

News snaps

Young woman commits suicide

From Our Correspondent
 BRAHMANBARIA, July 9: One young woman of village Rasulpur in Nasirganj thana committed suicide recently by hanging herself.
 According to her family sources, husband of the victim, Rina Begum, 20, had been missing for five years. Nobody knew his whereabouts. His long absence might be the cause of her committing suicide. But the actual cause of her death is yet to be ascertained. Postmortem of the body was done at Brahmanbaria Modern Hospital.

5 killed in road accidents

From Our Correspondent
 GAIBANDHA, July 9: Five persons were killed and 20 others sustained injuries in two separate road mishaps recently on the national highway.
 In the first incident a Rangpur bound night coach while proceeding through Palashbari suddenly knocked a child and later dashed a roadside electric pole near Palashbari post office. The victim, Mahfuzer, 9, rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. On the same day in another road mishap four persons were killed when a Borga bound truck loaded with RCC electric poles turned turtle. A total 14 cloth traders of Tangail district were travelling on board the ill-fated truck. Of them four persons named Abdul Gafur, 40, Md Ali, 35, Abdus Sattar, 44, and Abdul Quddus, 50, died on the spot.

Man killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent
 KISHOREGANJ, July 9: A bi-cycle rider was killed recently when he was run over by a speeding truck on Kishoreganj-Chamtataghat road near Karimganj madrasa at Karimganj thana headquarters.
 Police sources said, Kamrul Islam, 21, of village Gopinathpur in Karimganj thana was riding a bi-cycle when he was run over by a Kishoreganj bound truck. He died instantly. Later on police seized the truck.

Loan distributed

MADARIPUR, July 9: Bangladesh Rural Development Board under its Productive Employment Generation Project (PEP) distributed Tk 2.90 crore as loan among the poor during the 1998-99 fiscal, reports UNB.
 Poor people, including women of Shirkhara, Bahadurpur, Duhkhal, Kalikapur, Rasti, Ghatmaghi, Pearpur Jhondi and Khoazpur unions in the sadar thana received the loan. They were also given toilet slabs and hand-driven tubewells free of interest under the programme in order to help improve the environment.

Workshop on health care held

MADARIPUR, July 9: A training workshop on mother and child health care and family planning sponsored by the district information office was held recently at the office of the Thana Nirbahi Officer, Kalkini under Madaripur district, reports BSS.
 Fifty persons including school teachers and imams of mosques participated in the training. The participants were informed of the various programmes of the government for the control of population boom. They were requested to play their roles in the family planning activities in their respective areas in the greater interest of the nation.

1373 families get wheat

CHUADANGA, July 9: A total of 494 tonnes of wheat was distributed under the normal VGF programme among 1,373 destitute families of 30 unions of the four thanas of Chuadanga district in the last financial year, reports BSS.
 According to an official source, of the total wheat, 99 tonnes was distributed among 275 destitute families of six unions under Chudanga sadar thana, 214 tonnes among 595 families of 13 unions of Alamdanga, 115 tonnes among 320 families seven unions of Damurhuda and 66 tonnes among 183 families of four unions of Jibannagar thana. The district relief and disaster management department has distributed the wheat among the destitute families under the vulnerable group feeding programme of the government.

Eyes of Sarbahara man gouged

BARISAL, July 9: Angry people gouged out the eyes of member of Sarbahara party in village Balshari of Banaripara thana recently, reports UNB.
 Police said a mob caught Avi, 28, when he was passing through the village and gouged out his eyes. He was engaged in terrorism and illegal toll collection in the area. Avi was undergoing treatment in a hospital here.

Two get life term

SATKHIRA, July 9: A court here recently sentenced two people to life term in jail on charge of kidnapping a young girl and selling her to pimps in India, reports UNB.
 According to prosecution, Nawser and Akbar kidnapped Latifunnesa, 22, from her house at village Kadamda and sold her to pimps in India on June 17, 1998. After hearing nine witnesses and examining records, Additional District and Sessions Judge Anisur Rahman Khan found them guilty of human trafficking and handed down the verdict.

