

News snaps

Cash, valuables looted

GOPALGANJ, Mar 22 : Armed bandits looted cash and valuables worth about Tk one lakh from two houses at Barshapara in Kotalpara thana on Friday, reports UNB.

Local people later caught red-handed all the eight dacoits and handed over them to the police. The arrested dacoits were identified as Nurun Nabi Pathan, 38, Emdadul Haque Milan, 35, Syed Fakir, 25, Azad Molla, 22, Shahinoor, 24, Kamal Sheikh, 18, Ramzan Ali Molla, 35, and Tipu Howlader, 28. Four of the arrested dacoits, who were injured seriously by locals, were admitted to the sadar hospital. Police and locals said the dacoits swooped on two houses of Badar Ali and Dr Bijoy and looted cash-valuables at gunpoint.

Prospect of bumper output of wheat

RAJSHAHI, Mar 22 : There is a prospect of bumper production of wheat despite delay in cultivating wheat due to rain and flood waters here, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said a total of 35,100 hectares of land have been brought under wheat farming against the target of 35,000 hectares. Of the total, some 6,410 hectares were cultivated in Bagha, 3,710 hectares in Chharghat, 2,775 hectares in Godagari, 4,360 hectares in Putia and 5,220 hectares in Durgapur thanas. 4,705 hectares in Baghmara, 2,400 hectares in Mohanpur, 315 hectares in Boalia, 1,200 hectares in Tanor and 4,200 hectares in Paba thanas. It is hoped that a total of 85,000 metric tons of wheat will be produced this year.

Timber recovered

BARGUNA, Mar 22 : Some 500 cft Sundari timber worth about Tk 2.5 lakh was recovered from two trollers at Chalavanga in Patharghata thana here on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police acting on secret information challenged the timber-loaded trollers in the river Bishkhali on way to Swarupkhali in Pirojpur district. The traffickers, however, managed to escape the scene leaving the trollers. Another report from Sylhet adds: Anti-Smuggling Task Force seized huge smuggled timber worth over Tk one lakh from some shops near Longla rail station on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, BDR, Jafars and Forest Department personnel conducted the drive and seized timbers of Gamar and Teak.

2-hr transmission from Barisal Radio

BARISAL, Mar 22 : Bangladesh Betar's Barisal Broadcasting station has been on daily two-hour transmission for the last nine months just because it has not been formally inaugurated, according to official sources, reports UNB.

Construction work of its administration, production and transmission buildings and installation of machinery, at a total cost of Tk 18.76 crore commenced in 1994, had been completed in June 1998. Since then, the station with the capacity of 10-kilowatt medium wave transmission had been relaying national programmes for two hours on trial basis. But it is yet to start its full operation originating programmes of its own although programme officials have been posted there a few months ago. When contacted, Regional Director said the station was likely to be formally inaugurated soon when programmes will be originated from there with the participation and involvement of local artistes.

Power supply programme opens

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 22 : LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman on Saturday ceremonially inaugurated the power supply programme to Pallonpur and Chhalsuti villages of Kularchari thana. Kishoreganj district, reports RSS.

With the inauguration of the programme, people of these villages and adjoining areas would be directly benefitted from the service of electricity supplies. The new power extension lines would greatly serve the irrigation activities in the villages, besides creating positive impact on the overall socio-economic development in the rural areas. Addressing a public meeting on the occasion, he called upon the people to remain united under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for more development in the country.

Rehabilitation centres for homeless

MAGURA, Mar 22 : Setting up of 11 Asrayan projects (rehabilitation centres) for homeless people has been completed at a cost of Tk 27.50,000 in Mohammadpur thana here, reports APB.

About 110 homeless families will be rehabilitated in the centres, five at Palashbari Union and six at Balidu union. The Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Mohammadpur thana told that the centres have been constructed under the supervision of Bangladesh Army. Arrangements have been made for vocational training of the inmates and credit facilities are being lined up to make them self-reliant, he said.

Price rise of furnace oil

PANCHAGARH, Mar 22 : Industrial units in the northern districts are facing closure after incurring recurring losses due to price rise of furnace oil, entrepreneurs claimed, reports APB.

