddy

PIROJPUR, Mar 19: A scheme has been taken up to cultivate Aus paddy on 28,450 hectares of land in the current year, reports UNB.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, of the land, high yielding variety will be cultivated on 13,950 hectares and the rest under local variety. A total of 6,800 hectares will be brought in Sadar, 2,400 hectares in Kaukhali, 5,100 hectares in Nesarabad and 5,450 hectares in Nazipur, 4,000 hectares in Bhandaria and 4,700 hectares in Mathbaria thanas. The production target has been fixed at 51,106 mts of paddy. Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) will supply necessary supply seeds, fertiliser and other inputs at fair prices to make the scheme a success.

3 alleged terrorists held

GAZIPUR, Mar 19: Police arrested three terrorists with four rounds of bullets in Tongi here on Saturday night, reports UNB.

Police said Yunus Ali, Mokter Hossain and Shahjahan were detained on suspicion of their movement at the station road area of the thana and recovered the bullets from their possession. The arrested were engaged in various criminal activities for long in the area.

Wheat farming on 18,100 hectares

SHERPUR, Mar 19: Wheat plants on a vast tract of land ushered in new hopes among the farmers after the worst flood last year, reports UNB.

A total of 18,100 hectares of land were brought under wheat cultivation with a production target of 40,453 metric tons this season. According to Agriculture Extension Department, at first, it was decided to cultivate wheat on 17,182 hectares of land with a production target of 38,402 mts of wheat. But the target has been surpassed as the farmers showed interest to cultivate the crop on more lands to overcome their losses incurred during the devastating flood. The growers, this year, cultivated wheat even in an unfavourable climate in the beginning. They also purchased seeds at high prices.

Krishi mela ends

GAZIPUR, Mar 19: A three-day Agriculture fair concluded at Kaliganj thana Parishad here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

A total of 16 stalls were established where agricultural products, seeds and fertiliser were exhibited. A 65-kg pumpkin attracted the attention of the visitors among many other special attractions in the fair. Thana Parishad and Agriculture Extension Department jointly organised the fair, which was inaugurated by Akhtaruzzaman MP as chief guest on Sunday. Meher Afroz Ckumi MP also addressed the function as special guest.

Killer gets life term

SUNAMGANJ, Mar 19: A man was sentenced to life term imprisonment by a court here recently for killing his wife, reports UNB.

According to prosecution, Abdul Khaleque of Baraihati village in Doga Bazar thana strangled to death his wife on July 10, 1993. After examining records and witnesses, District Sessions Judge Abdul Mukit Majumder found Khaleque guilty of murder and handed down the verdict, court sources said. The Judge, however, acquitted three people — Karim, Mahmudur Rahman and Segu Mia — as the charges brought against them were not proved.

Land office realises revenue

MADARIPUR, Mar 19: Local land office realised Tk 47.51 lakh in revenue during the last fiscal despite its manpower constraint, reports UNB.

Official sources said 30 posts of Tahshilder and Assistant Tahshilder have been lying vacant for long. Of the revenues, Tk 20,94 lakh were realised from sadar thana, Tk 10.67 lakh from Kalkini, Tk 5.19 lakh from Rajoir and Tk 10.70 lakh from Shibchar thanas, they said.

Loan for farmers

PATUAKHALI, Mar 19: Agrani Bank disbursed a Tk 1.24 crore farm loan among 2,025 peasants of the district in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Official sources said a total of Tk 1.90 crore had been earmarked for Boro cultivation while Tk 15 lakh for fish farming and other agro-based economic sectors.

Loan for destitutes

PIROJPUR, Mar 19: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) disbursed loan amounting to Tk 4.28 crore among destitute people in six thanas in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

The loan was disbursed among 6,973 people of 397 associations under BRDB's Palli Bittahin Programme. Of the amount, Tk 53.31 lakh were disbursed in Nazipur thana, Tk 1.45 crore in Swarupkati, Tk 43.12 lakh in Kaukhali, Tk 66.26 lakh in sadar, Tk 54.78 lakh in Mothbaria and Tk 37.35 lakh in Bhandaria thanas.

Prices of onion, garlic up

NETRAKONA, Mar 19: Even though the new harvest has hit the market, prices of onion and garlic have again showed an upward spiral ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha, reports UNB.