911 TR schemes implemented

MYMENSINGH, July 9: Nine hundred eleven schemes under Test Relief (TR) programme against an allocation of 1,653 tonnes of wheat were implemented in the ten thanas of the district by between July 1, 1998 and June 30 this year, reports BSS.
 According to an official source, out of the total schemes, 182 were in sadar thana for 342 tonnes of wheat, 111 in Gaffarganj for 180 tonnes of wheat, 132 in Trishal for 222 tonnes of wheat, 85 in Phulbari for 172 tonnes of wheat, 110 in Muktagacha for 120 tonnes of wheat, 47 in Fulbaria for 183 tonnes of wheat, 67 tonnes wheat in Bhalka for 24 tonnes of wheat and 23 in Gouripur for 74 tonnes of wheat. The schemes included construction and reconstruction of roads and embankments, re-excavation of canals and ponds and repairs of schemes, mosques and madrasahs.

Mass awareness needed to fight arsenic contamination

From A Correspondent

KUSHIA, July 9: Mass awareness is the urgent need of the hour to prevent arsenic contamination in drinking water in rural areas of the country and the findings of Ramkrishnapur village model can help fight the contamination.

Speakers at a seminar held here recently observed the view. The seminar was organised jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Kushtia Folklore Research Institute.

Dr Anwarul Karim, Director of Folklore research Institute, presented keynote paper, which was the outcome of his intensive research of impact of arsenic on socio-economic and cultural life of the villagers of Ramkrishnapur under Bheramara thana of the district.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia Abdus Salam, the seminar was addressed, among others, by Director of Bio Chemical Centre of Dhaka University Professor Kamaluddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University Professor M Kayesuddin, Deputy Programme Manager of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare AZM Ifthakhar Hussain, World Health Organisation representative Abu Daud, UNICEF representative Barkatullah, Civil Surgeon of Kushtia Sadar Badraddin, Executive Engineer of PHE AFM Reza Hussain, Islamic University teachers Makhluhkur Rahman and Chisauddin, Farm Management officer of GK Project Obaidullah Siddique and Shahidur Rahman of an international NGO.

Professor Kamaluddin in his address congratulated Dr Anwarul Karim for his findings at the Ramkrishnapur village about arsenic contamination and said his findings will be very much useful for the policy makers in the government in mitigating arsenic contamination.

Professor M Kayesuddin while commenting on the research of Dr Anwarul Karim said that the findings about arsenic contamination can provide a new approach to the mitigation of arsenic contamination in Bangladesh.

AZM Ifthak Hussain said a study from a remote area may also present information which can be of real use. "We cannot go back to pond culture any more. We must find out alternative source for safe water including tubewell".

Abu Daud of WHO and Barkatullah of UNICEF expressed hope that the findings of Dr Anwarul Karim at a remote village can provide a new approach to arsenic mitigation programme.



JHENIDAH: Unscrupulous woodcutters are not even sparing the wayside trees, which are looked after by the government agencies. This photo was taken recently from Chhatabhara area under Kaliganj thana of the district.

Kushtia highways, roads in bad shape

From Our Correspondent

KUHSTIA, July 9: Roads and highways in the district are in deplorable condition due to lack of proper maintenance.

The poor condition of the highways has been attributed to excessive pressure of vehicular movement and incessant rain. The roads have developed innumerable big and small potholes.

The highways are Kushtia-Jhenaidha, Kushtia-Meherpur, Kushtia-Ishwardi, Kushtia-Bheramara-Mohiskundi, Pragpur, Kushtia-Meherpur and Kushtia-Alamdanga-Chuadanga roads.

About five hundred trucks and buses ply daily on the roads which connect port city Khulna with the northern region of the country. But lack of proper and timely maintenance of the roads and rough driving on the roads have made them extremely hazardous.

The owners of buses, mini buses and trucks of Kushtia district recently held a joint meeting with Shihabuddin Ahmed, President of their organisation, in the chair and discussed the poor condition of the roads.

They said these roads and highways are quite unfit for plying any vehicle.

The speakers present at the

meeting also said if the roads are not repaired by Roads and Highways Department immediately their vehicles owned by them will stop plying.

It is a general practice that after rainy season authorities concerned take up the repair work but in Kushtia no step was taken in the previous year.

