

## National



BARISAL: A colourful procession organised by the Charukala Bidyalaya paraded through the streets to welcome the Bengali New Year on Pahela Baishakh. — Star photo

## Jessore train robbery, 2 murders still a mystery

JESSORE, Apr 19: Police failed to arrest all the accused of a sensational train robbery and murder case and could not recover the looted arms even 19 months after the incident, reports UNB.

The local people alleged that police were trying to hush up the matter due to mysterious reasons.

On August 24 in 1997, a daring dacoity was committed in a Syedpur-bound train at a point between Barobazar and Mobarakan Sugar Mill. The robbers on gunpoint looted away eight firearms from the Ansars on duty and killed Ansar Commander Azizul Islam and injured Nausher Ali, a businessman, when they tried to resist them.

Later Nausher Ali succumbed to his injuries on August 26 at Khulna Hospital.

The looted arms included seven rifles, one SMG, 70 rounds of rifle bullets and 20 rounds of SMG bullets.

A case was filed with Khulna GRP thana and police started investigation into the incident. They arrested four people from Banani Cinema Hall of Kushtia in 16 northern districts, reports UNB.

But confusion arose over the numbers of arms as GRP reportedly failed to provide the correct number of the arms looted by the miscreants during the robbery.

When contacted, GRP sources said the case was handed over to CID and they don't know anything about the progress.

But there is no headway of CID investigation, said the local sources.

## 8000 tubewells inoperative in N districts

RANGPUR, Apr 19: Some 8,000 deep and shallow tube-wells are lying inoperative for long, affecting irrigation in about two lakh acres of land in 16 northern districts, reports UNB.

The authorities did not take any step to repair the tubewells so far that raised apprehension among the farmers on achieving the production target.

According to Khulna load

dispatch centres, the total production of power in local stations was only 202 MW and 20 MW is being supplied to national grid from the generated power.

According to the sources, total power production may go up to 400 MW if all the production

centres work in full swing. But the case is different from the reality.

Besides, the discrimination is done in distributing generated power as its lion share is given to local areas and Khulna cantonment. The industrial belts covering Noapara, Rajghat, Fulata, Shirononi and Daulatpur have been worst-hit.

The poor farmers are passing their days in great anxiety as they cannot prepare their land for cultivation.

A latest report said that the total power requirement in the zone comprising Khulna and Barisal divisions and that of greater Faridpur district is 320 MW in normal season. It goes up to 340 MW during the IRRI-boro cultivation season. But the supply remained as before. It said.

In the backdrop of the existing loadshedding, the poor farmers of rural areas cannot irrigate their IRRI-boro fields as most of their irrigation machines are rendered inoperative.

In Sherpur, serious disruption in power supply during the last few weeks has affected the life badly.

The district has been experiencing 15 to 20 hours of loadshedding every day during the last few days virtually bringing the production in the mills and factories, transactions in the business establishments and irrigation to standstill.

The life was shattered due to this prolonged loadshedding

coupled with the scorching heat of the summer.

About 300 rice husking mills, welding factories, photography studios and other shops are facing serious problem due to the severe loadshedding besides the disruption in water supply of the municipal-

ity.

Serious problem has also developed with the telephone exchange and the direct telephone link with outside stations are being hampered. The newsmen of the district have been facing problem in sending their items through telephone.

BADC sources said 80 deep and about 450 shallow tube-wells went out of operation due to the power crisis, threatening seriously the cultivation of different crops.

BADC sources here said that the demand of power in the district was seven megawatt, but they never got more than two to 2.5 megawatt. Moreover, the supply was reduced to only one to 1.5 megawatt.

## Alarming rise of crimes in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Apr 19: The law and order situation in the divisional headquarters has deteriorated seriously hampering normal life in the city, reports UNB.

Burglary, robbery, murder, snatching, mugging, rape and other crimes are on the rise in an alarming rate creating panic among the city dwellers.

Local people alleged that the police have utterly failed to contain the rising trend of various crimes as the chain of command in the police administration has almost broken.

During the last one month till April 10, six murders were committed in the city while the number of suicide and rape case is seven. Besides, about 200 people were injured in 12 clashes during the periods.

The authorities recently closed and suspended the Officer-in-Charge of Pabna thana for refusing to register a case regarding rape of a teenage girl.

In Mohanpur, a housewife Bhanubibi, 18, was strangled to death on March 15, but police could not arrest anyone in this connection. A similar incident occurred in Uttar Gaopara village in Bagmara thana.

According to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital sources, all of them were rushed to the hospital in critical condition but they died soon after admission.

A total of 47 people committed suicide in the district during the past month.

## News snaps

### Literacy movement in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Apr 19: A nine-month total literacy movement (TLM) programme will begin soon to eradicate illiteracy and to give light of education to the people of four thanas in Narsingdi district, reports BSS.

A survey conducted by the district administration reveals that 3,47,122 people aged between 11 and 15 of Narsingdi Sadar thana, Raipura thana, Monohardi thana and Beliabari thana have been deprived of education due to poverty. They will be taken under the programme. The literacy movement (TLM) programme would be implemented through 11,585 centres under the banner of Dipyaman Narsingdi. Every centre will be conducted by trained teacher. The district administration will distribute books, slates, black boards, chalks, and dusters. A monitoring cell will be set up to carry out day-to-day business of TLM programme.

### Rural dev project in Khulna

KHULNA, Apr 19: Construction of some 800 kilometers of roads and 2,000 metres of bridges in Khulna division under the Rural Development Project-18 will be completed in June, reports APB.

Nearly 80 per cent work on the 400 crore taka project covering 10 districts of Khulna division have been completed, according to sources in the Local Government Directorate. Work on the ADB financed project began in 1993-94 financial year.