Market sources said hoarders were trying to cash in ahead of the festival although the supply of onion and garlic were adequate. When asked some traders attributed the soaring prices of onion and garlic to short supply. Local people urged the authorities concerned to crack down on the hoarders in a bid to keep onion price stable during the Eid.

Fund shortage hampers work

NAOGAON, Mar 19: The construction work of the district jailhouse here could not be completed in seven years due to unavailability of funds, reports UNB.

Public Works Department (PWD) estimated Tk 12.43 crore for the implementation of the work. PWD sources said the construction work of the jailhouse was started in the fiscal of 1992-93 and only 25 per cent of the work has been completed after seven years. Only Tk 4.37 crore so far allotted for the work till the fiscal 1997-98. Cost of the construction work has already increased by 20 per cent due to dilly-dally process of releasing fund.

Rivals' clash leaves 6 hurt

MAGURA, Mar 19: At least six people were injured in a clash between rival groups at village Parla of Sadar thana here on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police sources said Abdul Bashir and his accomplices swooped on the house of Abdul Latif at the village at about 11 am and severely chopped Latif, his son Harun, 25, and neighbour Mohan, 50. The clash was the sequel to an incident on Saturday when Latif, aided by some villagers, stopped horse race and Jatra organised by Bashir and his group in the village. Three others injured in the clash were identified as Nurul Islam, Nazrul Islam and Baharul Islam. All the six injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital, but Latif was shifted to Dhaka in a critical condition.

Two alleged terrorists held

MEHERPUR, Mar 19: Meherpur sadar thana police with the help of local people arrested two alleged terrorists and recovered two fire-arms with five rounds of ammunition from their possession recently, reports BSS.

According to police, the arrested terrorists were Md Jamat Ali and Md Jala Mia. Two country-made guns and five rounds of bullets were recovered from their possession.

22 committed suicide in Gopalganj in February

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Mar 19: A total of 22 persons including nine housewives committed suicide due to failure in love, family feud and diseases in five thanas here in the month of February this year.

Police sources said, nine persons in Kasiani thana, six persons in Gopalganj sadar thana, three persons in Maksudpur thana, three persons in Kotlipara thana and one person in Tungipara thana committed suicide.

Salma Begun, 28, wife of Atiar Rahman of village Bhabrasul in Kasiani thana committed suicide by hanging for a quarrel with her husband over maintenance of family on February 2. An unnatural death (UD) case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Liton, 14, son of Badsha Khan of village Char Bhatpara in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison for failure to buy a thing on February 8. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani Police Station in this connection.

Rashida Khanam, 20, daughter of Hemayet Hossain Sheikh of village Char Bhatpara in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison for lost love on February 13. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Nusreen Begum, 40, wife of Nowsher Ali Sheikh of village Rajpat in Kasiani thana committed suicide by hanging from a branch of a tree by the side of her residence on February 21 midnight for failure to bear the pain due to various diseases. A UD case was filed with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Rafiqul Islam, 9, son of

Shamsul Hoque of village Tarail in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison on February 23 as he was beaten by his father.

An unnatural death (UD) case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Younus Ali Molla, 35, son of Dhalia Mia of village Kharabari in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison after a quarrel with wife on February 23. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Enayet Hossain, 20, son of Abdul Karim of village Sajail in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison for lost love in the same village on February 28. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Nargis Khanam, 16, a college student and daughter of Mohan Molla of village Sharakandhi in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison for failure in love with her college mate on February 28. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Tania Akter, 12, daughter of Tamiuddin Ahmed of village Bishwanathpur in Kasiani thana committed suicide by taking poison after being beaten by her father and mother on February 8. A UD case has been registered with Kasiani PS in this connection.

Zahid Hossain Fakir, 25, son of Majed Fakir of village Boalia in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison for lost love with his college mate on February 13. A UD case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection.

Monira Khanam, 16, a college student and daughter of Syed Faikuzzaman of village

Kulia in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison for failure in love with her college mate on February 10. A UD case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection.

Imran Hossain, 18, son of Moslem Sikder of village Paikandhi in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison for lost love with his college mate on February 23. A UD case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection.

Champa Banik, 30, wife of Sukomal Banik of village Raghunathpur in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison after a quarrel with her husband on February 23. A UD case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection.

