

National

News snaps

Reception

By Staff Correspondent

Renowned freedom fighter Major Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Subed Ali Bhuiyan has called upon the people to build strong resistance against those who want to do politics by resorting to terrorism and using illegal money.

Man killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, June 12: One person was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Kuttapara bus stand in Sarail thana on June 4.

According to eye witnesses, the victim, Nuru Thakur, 50, son of Yeakub Ali Thakur of Kuttapara village was passing through the highway near the aforementioned spot when a speeding truck bound from Dhaka to Sylhet knocked him down from behind and crushed him to death under its wheels.

Tumor removed from woman's abdomen

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, June 12: An ovarian tumor weighing 15kgs was removed from the lower abdomen of a woman at Jamalpur General Hospital recently.

Gynaecologist Dr Gopal Chandra Das, junior consultant of surgery Dr Rowshan Ara and Anaesthetic Senior Surgeon Dr Nurul Islam Talukdar operated jointly upon Minara Begum, 40, and removed the ovarian tumor. She was suffering from lower abdominal-pain since last three years according to general hospital sources.

Fire arms seized: 384 arrested

From A Correspondent

MAGURA, June 12: Magura police seized 12 illegal fire arms, 22 rounds of live bullet, four motorcycles and 452 bottles of phenyl in separate drives in one month from April 22 to May 22 this year.

Police also arrested 384 people from different areas. Of the arrested persons, 12 were arrested with illegal fire arms, 28 alleged terrorists, 83 accused of CR and 111 of GR cases, 12 on section 54 and the rest on various other charges, police sources said. The seized arms included SMG, shutter gun, foreign and country-made pistol and pipe gun.

Memo handed over to Kushtia DC

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, June 12: People of Majampur, Barokhada, Jagoti and part of Poradaha union brought out a big procession recently which paraded the streets and terminated at the office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kushtia protesting inclusion of their unions into Kushtia Pourasbha.

The procession was led by Walilul Bari Choudhary, Bashirul Alam Choudhary, Shamsul Hossain, Khairuddin, Monjurul Alam Choudhary, Md. Ismail, Iswaniath Saha, Amirul Islam and H. Uddin. Leaders handed over a memorandum to the DC containing their demands. The processionists held a rally where the speakers said that the people of these areas would not be able to pay the poura tax without having any additional facilities.

Chowkidars deprived of salaries

LAXMIPUR, June 12: Fourteen Chowkidars (Guards) of Hazi-bat union in Rangajit thana were not getting their salaries for the last one year despite a strong order by the DC to clear their dues, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner of the district have directed the Rangajit thana TNO to immediately clear the payments of the guards. Accordingly, the TNO asked UP Chairman Abul Baset to clear the dues. But their directives went unheeded.



NARAYANGANJ: Bangabandhu Road here has been turned into a place of dumping garbage, but the local municipality authorities seem to be indifferent to clean the road properly. —Star photo

Two muggers caught

NARAYANGANJ, June 12: Two muggers were caught red-handed while demanding toll from a garment factory owner in the town on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said four extortionists went to Bichitra Garnets at RK Mitra road and demanded Taka 5,000 from its owner. At one stage, the garment workers chased them and caught Rasel, 18, and Rafiq, 20, along with sharp weapons, including a dagger. Two of the muggers fled the scene. They were handed over to police after a mass beating.

Participatory plantation in CHT

RANGAMATI, June 12: Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division (CHTSFD) has been raising participatory plantation on an area of 1,600 acres of land, reports BSS.

About 500 forest villagers' families are associated under the ongoing participatory afforestation scheme in 1998-99. This way they are ensuring their economic security. Divisional Forest Officer of CHTSFD, Tapan Kumar Dey told here recently that raising of plantation on an area of 1,600 acres in the government reserved forests was about to be completed. A huge number of saplings of different costly species are being planted, he said. Working members of about 500 forest villagers' families have been working round the clock at Alikhiong, Farua, Sangrachhari, Kaptai and Karnaphuli forest ranges.

Answer scripts found on highway

GAIBANDHA, June 12: Some 50 answer scripts of English first paper of the current HSC examination were found on a highway here at Gobindaganj poura area, reports UNB.

After being informed by the local people police rushed to the spot and seized the scripts. Recently, police suspected that the incident happened due to the carelessness of the persons, who were taking the answer scripts to deposit to the officials concerned. But the incident created sensation among the people.

Drugs seized

SIRAJGANJ, June 12: The Narcotics Department of Sirajganj recovered huge quantity of drugs from different places recently, reports BSS.

According to Narcotics Department, 200 grams of hemp was recovered from Chofa bus stand. One person named Aynul Haque, 25, was arrested in this connection on June 2. In another raid the officials of the Narcotics Department recovered 90 bottles of country-made wine from a medicine shop of Khukni Bazaar in Sahajadpur thana. They were identified as Abdul Hakim, 40, and Mohammad Shamim, 25.

