

News snaps

Eid-e-Miladunnabi celebrated

From Our Correspondent
FARIDPUR, July 4: Eid-e-Miladunnabi was celebrated here in a befitting manner. Different socio-cultural and religious institutions chalked out separate programmes. The programmes included discussion on the life and teachings of the great Prophet of Islam Hazrat Mohammad (SM), milad mahfil, doa mahfil and waz mahfil. The devotees visited the local graveyards and prayed for the salvation of the departed souls of their near and dear ones who were buried there.

Man killed by cousin

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, July 4: One person was allegedly killed and his brother received injuries recently when their cousin attacked them. It happened at village Alipur in Mohepsure thana. According to police sources, the feud started following demarcation of a piece of land. At one stage Akbar Ali and some of his followers attacked on Dulal Hossain Sarkar, 25, and Fazer Ali with lethal weapons. Both of the injured were rushed to Mohepsur thana health complex where Dulal succumbed to his injuries on the next day.

Man chopped to death

From Our Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, July 4: One person was chopped to death by terrorists in day light recently. The ill-fated victim is Jalaluddin, 45, of village Charmasland in Gafargaon thana. On the day of the occurrence, a group of terrorists raided his house and chopped him to death. Previous enmity was the reason behind the killing incident, police said.

Death condoled

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, July 4: Prof Ataur Rahman, a retired teacher of Bangla Department died recently in Dhaka. Prof Abdul Khaleque, Vice Chancellor (VC), and Pro-VC Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan have condoled the death. They recalled him as a 'bright star' in the realm of Bangla poetry and termed his glorious role with gratitude in spreading the light of education in the varsity as well as the country. They also prayed for the departed soul and extended their deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Abductor gets 10-yr RI

From Our Correspondent
CHANDPUR, July 4: One young man was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) and fined Tk 10,000, in default, six months more RI on a charge of abducting a school girl. The prosecution story in brief is that the convict, Khusrizaman, 25, son of Anwar Hossain of village Sonachawi in Shaharati thana abducted Rawshan Ara, 14, daughter of Md Nurul Haque of the same village on July 8, 1998 while she was going to school. After examining the records and witnesses the Additional District and Sessions Judge here AKM Salimullah awarded the punishment.

New health complex bldg opens

COMILLA, July 4: Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru on July 1 inaugurated the newly constructed building of Brahmanpara Thana Health Complex and Training Centre, reports BSS. Civil Surgeon of Comilla Dr Mukhlesur Rahman presided over the inaugural function. Thana Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Shailendra Kumar Mitra, Dr Bazlur Rahman, advocate Dewan Ahmed Jalil, Jahangir Khan Chowdhury, Thana Nirbahi Officer Abdul Kader, Union Parishad Chairman Ali Akbar, among others, spoke on the occasion. The health complex was constructed by the Public Works Department at an allocation of Tk 6.50 crore.

Massive 'Aus' farming scheme

NETRAKONA, July 4: Netrakona District Agriculture Extension Department (DAED) has undertaken a massive 'Aus' paddy cultivation program for this year's rabi season, reports BSS. An official source here said, under the programme a total of 32,500 hectares have been brought under 'Aus' cultivation. Of the total land, 12,000 hectares have been brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) of the paddy and 20,500 hectares under the local variety. The production target has been fixed at 53,498 tons.



RAJSHAHI: A good production of mango has been achieved in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts in this season. Hundreds of trucks are now carrying the king of fruits towards different districts. Photo shows a dhaka bound bus carrying mango as gift for friends, relatives and bosses there. — Star photo by Abdul Wadood

Workshop on VGD programme

THAKURGAON, July 4: A day long workshop on Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation was held recently in the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Thakurgaon here, reports BSS. The DC, M Abdul Baqi presided over the workshop. A M A Jabbar, Director General of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation was present at the workshop as the chief guest. Twenty-three persons including Thana Nirbahi Officers, union parishad chairmen and district and thana-level officers participated in the workshop. The workshop discussed on various measures for proper distribution of VGD cards among the poor and destitute people.

Betel-leaf farming under threat

SHARIATPUR, July 4: With the rising prices of inputs, betel-leaf farming has come under serious threat, reports UNB. Some 8,000 people earn their livelihood from betel-leaf cultivation in Naria, Jajira, Damudya and Palong thanas. Kanchan Das, a betel-leaf farmer of Kashbhog village in Palong thana said the cultivators are facing a lot of problems as the prices of bamboo, oil cake and straw have gone beyond their purchasing capacity. A medium-sized bamboo now costs Tk 80-100, he said.