Monimala Rani Roy, 25, wife of Parimal Roy of village Char Kushali in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by hanging from the roof for pain on his body on February 13. A UD case was filed with Maksudpur PS in this connection.

Sunil Chandra Basu, 45, son of Jotish Chandra Bosu of village Golabaria in Gopalganj sadar thana committed suicide by hanging over family feud with his wife on February 10. A UD case was filed with Gopalganj PS in this connection.

Abul Bashir Sheikh, 15, son of Azhar Ali Sheikh of village Hiron in Kotlipara thana committed suicide by taking poison after being beaten by his father on February 3.

A UD case has been registered with Kotlipara PS in this connection.

Subarna Ratna, 25, wife of

Danna Ratna of village Nariarbel in Kotlipara thana committed suicide by taking poison over family feud and after being tortured by her husband on February 23. A UD case was filed with Kotlipara PS in this connection.

Chittaranjan Sarkar, 90, son of late Krishna Sarkar of village Nohata in Kotlipara thana committed suicide by taking poison for pain on his body on February 28. A UD case has been registered with Kotlipara PS in this connection.

Rabin Krishna Biswas, 18, son of Sunil Biswas of village Halinagar in Maksudpur thana committed suicide by hanging with the roof after being tortured by his brother on February 5. A UD case has been registered with Maksudpur PS in this connection.

Soleman Sheikh, 50, son of late Alauddin Sheikh of village Falepm in Maksudpur thana committed suicide by hanging from the roof for pain on his body on February 13. A UD case was filed with Maksudpur PS in this connection.

Ibrahim Sheikh, 18, son of Tata Sheikh of village Gadabai and in Maksudpur thana committed suicide by hanging with the roof after being tortured by his father on February 5. An unnatural death (UD) case has been registered with Maksudpur PS in this connection.

Lutfur Rahman Sheikh, ex-chairman of Pathgati UP, son of late Morshadul Hoque Sheikh of village Sreeram Kandhi in the Tungipara thana committed suicide after taking poison after a quarrel with his two wives on February 17. An unnatural death (UD) case was filed with Tungipara PS in this connection.

Price of onion soaring up again

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 19: The price of onion is again soaring up in the local markets.

Onion is now being sold at Taka 20 per kg as against Taka six per kg two weeks ago.

When asked the onion traders said that due to shortage of supply, the price of onion had increased. Some onion growers said that onions locally called 'Murikata' were already harvested and marketed, but dishonest traders hoarded onions resulting in the sudden increase of the price, they said adding that prices might go up further as Eidul Azha, the religious festival of the Muslims is knocking at the door.

Prices of onions may come down if onions locally called 'Hali Pia' are harvested in late April, they further said.

The authorities concerned should take steps to keep the onion price under control.

Dacoits loot Mominpur bazaar

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 19: A gang of armed dacoits numbering 15 to 20 attacked Mominpur bazaar in Baula thana of Patuakhali district at about 9 pm on Sunday night.

Witnesses said, dacoits arrived in the bazaar area with a trowler from the Tetulia river and entered into the bazaar exploding some crackers and fired seven to eight rounds of gunshots.

The dacoits swooped on the shop. They looted away goods including money amounting to more than 15 lakh taka from nearly 40 shops on gun point. They decamped with their trowler.

Woman kidnapped from Magura bus terminal

MAGURA, Mar 19: Gunmen kidnapped a young housewife from the district bus terminal today, reports UNB.

Court sources said a gang of 7-8 miscreants picked up Jesmin Begum, daughter of one Abdul Hakim Sheikh, and fled away in an autorickshaw.

Jesmin, who resides in her father's house, was returning home at Tila village in Sadar thana with her father after appearing the Magistrate's Court.

Her father filed a case against five people. Police could not rescue her till filing of this report.



RAJSHAHI: Rajshahi City Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu recently inaugurated the newly built "Nagar Bhaban" here. — Star photo

Landless on rise in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Mar 19: The member of small and marginal farmers is on gradual rise in the district due to poor socio-economic condition.

According to an unofficial survey, population of the district, stood at about 18 lakh. Of the total population three per cent has land over 25 bighas, five per cent below 25 bighas, 10 per cent below 10 bighas, 22 per cent has land below five bighas, the rest 60 per cent are landless. About 30 per cent people has no land even to build a hut.