Lack of pontoons at launch stations

MADARIPUR, June 12: Passengers on Madaripur-Dhaka river route have been suffering much due to lack of pontoons at 18 stations in the line, reports UNB.

Hundreds of passengers on three routes from the district travel to various places, including Dhaka everyday. The passengers also have to face problems in loading and unloading their goods. Women and children often face the disastrous situation due to lack of the pontoons at various launch stations. The routes include Madaripur-Dhaka via Chandpur, Madaripur-Dhaka via Angaria and Madaripur-Dhaka via Tal-tala.

A new hope for Sirajganj people

SIRAJGANJ, June 12: As Mitul lies awake at night, he listens to the gushing river. He leaves his bed and walks to the window from where he can see the river clearly. It is just a hundred yards from his house. He looks at the fierce monsoon current of the Jamuna and his mind flies back to the past.

Mitul recalls the sleepless nights his family and neighbours passed during the monsoon a couple of years ago. They were in constant fear that the banks of the river would break under the pressure of the current at any time, washing away their property in a deluge. Fortunately for Mitul and his family, the embankment along the river has taken a permanent shape and erosion was brought under control before harm could be done.

We would constantly monitor the water level of the river, ready to move out at the spur of the moment in the eventuality of any disaster," Mitul recalls. He remembers the police station and the playing grounds, all long lost to the river.

Now the people of Sirajganj are no longer at the mercy of the river. The old millman Jai, himself displaced several times due to erosion, points to the embankment. "I never thought I would see the day that this raging river would be brought under control. But look, we are doing it. I thank Allah that at least my sons will no longer suffer like I have, losing my land every few years."

Old Jai is referring to the river embankment being constructed and reinforced along the river. This is part of the River Bank Protection Project being implemented by the Bangladesh Water Development Board. The International Development Agency, the World Bank's credit window, is providing US\$121.9 million for this US\$ 156 million five-year project which started in 1996.

Nearly three million people living along the right bank of the Jamuna in Sirajganj, Sariakandi and Mathurapara are to benefit from the project. About 125,500 people of Sirajganj will be protected from property loss, impoverishment and displacement caused by river bank erosion and flooding.

The project would protect agricultural production over about 100,000 hectares from annual flooding. Control of



Long locked in a futile struggle against river erosion, the people of Sirajganj and adjoining areas now see a glimmer of hope in the future. The river embankment project, being funded by the World Bank, means that the people no longer have to live in the shadow of erosion, floods and lack of permanence.

erosion at Sirajganj is essential for the security of Jamuna Bridge.

The project has been a boost to the environment. Previously erosion prevented the people from planting trees. "There was no point in planting anything," says old Jai. "I have seen so many mighty trees washed away, like twigs in current of the mighty river."

Surveys indicate that property loss prevented over a five-year period would include about 16,400 pucca houses and shops, 75 manufacturing enterprises, 9,000 kutcha dwellings, 70 kilometers of roads, railway lines and two railway bridges.

It was the floods of 1988 that led to many international and government studies aimed at saving the people from erosion and floods. The surveys showed that from 1980 to 1992, land capable of supporting 405,000 people was washed away by the Jamuna. The 1992-93 study looked into the pattern of erosion and about 22 strategic locations, called hardpoints, were identified.

Concerning the River Bank Protection Project, Rafiquzzaman of the World Bank says, "It is an effort to stop the Brahmaputra river's tendency to move towards the right."

The embankment portion of the project at Sariakandi and Mathurapara has been completed by the contractors and handed over to the Bangladesh Water Development Board last October.

During the 1998 floods there were several breaches at the Sirajganj portion of the project, but work is continuing and likely to be completed by June. "We will also see how the river is behaving at Kazipara and other points," says Rafiquzzaman.

Over the past 20 years, several efforts were made to protect Sirajganj. Boulders and concrete slabs were dumped along the river banks. The experience from these endeavours has helped in designing the project. Continuous maintenance, of course, will be essential for its effectiveness.

The people's hope in the future is almost palpable. Small businesses are cropping up here and there. People are setting up clinics and markets in the small town. New agro-based industries have also come up in the past few months.

Today, standing on the embankment, Mitul lets out a sigh of relief. He is relieved that his home, which has been home to his ancestors down the years, will survive the erosion. Like Mitul, Jai and others of the area, have put their hope in the permanent solution this project has to offer.

—Courtesy PROBE.

Problems grip Asheq Mahmud College

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, June 12: Asheq Mahmud University College here is in grip of multifarious problems. It has been causing great concern among the guardians.

The college was first established in 1946 as a private institution. It was turned into a government college in 1980 by former President Ziaur Rahman. It was upgraded in 1993 as a university college with honours and masters degree courses in Bengali and management subjects.