Roads in bad shape

SHARIATPUR, July 4: Five roads of the district are in deplorable condition for lack of repair and maintenance, hampering the movement of vehicles for long, reports UNB. The roads are Chandipur-Naria, Damudya-Burirhat, Bhedergaj-Banglabazar, Shariatpur-Bhedergaj and Biamkhali-Bhedergaj. Many bridges and culverts on these roads, damaged by the prolonged floods last year, have not been repaired yet. The authorities could not take any step to repair the roads for alleged scarcity of funds. Nearly five lakh people, who use these roads every day, urged the authorities to take immediate steps to remove their sufferings.

Body recovered

JOYPURHAT, July 4: Police recovered the body of a young housewife from Srimantapur village in Panchbibhi thana on June 30, reports UNB. Firoza Begum, 19, was allegedly hacked to death on Tuesday by her husband, Abul Kalam, son of Khoka Munshi. Police and family sources said Kalam married to Firoza of Devkhandia-Flechkarhat village about 11 months back. On the fateful day, Kalam hacked his pregnant wife to death with a 'ramdao' over a brawl for dowry. Then he dumped her body under the floor of his house, according to a case filed by Firoza's father. On information, police came to the house and recovered the body along with the bloodstained dress of the victim and the 'ramdao'.



Change in rural life

Previously any newly married rural woman of the northern region had to go back to her father's home on board a bullock cart from the house of her husband after a brief stay over there just after the wedding ceremony. The return journey is locally called *nyore jaaa*. But time is now passing very fast. With the passage of time the age old traditional system of carrying brides aboard bullock carts has also changed. Now any newly wed young woman is usually carried by a tri-wheeler van. Still there is a similarity in such vans with the previous bullock carts. It is in the movable cover made of bamboo slips to shelter the passenger from sun or rain. It seems the van is the modern variety of the old bullock cart. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

TB patients increasing in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh

PANCHAGARH, July 4: The number of tuberculosis (TB) patients has been showing a rising trend in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts, reports UNB. The spread of the disease was being caused due to ignorance and lack of nutrition, according to the physicians. At present, some 70,000 people are suffering from TB in the two districts. Of them, the number of patients is nearly 40,000 in Tetulia and Deviganj thanas of Panchagarh and Haripur and Ranishankail thanas of Thakurgaon district, sources said. A local physician said a large number of patients are carrying the disease unknowingly. He added that the lack of proper knowledge about the disease among the poor people and their intake of stale and unwholesome food were the main reasons for the rapid spread of

the disease. Fifteen per cent of the TB patients come for treatment only after the disease becomes chronic. And in most cases, the poor patients could not bear the expenses of a long treatment. Another reason for the rapid spread of the disease is lack of proper treatment facilities. The lone TB Control Centre at Thakurgaon for the 10 thanas of the two districts cannot cope with the growing number of patients. There is no X-ray machine in the two districts, except at the TB Control Centre, to detect the disease at the early stage. There is an urgent need for at least another TB Control Centre for the TB patients of the two districts. Another report from Sherpur says: The number of leprosy patients is on the rise in Sherpur district. According to an estimate, leprosy patients in five thanas

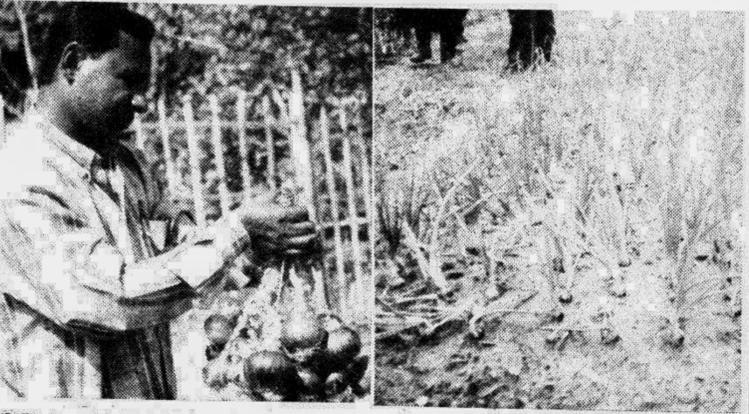
of the district now total more than 1,000 with Sadar thana topping the list. Every year new patients are being identified. In last five years (1994-98), leprosy claimed seven lives in the district — two at the end of treatment and five during treatment. Competent sources said the number of male patients, infected by leprosy is higher than among women and children. Some 54 patients were given physiotherapy treatment in last five years while another 54 have been registered as serious patients, they said. Sherpur Leprosy Control Programme, operated by the Damien Foundation, identified 318 people as leprosy patients in last five years. Of them, 84 were identified last year alone. There are five leprosy control centres in five thanas of the district, which have been working to combat the disease.