The landless people live as farm labourers. The people are day by day becoming landless with the increase of population.

Recurrent natural calamities like, drought, massive pest attack, flood, gusty wind during the last 10 years caused crop failure. Even the farmers did not get fair price of jute, the only cash crop of the district. They can not sell paddy, rice, in fair price. All these made an adverse impact on the economic condition. Poverty stricken

farmers compelled to sell out their lands to a section of affluent.

The poor, marginal farmers who took to bank loans could not repay loans due to poverty, while the landless farmers have no scope to apply for bank loans.

As a result the farm labourers do not get employment during the harvesting period of crops. Rural poor men of Satkhira need employment under Test Relief Work for their subsistence.



MYMENSINGH: Scientists of BINA and the officials of DAE, block supervisors and farmers are seen at a demonstration plot of 'BINA Sharisha' in village Kuistara in Delduar thana of Tangail district. — Star photo

Two including newsman killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Mar 19: Two persons including a journalist were killed and another was injured in a road accident in Shingra thana recently.

Mustaque Ahmed (Juel), 30, the Executive Editor of a local daily, 'Uttarabangha Barta' and his relative Mojahar Hossain, 58, became the victims of the fatal accident while their microbus collided with a roadside tree at Jamtali area in Shingra thana on Natore-Bogra highway. They were returning home in Shingra from Adamdighi of Bogra.

Workshop in Rajshahi

Reform of law, judicial system sought

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Mar 19: An updated system of law and an efficient judicial system are a must for ensuring right of individual and society, security of investment and promotion of commercial and economic development.

This was observed in a workshop on 'Law and Judicial Reforms' organised jointly by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and World Bank on March 6 at Rajshahi Parjatan Motel.

This was the third of a series of stakeholders' workshops being held for the purpose of preparation of the forthcoming Legal and Judicial Capacity Building Project of the government.

The workshop also observed that law and legal system in the present day world was not only related with maintenance of law and order, but an effective, efficient and modern legal and regulatory system was also a precondition for a free, transparent and credible judiciary.

Secretary of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Aminullah inaugurated the workshop as the chief guest, while Rajshahi District and Sessions Judge Md Sohrab Hossain presided over the inaugural session of the workshop.

Some 120 participants representing the Ministry of Law, the Supreme Court, the Law Commission, judges, lawyers, administrators, academics, chamber of commerce leaders, women's organizations, NGOs, media, poor and disadvantaged litigants and members of the civil society took active part in the workshop.

Mohsin Alikhan, Prof Syed Mynuddin Hossain, Dr Khurshid Alam and Dr Nilufar Ahmed from the World Bank were present in the workshop as observers. Development Support Link (DSL) facilitated the workshop with, among other things, all logistic support.

Participants mentioned that many of the laws of the country were century old. Law makers of those days could not foresee the societal changes that were to occur during this long span of time. Thus ancient laws have become almost obsolete and unfit to meet the changing demand of the society and people. As a result, modernisation of the country, expansion of private sector and access to justice on the part of the poor, the disad-

vantaged and women are being hindered. All these call for a thorough reform of the existing law and judicial system.

The participants worked in four groups on four separate themes such as, Commercial and Substantive Law and ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) and the Process of Law Reforms; Court Administration and Case Management; MIS, Budget and Finance; Legal Education, Legal Aid, Standard of Entry into the Legal Profession; and Access to Justice, Gender Issues and Gram Salish Mediation and Reconciliation.

Aminullah said that the proposed Legal and Judicial Capacity Building Project was a homegrown project. This is being prepared under the guidance of a multi disciplinary Task Force and through able participation of local consultants and advisors including former Chief Justices, prominent lawyers, academics and others. He said that the government recognised that a well-functioning legal and judicial system is necessary for improving the financial, commercial, industrial and social life of the nation. The government has taken a number of steps in this regard with assistance from the World Bank.

Mohsin Alikhan, Operations Advisor of the World Bank, said that the World Bank was pleased to work with the Government of Bangladesh and all concerned members of the civil society. All relevant quarters have shown tremendous interest in this project and have been working with total commitment in preparing this project. Spontaneous and large-scale participation in the workshops such as the speakers of the need for legal and judicial reforms. He pointed out that this is a 'Bangladeshi project' and the Bank has assisted the government on its request.