Out of 62 sanctioned posts of teachers it has only 50 working teachers at present. The present strength of teachers is insufficient even for a college, not to speak of a university college. Normal education of students is greatly hampered here due to dearth of teachers. Moreover, the number of third and fourth class employees is also inadequate. The most important Commerce and Administrative buildings are yet to be constructed.

More than 3,000 girl students are enrolled with the university college, but there is no separate hostel for them. In absence of halls for female students many of them coming to pursue higher studies here face accommodation problems.

Many have to abandon the aspiration for higher studies. Dining facilities and standard of food supplied at the male students' hall of the college are not up to the mark. There is basketball ground and a big play ground in the college, but no sports activities are visible now because of lack of initiative of the college authorities and due to scarcity of sports materials.

The college administration is weak and has become a hostage of some so-called student leaders.

The overall atmosphere in the college is not favourable to education. It is difficult to expand the academic facilities keeping pace with the increasing population.

In this backdrop the district level educational institution deserves special attention from the government. The government has given top priority as well as highest budget allocation for expansion and improvement of education in the country. It should ensure that its policy is implemented with sincerity and honesty. Local elite and guardians have urged the government to solve the problems of the college immediately and ensure a favourable academic atmosphere on the campus.

Grand reception to Purna Das Baul

From Shirin Akhter



The Baul king enthralling a jampacked audience at Chandpur Government Women's College auditorium.

CHANDPUR, June 12: World famous Baul exponent Purna Das Baul was accorded a reception on June 8, at Chandpur Government Women's College auditorium.

The reception was arranged by Silpakala Academy, Chandpur, in co-operation with the district administration. The reception function was presided over by Md Rezaul Karim, DC, Chandpur.

The function was addressed, among others, by Ajoy Kumar Bhoumik, Secretary, Silpakala Academy, Chandpur, Jiban Kanai Chakraborty, Md Yusuf Gazi, Chairman, Chandpur Municipality and Manju Das Baul, wife of Purna Das.

It may be mentioned here, Manju Das Baul hails from village Madna in Chandpur sadar thana. She came here to visit her village home along with her husband Purna Das Baul and other family members.

Different social and cultural organisations accorded them reception. The organisation included Sanghik, Niketan, Lalitkala, Chandpur Government College, Chandpur Government Women's College, Sports Association, Ankur Kanchi Kacher Mela, Ananna Drama, Chandpur Press Club and Mahila Samity.

In his address, Purna Das Baul said he played a significant role during the War of Liberation in 1971 by organising cultural functions in different foreign countries to raise fund for the freedom fighters. The reception followed a session of Baul songs where his wife and son Dibendu Das Baul enthralled the audience.

—Star photo

Rajshahi GRP thana ransacked by miscreants

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, June 12: Some miscreants attacked and ransacked the Rajshahi Government Railway Police (GRP) thana recently.

At least 10 people including three constables were injured during the attack. The miscreants snatched away one rifle. Railway sources and witnesses said, a young lady named Lucky came to Rajshahi by train at night from Khulna. Some miscreants tried to abduct her from Rajshahi Railway Station. GRP police rushed to the spot, recovered the lady and arrested two miscreants.

About half an hour later an organised group of youths attacked the GRP thana and blasted several bombs. Eight attackers and three GRP constables were injured in the clash. The miscreants failed to rescue their arrested friends, but snatched away one rifle from the thana. The rifle was later recovered on the same night.

Attack on bridegroom party: 20 injured

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, June 12: At least 20 people were injured, three of them seriously, when a group of miscreants attacked a bridegroom party at Dadpur village under Paba thana on Wednesday evening.

According to eyewitnesses, a group of local miscreants attacked the bridegroom party when they were returning to their own village after the wedding ceremony.

A clash was took place between the members of bridegroom party and miscreants which left at least 20 people injured. Three of the seriously injured persons were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in a critical condition.

None was arrested so far.

—Star photo

Dacoit killed in mass beating near Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, June 12: A dacoit was killed in mass beating, while four others managed to escape.

The dacoits were running away after committing a dacoity in a Jessore-bound bus at Dolanghata in Kotwali thana on Jessore-Khulna highway on Thursday noon. They were fleeing on board a microbus.

According to police and witnesses, a gang of five dacoits was coming in disguise of passengers from a Jessore-bound bus from Khulna. They snatched away everything of the passengers worth several thousand taka.

They got down at Dolanghata by stopping the bus.

People from all around attacked them. A dacoit named Asgar Ali, 35, was caught and killed on the spot by the people. Asgar Ali is the son of Alfaz Uddin of Moralganj in Bagerhat.