Because of the poor condition of the roads and highways accidents occurring nowadays on the routes.

Recently an accident was occurred due to a big pothole on Kushtia-Bheramara road, killing a helper of the ill-fated bus.

Discussion on Madhusudan

KESHABPUR, (Jessore), July 9: Speakers at a discussion meeting held in Keshabpur thana Parishad auditorium on June 29 to mark the 125 death anniversary of Michael Madhusudan Dutta paid tributes to the greatest epic poet and playwright of the Bangla literature, reports BSS.

Organised by Madhusudan Academy, the discussion was presided over by poet Khasru Parvez, president of the Academy.

Two girls receive acid injuries in Mymensingh

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, July 7: Two young girls were exposed to acid injuries in the district recently in separate incidents.

The victims were identified as Momena Khatun, 25, daughter of Aftab Uddin of Village Joydakhali under Gafarganj thana and Khadeja Khatun, 14, daughter of Abu Bakar Siddique of village Chak Radha Kanai under Phulbaria thana.

Momena Khatun received acid injuries at the dead of night recently when she was sleeping at her house with her younger sister Mina Akhtar, 13, and niece Kakon, 8.

According to police and family sources, one Rabbani, son of Falan Daptari of village Shaheed Nagar, allegedly threw acid on her through window.

Rabbani wanted to marry Mina, sister of the victim. But Mina refused him.

Later angry Rabbani threw acid through window to take revenge on Mina. But Momena, who was sleeping in her sister Mina's room, received fatal injury. But Mina and Kakon fortunately escaped injury.

Critically injured Momena was rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

A case was lodged with Gafarganj police but none was yet to be arrested.

In another incident, Hira Mia, son of late Abdul Hakim, along with his associates allegedly threw acid on the teenager when she went out to respond to the call of nature at night.

According to police and victim's family sources, Hira proposed the girl. But the proposal was rejected by the victim and her family members, 'angering him'.

Hira threw acid on her to 'take revenge', neighbours said. Khadeja was rushed to MMCH in critical condition.

Hira and Mofazzal were arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Earlier, Md Shaidul Islam, brother of the victim, filed a case with Phulbaria thana in this connection.

Number of child labourers increasing in Moulvibazar

MOULVIBAZAR, July 9: Despite government efforts to ensure education for all by the year 200, the number of child labourers in the tiny town is increasing in an appalling rate, reports UNB.

Officials attributed the rising trend of child labourers to migration of poor families to the town.

They said the poor families, rendered homeless by natural calamities, continued to move to the town in search of livings.

According to a survey conducted by an NGO, 90 per cent minor boys of these floating families, aged between 8 and 12, are working as hotel boys, rickshawpullers and day labourers.

The survey showed that many young girls of these destitute families are also engaged in anti-social activities, giving a rise to the number of floating sex workers.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures for rehabilitation of these poor people.

Another report adds: The weather and soil of the district are most suitable for large-scale cultivation of jackfruit according to a survey conducted by an NGO.

The survey showed that there are six lakh jackfruit trees in the district, producing some three crore fruits on an average every year.

But the jackfruit orchards in the district are not well planned the survey said.

It said jackfruit production could be made double in an organised manner and providing the growers with proper training and equipment.

On the other hand, growers are being compelled to sell jackfruits, at throwaway prices for lack of marketing and storage facilities.

They urged the authorities concerned for providing them proper training and thus give a boost to jackfruit production.

UNDP programme for sex workers' rehabilitation

From Our Correspondent
 NARAYANGANJ, July 9: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will implement a Tk 10 crore rehabilitation programme for the sex workers of four red-light areas in the country including the Tanbazar-Nimtoli brothel, Deputy Commissioner Office sources said.

Under the project, "UNDP Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Livelihood of Socially Underprivileged Women", the sex workers will be given medical treatment and vocational training.

The project, to be implemented through the Department of Social Welfare of the government, will be operated by a local committee comprising deputy commissioners and civil surgeons of respective district and UNDP and NGO representatives.

25 houses, five shops gutted in 2 dists

From Staff Correspondent

A total of 25 dwelling houses and five shops were gutted in two devastating fire incidents in Mymensingh and Jamalpur districts within a week.