"Khorip onion" successfully cultivated in Magura

MAGURA, July 4: The Spices Research Sub-Centre in Magura has achieved a success in experimental cultivation of "Khorip onion", a high yielding variety (HYV) of onion. One piece of onion produced by the sub-centre on an exhibition farm land weighs 30 gm. The research sub-centre authorities cultivated the spice on 10 kathas of land on experimental basis. According to the sub-centre officials, though the variety is widely cultivated in India, Sri Lanka, Turkey and other countries, Bangladeshi farmers are still ignorant of the cultivation of this onion.

The authorities, however, are trying to popularise the variety across the country. They also hope that the "Khorip" variety will be cultivated widely in the country by the year 2001. The country needs 4 and half lakh metric tons of onion per annum. But the domestic production of onion is only 1 and half lakh metric tons, causing about annual deficit of 3 lakh metric tons. The success achieved in the sub-centre, which was established only in 1995, can play a pioneer role in removing the shortage of onion, one of the essential spice items, in the

country, observed agricultural experts. The quantity of yield of Rabi onion, common local variety, per hectare is 4.10 metric tons while the yield of "Khorip onion" is 12 to 14 metric tons per hectare. Moreover, Khorip onion grows three times a year. The exhibition land of "Khorip onion" has deeply impressed farmers of this region. They are coming from adjacent districts to visit the farm land. The Director General of Agricultural Research Institute also visited the farm land and highly appreciated the initiative.



(L-R) An exhibition plot and an employee of Magura Spices Research Sub-Centre with some recently harvested 'Khorip' onion. — Star photo

Shortage of teachers in Pabna Edward College

From: Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, July 4: A total of 40 posts of teachers of different subjects and the post of principal in the century old Pabna Edward College have been lying vacant for a long time, hampering both academic and administrative activities of the educational institution. The post of the principal, however, fell vacant only five months back when former principal Muhammad Abdur Rouf went on LPR (leave preparatory retirement). A senior professor of the Department of Mathematics has been made Acting Principal of the college.

Professor Sheikh Kutubuddin, Acting Principal, referring to the problem of scarcity of teachers said the college authority has to make extra arrangement for admission of students every year beyond the seat capacity following pressures from students organisations, deteriorating the crisis of shortage of teachers. In fact, the admission tests for the honours courses have become meaningless because of the interference in the admis-

sion procedure by students organisations, he added. The university college at present runs honours courses in 12 subjects but shortage of teachers is affecting the academic activities severely. The reputed educational institution, which achieved enviable success in the then undivided Bengal, introduced master's course a year back, deteriorating the crisis of shortage of teachers as their numbers were not increased. The numbers sanctioned posts of teachers for the college are 146, college sources said. Moreover, honours courses in two more subjects were introduced about three months ago but additional posts of teachers were not created. The 12 honours courses in the college are Bengali, English, Economics, Political Science, History, Philosophy, Accountancy, Management, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Botany. Two out of seven posts of lecturers have been lying vacant in the Department of Bengali, five out of 12 posts have been lying vacant in the Department of

English and three out of 12 posts have been lying vacant in the Department of Economics.

The Department of Political Science has the deficit of six out of 12 posts, the Department of History three out of nine posts, the Department of Philosophy one out of seven posts, the Department of Accountancy four out of 12 posts, the Department of Management one out of 12 posts, the Department of Physics four out of 12 posts, the Department of Chemistry one out of 12 posts, the Department of Mathematics one out of 12 and the Department of Botany three out of 12.

In the other departments, which have not introduced honours courses, also face shortage of teachers. In the Department of Islamic History, two out of four posts have been lying vacant and in the Department of Zoology one out of four posts has been lying vacant.

Moreover, the posts of Librarian and physical instructor in the college have also been lying vacant for a long time.