12 hurt in clash over prayer sitting arrangement

BARISAL, June 12: Twelve people were wounded in a clash between two groups of Muslim devotees over seating arrangement during prayer at Bhurghata bus stand in Gouranadi thana Wednesday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash took place when two people, Alamgir and Emarot, scuffled over saying Magreb prayers in the first row in a mosque of the area.

They said the warring groups exploded bombs overnight and damaged seven bus counters.

Another report adds: A 10-year old boy was crushed under the wheels of a pick-up van on Dhaka-Barisal highway in front of Rahmatpur Cadet College in Babuganj thana Thursday.

Police identified the victim as Belal.

Environment Day observed

By Staff Correspondent

World Environment Day '99 was observed in various parts of the country on Saturday amidst much enthusiasm.

Our Habiganj Correspondent reports: Habiganj district administration chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the day in a befitting manner.

The programme includes students' rally, discussion meeting, cultural function, free distribution of saplings, debate competition among the students of different educational institutions.

A discussion meeting on selected subject "Our Earth Our Future" was arranged at the local circuit house conference room with MAN Siddik, ADC (General) in the chair. Ahmed Fazlur Rashid, DC, Habiganj attended the meeting as the chief guest.

Enamul Haque, TNO Habiganj sadar, Advocate Shafiqur Rahman Choudhury, President Habiganj Press Club, Dr Wali Mahmud Khan, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Habiganj, Rafiqueullah Amran, AGM, BSCIC, Habiganj and Jamila Aziz Choudhury, President, Jatiyo Mohila Sangstha, here among others, addressed the meeting.

The key-note paper on the subject was placed by Mahububur Rahman, ACF, Habiganj, Jahanara Khatun, Samad Kr Borua, OPEO, Abdul Ahad Fazle Elahi, Engineer, Moulana, Abdul Kadir, Md Anwar Ali and Abdul Motin.

The meeting conducted by Magistrate MA Karim which followed by an attractive cultural function presented by the artistes of local shilpokola academy. Later on about 1,000 saplings of valuable fruits and timbers were distributed free of cost among the students and members of different welfare organisations.

BSS from Narsingdi reports: The district administration arranged various programmes including rally, discussion meeting and distribution of saplings on this occasion. The largely participated rally was brought out from Narsingdi District Court Building premises, which paraded the main roads. After the rally a discussion meeting was held at the local town hall.

Government officials, educationists and environmental activists spoke on the occasion. A

large number of saplings were distributed among the participants.

Another discussion meeting, organised by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), Madaripur branch, was held in the pourashava auditorium with Advocate Mujibur Rahman Khan in the chair.

Another message from Chandpur says: An elaborate programme was chalked out by different government and Non-Government organisations in different areas of Chandpur district to observe the World Environment Day on June 5.

Rally, discussion meetings, essay and painting competition were held on the occasion. A colourful rally was brought out from Chandpur Press Club which paraded the main roads of the town.

A discussion meeting was held at Chandpur Press Club to mark the day.

Reports of observance of World Environment Day are still pouring in from all other districts.

Cracks on Kushtia-Daulatdia highway: Traffic movement threatened

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, June 12: Traffic movement on Kushtia-Daulatdia highway likely to be disrupted within a year if overloading in trucks continue, said an engineer of the Roads and Highways (R&H) Department.

Construction work of 207-

kilometre highway was completed in 1996 under Road Implementation Project (RIP) of R&H Department. The capacity of the highway was five to six metric tons. But the trucks which usually ply on the highway carry at least 12 metric

tons to 18 metric tons of goods instead of the highways actual capacity. Due to heavy pressure on the highway, it started damaging from the very beginning of its construction. At first cracks developed on one side of the highway and later on its middle portion has been damaged.

To protect the highway and to prevent heavy load carriers, transport owners and transport workers sat in several meetings and decided to establish check posts on the roads.

At least one check post was set up in a district to prevent excess load on trucks. The workers of the check post are provided with financial help from the truck owners. But the workers of the check posts are allegedly ignoring the decision and releasing the excess loaded trucks in exchange of money. As a result over loading of goods on trucks could not be checked



at all.

When contacted some truck owners said that the workers of the check posts were actually collecting money both from owners and the drivers who carry excess goods on trucks.

While talking to some drivers of trucks they told that the earth filling work on both sides of the highway was completed hurriedly. As a result earth was removed from the roadsides very soon. As a result the traffic vehicles usually cannot give side to other vehicles. Sometimes accident occurs during giving side to one vehicle by another vehicle.

When contacted the Executive Engineer (EN) of R&H Department at Jhenidah could not give any details of measures taken so far to evade accidents.

If proper steps are not taken immediately by the department concerned, the highway might be damaged soon, it is apprehended.

(L) Cracks on the Asian highway near Ahsannagar of Jhenidah district. (R) A truck carrying at least 17 metric tons of goods moving fast over the cracked highway.

—Star photo