UNB from Mymensingh reports: Some 25 dwelling houses were gutted at Shakua village in Trishal thana on Thursday.

Police and witnesses said the fire originated from the house of Shah Abdul.

The loss was estimated at Tk five lakh.

Hafez Ruhul Amin Madani MP and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafiqul Islam visited the affected area.

Another report from Jamalpur says: Five shops at Pigna Bazaar in Sarishbari thana were gutted last week.

Witnesses said the fire originated from a lamp in the shop of Akhtar Ali on the night of June 12. Valuables worth about Tk 10 lakh were gutted.

Local people put out the blaze after one hour of hectic efforts.

Reign of terror in Rowangchhari, Bandarban sadar thanas

BANDARBAN, July 9: As law and order situation in two thanas continued to deteriorate, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) has asked the local administrations to take necessary steps to put a lid on terrorist acts, reports UNB.

The DC gave the directive while addressing a meeting of the district law and order committee here recently.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 50 lakh recovered in Joypurhat

JOYPURHAT, July 9: A joint team comprising Anti-smuggling Task Force, BDR and police in a six-hour drive in frontier panchbibi bazaar recovered smuggled goods worth over Tk 50 lakh Monday night, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, the team launched the operation all 11 pm and recovered two truck-loaded smuggled goods, including onion. The smugglers fled the scene leaving behind the trucks sensing the arrival of the team.

Deputy Commissioner Abu Naser Ahmad, BDR commander LT Col Abdul Khaled, Additional District Magistrate, Dulal K Shah and ASP Mohammad Shajahan conducted the anti-smuggling drive.

The seized goods were deposited with the Hill Customs godown.

In a separate anti-smuggling drive by BDR on Panchbibi-Hill road, Panchbibi-Joypurhat road and Joypurhat rail station recovered contrabands worth about Tk 50,000.

BSS from Chuadanga says: Smuggled Indian onion worth (aka 1,91,900 was seized by the jawans of the BDR 28 battalion stationed at Noornagar-Chuadanga recently.

According to a BDR source, the BDR jawans in an anti-smuggling drive on Chuadanga-Meherpur-Jhenidah road seized three trucks loaded with smuggled Indian onion and recovered 9,500 kg of onion worth taa 1,91,900.

The trucks were also confiscated but nobody was arrested in this connection. Earlier the BDR jawans recovered 107 gas cylinders from the border areas of Chuadanga district. The gas cylinders were being smuggled to India. The value of the gas cylinders is taka 3,42,400.

The foreign made gas cylinder is generally used in refrigerator and air-conditioner.

Another UNB report from Tangail says: A special tribunal in the district has sentenced two people to six year's rigorous imprisonment (RI) and another to three years' RI for smuggling 'zira' (cumin seeds) into the country.

Of the convicts, Ashraf Ali and Rabi Karmaker of Porabari village in Sadar thana were awarded six years' RI and fined Tk 1,000 each, in default, to suffer another six months in prison.

The other convict Abdul Matin of Pataluipara village of the same thana, was sentenced to three years' RI and fined Tk 2,000, in default to suffer six months more in prison.

According to the prosecution case, police caught the three convicts with 369 kilograms of smuggled Indian 'zira' (cumin seeds) at the town's baby taxi stand on August 4, 1997.

Judge of the sixth special tribunal Altaf Hossain delivered the judgement on June 30 after a long hearing in the case filed by police.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner of Barisal Mohammad Alauddin, the function was addressed by the Divisional Commissioner Mohammad Yahiya Mollah and Chairman of Gouranadi Pourashava Golam Sarwar Faruq. Barisal Jila Parishad has built the 140-feet bridge at a cost of taka about 18 lakh.



RAJSHAHI: A partial view of Laxmipur crossing. Electric poles are seen in the middle of the road which leads from here to the court.



JHENIDAH: Smuggled Indian onions have flooded the markets in Jhenidah, Jessore, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Kushtia districts. Each kilogram of such onion is being sold at the rate of Taka 14 to 15. This photo was taken recently from Khalispur hat in Mohespur thana.