Life term imprisonment for 16 murderers

CHANDPUR, July 4: Sixteen people were sentenced to life term imprisonment in Chandpur and Narail districts on Saturday and Thursday in two murder cases, reports UNB. Court sources said Abdul Malek, Delwar Hossain Minto, Akkas, Yasin, Lal, Jalil, M Nazrul Islam, Mohammad Yasin and Mohammad Shahid jahan were sentenced to life term in jail by a court in Chandpur on Thursday. The court fined the accused Tk 1000 each, in default, to suffer six-month more RI. Applying another section of penal code, the court also awarded them two years RI and

fined Tk 500 each, in default, to suffer one month more in jail. The case history in brief: Police recovered the body of one Milton, son of Tayeb Ali of Paliara village, from a ditch on June 2, 1997 and filed a murder case. After investigation they charge sheeted against the above accused. The court, after examining the records and witnesses pronounced the judgement. In Narail, the District and Sessions Judge sentenced eight people to life term in jail in the sensational Rabiul Mollah murder case. The lifers are: Motiar, Chelap, Nekbar Sheikh, Quayum, Jamil, Sabur, Monsur and Mujibur.

The court also fined them Tk 5000 each, in default to suffer, six months more RI, and acquitted five others in the case. Of the accused, Mujibur and Sabur were tried in absentia. According to prosecution, 13 people attacked Rabiul Mollah, 38, of Panchkachhunia village on October 25 1996 and stabbed him indiscriminately. He later died at hospital on October 27 1997. After examining the evidences and witnesses, the Judge pronounced the judgement on June 26.

SI of police in Rajshahi suspended

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, July 4: A sub-inspector (SI) of Boalia thana of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) named Rezaul Hossain was suspended for kicking a pregnant housewife in her abdomen. The woman has been under treatment in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). According to police, SI Rezaul Hossain had gone to Upabhadra village last Thursday in the city to investigate into a case of repression on women. He asked Margjina Begum, 26, pregnant wife of Ansar Ali to call an accused. They locked in quarrel when the woman refused to obey him. All on a sudden the SI kicked the woman. She was rushed to RMCH. The incident created tension in the area. RMP Commissioner Khondoker Shaheb Ali formed three member probe committee headed by Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Uddin Mallick to investigate into the matter. The committee submitted its report on July 2 saying that the incident of assault was true.

Property worth Tk 30 lakh gutted

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, July 4: A devastating fire gutted a thread making factory including a two-storey building in front of Barisal Textile Mills Ltd at Kaunia BSCIC Industrial Estate on Friday night. Hossain Ali, owner of a thread making factory said, his factory has been gutted and razed to the ground including a thread making machine, Tk 40 thousand in cash and six tons of gold ornaments, sewing machines, television and other household articles of five other tenants of the double storied building. All Hossain was also injured during the incident. Fire originated from electrical short circuit which suddenly engulfed the house and the factory. Local people could not extinguish the fire as there was a huge quantity of cotton in the house. Later on after two-hour long endeavour the firemen of Barisal Fire Brigade could put off the fire. Property worth nearly 30 lakh taka was gutted, local people said.



MAGURA: Pineapples have started arriving in the local markets though not in plenty. Each pair of pineapples is being sold at Taka 30 to 35 in Puratan Bazaar fruit shops of the town. — Star photo

Chemical testing laboratory at Benapole land port yet to be established

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, July 4: The Chemical Testing Laboratory at Benapole land port is yet to be established even after 25 years of government assurance. As such the process of clearance of imported goods are being delayed. All the raw goods and chemicals have to send to Dhaka or Rajshahi for testing. Absence of such laboratory at Benapole is the cause of this situation. Thus crores of taka from here are running out every year for this purpose. In many cases the reports of test are not being received here on time. The reports are usually

not accepted by the local authorities. As a result for the final decision these are sent elsewhere for the correct report. The process delays in getting the correct report. It also involves financial losses. Sometimes such goods are released by the Customs authorities on the basis of bond, jointly signed by the importer and the clearing and forwarding agents. Samples of the goods are kept with the local Customs office. But, in fact, no businessman is benefited. Sometimes, the importers concerned are directed to pay extra duties if something differ-

ent is found in the test. Bonds are also not honoured by the authorities in such cases, it is alleged. As a result the parties have to keep their goods in the warehouse for a longer period. This situation generates two fold losses. Firstly the importers are affected financially. Secondly the quality of goods is also affected. Now-a-days the importers have reduced importing such items through Benapole port. It is worth mentioning, no foreign aid or experts are needed for establishment of this laboratory.