

News snaps



RAJSHAHI: A vast tract of land of the city and the bank of the river Padma devoured recently in the river bed. Rajshahi City Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu visited the erosion affected areas of Bulonpur and Keshabpur.

— Star photo

Smuggled goods seized

COMILLA, July 10: Smuggled goods worth Taka 6,58,68,000 were seized by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) from different areas of the district during the first six months of the current year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, 2,661 cases were registered against the alleged smugglers between January 1 and June 30. Fifty-three persons were arrested during this period in this connection. Goods worth Taka 6,50,18,000 were seized while they were being smuggled out of the country while Indian goods worth 8,50,000 were seized by the BDR jawans posted in different border areas.

Projects completed

FENI, July 10: The implementation of 417 projects has been completed by the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation in the five thanas in the last fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the Relief Ministry had taken up the projects under the rural infrastructure maintenance programme at an allocation of 1847 tonnes of wheat. The projects are repair and maintenance of rural roads, bridges and culverts.

'Aman' farming on 94,000 hectares

TANGAIL, July 10: Transplanted Aman paddy has been cultivated on 94,000 hectares in the district in the current season, reports BSS.

According to agriculture department, of the total land 34,000 hectares have been brought under local variety of 'Aman' and the rest under high yielding varieties. The production target of 'Aman' has been fixed at 1,87,262 tonnes of rice this year. The Agriculture Department supplied fertilisers and high quality seeds to the growers to achieve optimum production.

Accused acquitted

SUNAMGANJ, July 10: The additional district and sessions judge has acquitted all the accused of sensational murder of a young man in parental house of his second wife in village Kalasripur, Tahripur, in May, 1997, reports UNB.

The judge in his verdict on July 6 in a jam-packed court, acquitted all the seven accused, including Sejuara Begum, second wife of the victim, as the prosecution failed to prove beyond doubt the complicity of the accused in the murder. Twelve witnesses were examined during the lengthy hearing of the case. The prosecution in brief was Shahnur, Akik Miah, Golam Rabbani, Abdul Hannan, Monnar alias Monaf, Imam Hossain and Sejuara Begum in a planned way killed Hanifa on the night of May 1, 1997. After the gruesome murder, the body was hidden under ashes.

25 fishermen missing

BARGUNA, July 10: At least 25 fishermen were feared drowned in the Bay in separate incidents last week, reports UNB.

Police said the fishermen were missing after two fishing trawlers — FB Enamul and FB Haider — sank in the deep sea on June 28, according to Patharghatha Trawler Owners' Association.



JHENIDAH: Child artistes rendering songs at a function held recently at Sailkupa thana Shilpakala Academy.

— Star photo

Exhibition of handicrafts held

PABNA, July 10: A two-day exhibition of handicrafts organised by CCDB, a non-government organisation, was held in Ishwardi press club auditorium recently, reports BSS.

Thana Nirbahi Officer, Ishwardi Rabiul Alam attended the concluding function as the chief guest. CCDB project manager Ziaur Rahman presided over the function. Prizes and certificates were distributed among the best artisans.

Tk 1.78 crore dev project

MAGURA, July 10: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has taken a development project at a cost of Tk 1.78 crore, reports UNB.

Advocate Dhiren Sikder, MP, laid the foundation of the project recently. An amount of Tk one crore was allocated for construction of Rajapur-Baharbagh road, Tk 24.35 lakh for construction of Gangarampur Union Council complex and Tk 54 lakh for construction of Majhpara-Bunagati road. The project is likely to be completed by December next and meet the long standing demand of the people of the area.

Tribal teen kidnapped

RANGAMATI, July 10: A gang of tribal youths reported to have kidnapped a teen-aged tribal girl on Tuesday night from her house at Kella Pahar of Balukhail Union in sadar thana, reports BSS.

The father of the victim said the miscreants assaulted him and his wife as they resisted. The victim Mukta Tripura, 16, is yet to be rescued. Balukhail Union Parishad has launched a rescue operation.