Through day-long intensive and lively discussion, participants from the four sub-groups came up with pragmatic sets of recommendations, which will be taken into account in finalising the strategy paper for implementing the project. Based on this paper and the input from the stakeholders' workshops being held across the country, the first phase of the project will be formulated and implemented with possible assistance from the World Bank.

Two BNP leaders warned, 2 JCD leaders expelled in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Mar 19: The General Secretary (GS) of Moulvibazar district unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Nurul Alam Numan and another JCD leader and General Secretary of Moulvibazar Government College Students Union Abdullah-Al-Mamun Pervaz have been expelled from the organisation.

They were expelled as they were taking a leading role in launching an All-Party Students' Union in protest against the politics of Jamaat-Shibir in Moulvibazar.

Their expulsion order came from the JCD central unit. Besides this, Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, Convenor of Moulvibazar district BNP and Begum Khaleda Rabbani, former MP from Moulvibazar (Hobigon) reserve seat were also warned by the BNP high command for their anti-Jamaat position in Moulvibazar.

Following the expulsion of two JCD leaders and warning to two top ranking BNP leaders, a local politics of BNP has suffered a serious setback. The All-Party Students' Union led by JCD has torn apart immediately after its very inception.

The relationship of BNP with Jamaat here has deteriorated recently following the armed attack of Shibir workers on JCD workers at Moulvibazar Government College on March 3. Three JCD workers were injured in the clash. Saifur Rahman Sumon, an injured JCD worker is now under treatment at Bangabandhu Medical University in Dhaka in a critical condition.

Moulvibazar police in a recent raid at the district office of Jamaat-e-Islam recovered huge arms and arrested 37 Jamaat-Shibir leaders and

workers including Sirajul Islam Motalib, district 'Ameer' and Abdul Mannan district General Secretary of Jamaat.

Jamaat leaders blamed BNP for the police action against Jamaat leaders and workers. In a protest meeting held at Sylhet town, Sylhet district 'Ameer' of Jamaat Prof Shafiqur Rahman criticised BNP leader and former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman who is an elected MP from Moulvibazar Sadar constituency. Jamaat leaders said in the 'public meeting' held at Sylhet that BNP leader M Saifur Rahman was a collaborator of the AL government. After this speech, Moulvibazar BNP leaders stood against Jamaat.

JCD formed All-Party Students' Union with Chhatra League, Chhatra League (JSD) and Chhatra Union and started agitation against the Jamaat Shibir politics.

Meanwhile, the central Joint Secretary General of Jamaat Md Quamruzzaman visited Moulvibazar. A powerful group of Jamaat met with the local BNP leaders and requested them to continue the anti-government movement.

The Jamaat leaders also withdrew their comments against BNP leader M Saifur Rahman. Ultimately, the BNP-Jamaat meeting ends in agreement.

But the local JCD leaders rejected the BNP-Jamaat agreement and they were participating in anti-Jamaat-Shibir programmes taken by the All-Party Students' Union.

A BNP leader requesting not to mention his name said, after his return from Dhaka that following complaints by the Jamaat leaders to the BNP high command two Moulvibazar JCD leaders were expelled and the other BNP leader was warned.

North Bengal Paper Mills on verge of closure

NATORE, Mar 19: Mismanagement, erratic power supply and lack of modernisation efforts have brought the North Bengal Paper Mills in Pakshye to the verge of closure, reports UNB.

Official sources said the mill, the only paper industry in the country's northern region, incurred a loss of Tk 216 crore since its inception in 1975.

"The mill incurred a record loss of 25 crore in the 1997-98 fiscal," said an official wishing anonymity.

"Irregularities, lack of overhauling and erratic supply have caused the mill to incur such a colossal loss. Even the management has failed to ensure uninterrupted water supply from the river Padma, adjoining to the mill," the official said.

Unscheduled closure and labour unrest are also to blame for the staggering losses of the

mill, which has about 1,100 workers and 100 officials with monthly salaries of about Tk 70 lakh.

The mill, having the annual production capacity of 15,000 metric tons, could not achieve its production target since its inception.

It also owes a huge amount of money to different banks and financial institutions, and other organisations providing raw materials.

Officials and employees of the mill accused Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) of not giving due attention to the mill.

"A huge amount of money is spent every year for purchasing furnace oil. The mill can save Tk 4 lakh everyday by using natural gas as its substitute," the official said.