The project aims at socio-economic uplift in remote area through development of communication system.

### 3 hurt as neighbours clash

JOYPURHAT, Apr 19: Three people, including two housewives, were injured in an attack by their rivals at Mahabbatpur village in Khetia thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said wife and son of one Azharuddin and their men attacked Jamaluddin, 32, his wife Jahanara Begum, 21, and his brother's wife Monzura Begum, 24, following a dispute over fencing in between their residences.

The injured were sent to Sadar Modern Hospital. The condition of Jamal was stated to be critical.

### Wheat procurement in Rangpur

RANGPUR, Apr 19: Procurement of wheat during the current season has been progressing fast in eight thanas of the district, reports UNB.

Official sources said that so far 1,607 metric tons of wheat was procured through nine purchasing centres against the target of 16,350 metric tons. Wheat was cultivated in 36,447 hectares of land in the district during the current season with a production target of 72,894 metric tons.

### Father kills son

COMILLA, Apr 19: A man allegedly killed his minor son on Wednesday last at village Jamalnagar in Laksam thana here, reports UNB.

Polic said Tota Miah got furious with his son Kazi Jafar, 8, and threw him to the ground near his house, leaving his arms broken. Later he succumbed to his injuries. The postmortem of the body was performed at the local hospital and a case was filed with the police.

### 712 tubewells installed

RANGPUR, Apr 19: Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has so far installed 712 deep tubewells and 822 Tara-pumps in seven districts of greater Rangpur, including Bogra to ensure supply of drinking water, reports UNB.

DPHE has taken up the scheme to install a total of 1,065 deep tubewells and 1,150 Tara-pumps in the region under post-flood pure water supply programme in the current fiscal year, officials said. Of the total, 175 deep tubewells and 164 Tara-pumps were installed in Rangpur while 130 tubewells and 138 pumps in Kurigram, and 118 tubewells and 159 pumps in Gaibandha districts. Besides, 79 deep tubewells and 311 Tara-pumps were installed in Bogra while 71 deep tubewells in Nilphamari, 55 Tara-pumps in Joypurhat and 139 deep tubewells in Monirhat districts.

### One beaten to death

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 19: A man was beaten to death by his cousin at village Bahuk in Sadar thana on Sunday for his alleged involvement in stealing an old spade, reports APB.

Polic said Abdul Hye, the victim's paternal cousin, along with his associates set upon Mufazzal, 32, and beat him indiscriminately with iron rods and sticks at about 11 am. Mufazzal was rushed to Sirajganj General Hospital where he died at about 2 pm.

A case was filed with sadar police, but none could be arrested in this connection so far.

### Mujibnagar Day observed

SATKHIRA, Apr 19: A discussion meeting to observe the historic Mujibnagar Day, jointly organised by the District Sramik League and Krishak League, was held at Rickshaw League office premises on Saturday, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by the President of the District Sramik League Professor Abu Ahmed. The meeting was addressed, among others, by Manzur Hossain, Shahidat Hossain, Shahin Mahiur Rahman, Nur Islam and Azizul Haque.

### Aus cultivation target

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 19: A target has been fixed to bring 3.27 lakh hectares of land under Aus cultivation in 16 northern districts this year, officials of the local Agricultural Extension Department (AED) said, reports APB.

The district-wise target is 7,718 hectares in Sirajganj, 30,038 in Rajshahi, 25,265 in Naogaon, 17,891 in Nator, 46,084 in Chapainawabganj, 7,649 in Bogra, 1,102 in Joypurhat, 58,869 in Pabna, 35,423 in Rangpur, 2,173 in Gaibandha, 22,655 in Kurigram, 7,014 in Monirhat, 10,024 in Nilphamari, 31,443 in Dinajpur and 9,927 hectares each in Thakurgaon and Pan-

## Tk 330 cr loan for flood-hit farmers

RAJSHAHI, Apr 19: Irrigation pumps have been lifted water much less than their capacity. The three main pumps can lift only 3900 cusec of water and 12 auxiliary pumps 1500 cusec now, they said.

Four dredgers have been engaged to maintain the flow of water from the Padma to the intake channels, but that also is of little use, they said.

A separate Dredger Division has been created but even with this arrangement, it is not usually possible to maintain the minimum required flow of water in the project area covering four districts.

Meanwhile, over Tk 20 crore irrigation taxes are due with farmers in the project area, the authorities said.

This is also hampering operation. Besides staff salary and fuel cost, huge amounts of money are spent for maintenance of 70-mile flood protection embankments in the project area, they said.

The bank has so far disbursed Tk 213 crore among the 1,98 lakh flood-hit farmers.

Of the total disbursed loans, Tk 150 crore was given for farming paddy, onion, potato, wheat, maize, garlic, sugarcane and vegetables.

Apart from this, Tk 45 crore was distributed among the farmers for cow fattening poultry, pisciculture, horticulture-oriented gardening and purchasing of agricultural inputs.

RAKUB has also disbursed Tk 8 crore out of allocated Tk 17,40 crore under its poverty alleviation programme to make the recipients self-reliant.

Besides, Tk 10 crore out of the total allocated Tk 40,40 crore have been distributed for the agro-based industries projects, including cold storage.

The bank has so far realised Tk 130 crore from its targeted amount of Tk 400 crore from the farmers, officials said.

## Erratic power supply hits mills, irrigation system

JESSORE, Apr 19: The loadshedding which is prevailing in 10 districts of southwestern region of the country has adversely affected the production in mills and factories as well as the irrigation in the IRRI-boro fields, reports UNB.

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