Accommodation problem

NARAIL, July 10: It was basically set up for 33 inmates some 150 years back. But now over 300 prisoners are huddling together in the district sub-jail for lack of accommodation, reports UNB.

Jail officials said condition of the jail remains the same for decades although the number of inmates increased with the growing rate of crime. Meanwhile, the authorities have taken up a project to construct a new building of the jail, but the project work could not be started for lack of funds.

'Aman' farming on 40,000 hectares

NARSINGDI, July 10: A total of 40,000 hectares have been brought under transplanted 'Aman' paddy cultivation in six thanas here in the current season, reports BSS.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, 33,000 hectares have been brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) of 'Aman' paddy and the rest 7,000 hectares under local variety. Of the total 40,000 hectares of land, 37,000 hectares will be cultivated in Narsingdi sadar thana, 8,500 hectares in Raipura, 4,300 hectares in Polash, 8,500 hectares in Shibpur, 9,500 hectares in Monohardi and 55,000 hectares in Belabo thana.

Six Cox's Bazar health complexes ailing

From Abdul Monayem Khan

COX'S BAZAR, July 10: Scarcity of medicine in six health complexes of the district has been causing sufferings to patients.

Local people alleged that simple medicines like dettol, savlon, paracetamol and histacin are not available in almost all thana health complexes.

The six thana health complexes are Kutubdia, Mohekhali, Chokoria, Ramu, Ukha and Teknaf. A large number of people coming from the remote areas to thana health complexes every day are to go back disappointed for lack of proper treatment and admission facilities.

In absence of physician,

usually the compounder or other staff members give prescriptions to the patients, it is widely alleged.

The doctors posted in the rural areas are mostly reluctant to carry out their responsibility as they remain busy to secure transfer to urban or town areas. Some doctors are seen busy with their private practices instead of attending patients in the aforementioned health complexes.

Some physicians of the thana and union health complexes are unwilling to attend outdoor patients due to non-availability of medicines, it is learnt.

Local people alleged that some dishonest officials of the

health complexes are involved in selling medicines in the black market.

According to another report from Teknaf and Ukha thanas, patients have to sleep on floor due to scarcity of bed. Health complex sources said, Ukha and Teknaf thana health complexes are operating with 32 beds since 1984. The demand for upgrading those into 50-bed health complexes is yet to be fulfilled. Scarcity of equipment and physicians have also been hampering patients' treatment badly.

According to official sources, posts of two consultants, two health education

nurse, one radiologist and one pathologist are lying vacant for a long time.

On average some 200 patients come to indoor, outdoor and emergency departments daily who are facing problems due to shortage of doctors, equipment and medicine. Patients have to buy medicine at high prices from the outside markets.

The machines for ultrasonography, pathology and anaesthesia have been lying out of order since long. Only one ambulance of Ramu thana health complex has also gone out of order. The remaining X-ray machine often goes out of order causing sufferings to the patients.

Nazrul Varsity to be set up at Trishal

MYMENSINGH, July 10: The foundation laying plaque of Kabi Nazrul Biswabidyalaya and Niketan was unveiled by State Minister for land Alhaj Rashed Mosharrar at Namapara Battala under Trishal thana on Friday, reports BSS.

State Minister for Health and Family welfare Dr M Amanullah was also present on the occasion.

The function was presided over by Alhaj Hafez Moulana Ruhul Amin Madani MP. Among others Principal Hamida Ali, Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh Md Rafiqul Islam, Principal Abdul Rashid, Cap (ret'd) Zamulur Rahman and chairman of Trishal Pourashava Abdur Rashed spoke on the occasion.

The government decided to establish a university after the name of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on the occasion of the birth centenary of the poet.

Shortage of teachers hits pry education

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, July 10: The primary education in the different government schools in the district is being hampered due to shortage of teachers.

According to an official source, there are 2422 primary teachers out of 2340 sanctioned posts in 634 government primary schools of the district.

However, a source said actually 4325 teachers are needed for 2,92,220 students in the district.