The price of furnace oil has been raised to Tk 5.22 per litre from Tk 4.22. There are about 60 medium size industrial units in the region using furnace oil and their total losses would run up to crores of taka due to high cost of the fuel, they claimed. Unsold products are stockpiled as those can not compete in the market as their prices have risen by 20 to 25 per cent due to high price of furnace oil, they said.

Acute crisis of fodder

CORILLA, Mar 22 : The latest item added to the list of goods smuggled into the country is hay, reports APB.

A one-maund bundle of smuggled hay now sells at between Tk 100 and Tk 150 in the local markets. An acute scarcity of fodder is prevailing in the district as an after-effect of last year's flood and elderly people say they never saw hay being sold openly in the markets. Prices of other cattle feed like Khal and Bhushi have also become dearer. The devastating flood damaged Amari crops on some 100,000 acres of land. Prior to that, farmers also lost the Boro crop, which aggravated the fodder crisis in the district as elsewhere in the country.

Fund for road construction work

NARSINGDI, Mar 22 : The people of Kaliganj feel mighty inspired following sanction of funds by the ECNEC for construction of a 25 kilometer Tongi-Kaliganj-Ghorashal road, reports APB.

Kaliganj, an industrial centre, will have direct road connection with the capital and the rest of the country when the proposed road will be completed. Although there are two large fertiliser factories, six jute mills and more than 50 small and medium sized industries in the area, their products can not be transported smoothly to other parts of the country now. Construction of the proposed inter-district road will add an altogether new dimension to the socio-economic development of the area, local people say.



Rajpunnah: The traditional festival of Bandarban Hill Dist

From A Correspondent



Bohmong chief Maung Shwe Prue Chowdhury, escorted by his courtiers, proceeding toward the venue of Rajpunnah.

BANDARBAN, Mar 22 : Rajpunnah is an age old traditional annual universal festival being celebrated regularly in Bohmong circle.

The Bohmong circle comprises of Bandarban Hill District and a part of Rangamati district having an area of 1702 square miles with 109 mouzas. Of the 13 tribes living in Chittagong Hill Tracts the tribes living in the circle are the Marma, the Mro, the Tonchongya, the Tripura, the Bom, the Chakma, the Chak, the Khinag, the Khumi, the Lusal and the Pangkho.

Rajpunnah, better known as mela or fair is being held, primarily on the basis of the particular traditions and customs relating to land and land revenue.

Rajpunnah was also the traditional annual festival in other two circles: The Chakma and the Mong circle of Chittagong Hill Tracts. But unfortunately, the celebration of Rajpunnah in these two circles has already been discontinued for reasons best known to the concerned people.

The exact year and date of introduction of Rajpunnah is very difficult to ascertain. But it may be presumed, this is linked with the incident of the establishment of present Bandarban town during the reign of Bohmong King Sa Thang Prue in 1822 and the application of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900 by the British wherein Chittagong Hill Tracts have been divided into three circles.

During the British rule the revenue administration, revenue collection, administering social justice, and performance of social functions have been entrusted up on the circle chiefs, popularly known as king. For smooth running of the administration each circle has been divided into mouza and mouza into para. Mouza chief known as headman is appointed by the government in consultation with the circle chief and the para head known as karbari is appointed by the circle chief himself.

The king used to collect tax at a fixed rate from the Jhum cultivators and from the people enjoying groveland though mouza headman and karbari. The headmen and the karbaris after collecting tax from within their respective mouzas and paras presenting themselves before the king on particular date, deposited the same to him ceremoniously. The function relating to land revenue, thus arranged on this day is called as Poingjira in Marma of Rajpunnah in Bangla.

Rajpunnah is a universal festival of the Bohmong circle where members of all tribal communities as well as non-tribals of the circle irrespective of age, sex and religion used to gather and in which they participate. Though the Bohmong chief belongs to the Marma community, yet the represents all people of his circle symbolizing unity in diversity. The celebration of the festival is

tagged a particularly with their main occupation Jhum cultivation. Usually Rajpunnah and the fair are being held convenient time to the determined in accordance with the Marma calendar year in the month of December. During this time the financial condition of the general people remains somewhat satisfactory, at least for the time being, because of harvesting of Jhum. So their participation in the fair is spontaneous with gaiety. Generally the duration of the fair organised on the occasion of Rajpunnah is three days.

In the recent past most of the dwellers of the Bohmong circle who lived in the remote forests and hills had to traverse though forests and rough ravines infested with ferocious wild animals to reach Bandarban town.

Today though the situation improves to a certain extent, still there are many inaccessible areas from where journey to Bandarban town is trouble some. Innocent, simple natured tribal people believe that Raj Darshan (to see the king) not only brings fortune to them, it would be a source of pleasant remembrance till their death. In those old days, to them it was almost impossible to meet the chief and receive his blessings. Rajpunnah is such an occasion where they can meet the king to show their respect and receive his blessings. So every year members of all the tribal communities living in Bohmong circle irrespective of age, sex, religious belief and economic condition ignoring all sorts of hazards and obstacles, used to come to Bandarban town to see and to pay their profound respect to the king.

People from different areas of the circle as well as different parts of the country particu-

larly from the adjoining Chittagong district begins to throng at Bandarban town, occupying every available residential accommodation a few days before Rajpunnah. Shops of various kinds and commodities are arranged with both traditional tribal and modern items occupies the open field in front of the Rajbari. There are temporary hotels and restaurants offering local traditional food items demonstrating workmanship of culinary arts. Arrangements are there for merry making and fun including circus, holding of drama and jatra, puppet show and variety show for all ages. Above all, drinks which is inseparable part of the tribal life and culture, are freely consumed by the participants both tribals and non-tribals of the fair. Government high officials and local elite are invited on this occasion. The entire Bandarban town takes a festive look. From the morning of the day of the commencement of Rajpunnah the tribal musicians with their traditional musical instruments create a festive atmosphere in the courtyard and surroundings of the Rajbari with their music and orchestra Ujir, Najir, Jamadar, Roaza, Daigat and other courtiers of the king dressed in formal attire stand in rows from the main gate of the Rajbari to Darbar Hall to receive and show respect to the king. In a similar fashion tribal boys and girls, young men and women used to wait with flowers and garlands to receive him. The Rajbari Hall is decorated befitting on the occasion. Before noon the king putting on formal traditional dress arrives at Darbar Hall with the invited guests and members of the Royal family in a procession. The arrival is marked with boozing of the

gods, orchestra and cheerful voices of the waiting people. The entire area turns into a human sea and the Darbar Hall is closely packed with curious faces. At that time dances are performed by the naught girls. Till afternoon taxes are being collected from the headmen. There is also usage of presenting various gifts along with the tax. On the day of Rajpunnah the invitees are entertained with feasts and on the day the king usually invites the headmen, karbaris and the employees in a dinner which is followed by jatra performance and cultural functions. The pleasant experiences of Rajpunnah and the fair remain a matter of sweet memory in the minds of common people in their coming day.

After the death of the 14th Bohmong chief Bohman-Gree Maung Shwe Prue Chowdhury on 16 June 1996, there starts a legal battle over the recognition and appointment of Bohmong king between the former minister Aung Shwe Prue Chowdhury and KS Prue Chowdhury. As a result, the Rajpunnah could not be held and celebrated during the last three years. The last year the government recognised and appointed Aung Shwe Prue Chowdhury as the Bohmong chief and his investiture was conducted by the concerned official. With his appointment as chief this year Rajpunnah was held from 12 to 14 February though unostentatiously, but this removes the apprehension from the mind of the local people that the age old traditional Rajpunnah will be discontinued like other two circles. They are now inclined to believe that the Rajpunnah will continue to be celebrated in future. Rajpunnah may attract tourists from home and abroad.

Sub-standard drugs flood markets in S-region

From Arop Talukdar

BARISAL, Mar 22 : Sale of sub-standard drugs of various names, kinds and companies is rampant in different places of the districts of Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati; Bhola and Pirojpur in Barisal division.

Mushroom growth of pharmaceutical companies across the country are mainly responsible for marketing of the sub-standard and sometimes date expired medicines in convenience with some unscrupulous medicine traders. They are particularly active at the outskirts of the towns and in the

remote villages. Unscrupulous medicine sellers do not bother for the health of the patients. They do everything to earn money only at any cost.

Excepting some renowned pharmaceutical companies most of such unknown pharmaceutical companies have no ethics in this regard. They do not bother even to obtain genuine, valid certificate from the concerned quality control authority.

It is also alleged that in some unscrupulous physicians too

are also involved in the malpractice who patronise the low quality and sub-standard drugs of unknown pharmaceutical companies. Many patients also complained of their misbehaviour. There are some quacks who practise in remote rural areas frequently prescribe such type of low quality drugs for their own interests and ignorance of the patients' problems.

It is also alleged that many pharmacies have no valid drug licence and related papers.

Local conscious people have demanded necessary steps in this regard immediately for the interest of patients.

Alarming fall in ground water level

JESSORE, Mar 22 : Ground water level in seven out of eight thanas of the district has gone down to such an extent that all the tube-wells in the areas have been getting choked, reports UNB.

The situation may take a grave turn if there is no rain in the next few days, experts said.

Directorate of Public Health Engineering sources said, the ground water level came down to 25 feet from 8-9 feet in the last few days.

The officials of the direc-

torate disclosed this after conducting a survey at Sadar, Manirampur, Abhoynagar, Chougahha and Jhikorgachha thanas.

Kesabpur is the only thana where the situation was found better, according to the survey.

Officials see no chance of rainfall in the month of Chaitra and Baisakh and apprehended that power pumps and tube-wells may turn totally dry if there is no rainfall in the next fortnight.

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Mar 22 : A girl died while trying to rescue her friend from drowning. Both the girls died.

The sad incident happened on March 11 noon in Shriji Colony Number 3 lane in the city.

The two friends, Nargis, 10, and Shapla, 11, went to bathe in the pond of Farid in the lane. Suddenly Shapla drowned. Nargis went to rescue her beloved friend and both of them died.

They were students of class V of UCEP School.

DFP-5132-14/3
G-490

It is for information of all that a tender was invited for the work of construction of boundary wall to the south-west side of Narsingdi District Judge Court Building and south-west side of mosque under Narsingdi Public Works Division through the Memo No-T/Nar/402(15) dated 26-11-97/12-8-1404 Bangla of Tender Notice No 18/1997-98. The tender is cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Executive Engineer
Narsingdi Public Works
Sub-Division, Narsingdi.

Inmates of Sadullapur Adarsha Gram in misery

From K M Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, Mar 22 : The villagers of Sadullapur Adarsha Gram, a model village here, have been passing days in acute hardship.

Now they have no alternatives other than begging just for survival. The villagers have no adequate food.

During the last flood the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Sadullapur thana distributed five kilograms of rice to each of them. Once they received three kilograms of rice per head. Only four lucky inmates of the village managed VGD cards for them.

During visit in the area this correspondent found most of the inmates suffering from malnutrition. They were found to be in a state of acute poverty.

While talking to some inmates of the village namely Faizu Mia, Debendra, Madhu Mia and Shah Alam, they narrated

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
121, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Shahbagh, Dhaka-1000

No BTV/Administration-1/100/413

Dated: 11/3/99

Re-Tender Notice (3rd Call)

Sealed tenders are invited from bona fide computer trader/assembling/supplier establishments for purchasing a computer (along with accessories) for central office of the Bangladesh Television.

- Each set of schedule containing the terms and conditions of tender can be purchased till 04-04-99 on all working days during office hours on payment of Tk 400/- (four hundred) in cash (non-refundable) from the central accounts section situated at 3rd floor of central office of BTV at 121, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbagh.
- Tenders will have to be deposited in the tender box kept at extension 'Ga' room on 3rd floor, BTV, Shahbagh till 05-04-99 at 12:00 Noon and will be opened the same day at 12:30 PM in presence of tenderers (if anyone remains present).
- Earnest money at the rate of 2% of the quoted cost in the form of Draft/Pay Order (Refundable) from any branch of scheduled bank in favour of Finance Officer, NBA, Television will have to be submitted along with each tender.
- The authority reserves the power to accept/reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

DFP-5343-16/3
G-489

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Office of the Project Director

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