Meanwhile, 10 posts of Assistant Thana Education Officer and 4 post of Thana Education Officer have been lying vacant for a long time, hampering the supervision work in the schools.

Religious education in some schools is also being hampered for want of religious teachers, guardians said.

Unscrupulous traders selling non-iodised salt

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 10: Defying government ban, a section of unscrupulous traders are selling non-iodised salt in different markets in the district, posing a threat to public health.

Production, storage and sale of non-iodised salt were banned in 1989 in the country. But the sale of the item is going unabated in 6 thanas of the district, showing disregard to the ban.

Besides, the sale of adulterated and non-iodised salt is being sold in iodine label packets in remote areas of the district.

About 80 per cent people of the rural areas are deprived of consumption of iodised salt. This was revealed in a recent survey conducted by a non-governmental organisation.

According to the survey, of the total 17 lakh people in the district, only about 4 lakh take iodised salt.

Because of iodine deficiency a large number of people suffer from different diseases such as goitre and squint.

49 killed in 4 months in Chuadanga

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, July 10: A total of 49 persons were killed in four thanas in four months of the year by armed miscreants.

Murder, kidnapping, toll collection, terrorism and robbery were the normal incidents during January, February, March and April.

There are huge quantities of illegal arms and ammunition in possession of the terrorists of the district.

During combing operation by police or BDR the terrorists usually go underground. It is also reported that the terrorists had taken shelters of the influential persons on various occasions.

It may be noted that a total of 410 person had been killed by the armed miscreants and terrorists in all the four thanas during the last eight years from 1991 to 1998. Of the total killings 51 persons were killed in 1991, 49 persons in 1992, 52, person in 1993, 50 persons in 1994, 51 person in 1995, 49 person in 1996, 31 persons in 1997 and 77 persons in 1998.



Now is the time of a fast changing society. The mode of carrying goods from far flung areas of rural Bangladesh has also changed. Previously bullock carts were the only means of carrying various necessary items from here and there. But the days are gone. Now rickshaw vans are the main means of transporting goods in village areas. In many places 'Nasiman', autorickshaws run by shallow machines are also used. This is because almost all the roads in rural areas have become pucca. The picture above was taken from Sailkupa-Kancherkole road in Jhenidah district recently where rickshaw van pullers plying their vans in a queue.

— Star photo

Alleged corruptions in Jessore central jail hospital

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, July 10: Poor ailing prisoners are being deprived of all medicare facilities at Jessore Central Jail Hospital due to alleged corruptions, malpractices and maladministration for a long time.

As a result many of them die uncared and unattended.

The hospital remains occupied by solvent healthy prisoners. They enjoy all the hospital services at the cost of less fortunate prisoners by dint of unfair practices.

Poor prisoners, attacked with serious diseases have little chance to get the hospital service.

Nearly 50 prisoners died of various diseases in this central jail during the last 10 years due to lack of proper medical care.

The death report of a poor

prisoner, identified as Jahangir who died recently sparks wide criticism about medical service of the jail hospital.

Officially the accommodation capacity of this jail is 1,719, but presently there are over 3,000 prisoners in this jail staffed with one doctor and limited manpower. The small and old jail hospital with 60 beds is rendering medical services to this large number of prisoners.

Alleged corruption by the doctor is the major cause for the poor ailing prisoners.

Bribes and pay-offs are the accepted ways to get things done in this hospital.

Prisoners whoever he may be and whatever is his state of health has no consideration for admission to this hospital unless the doctor is satisfied with the arrangement of the

party concerned.

Rush of solvent healthy prisoners is on increase. They wait for weeks together to get their admission in the hospital.

The hospital remains always overcrowded with patients. Normally the number varies from 400 to 500. It is strange that the number of patients who died uncared for in the central jail during the last 10 years were below 50 years of age.

A senior officer in the central Jail, when contacted, told this correspondent that the doctor was the main authority to deal with matters relating to the health department and he had nothing to say in this connection.

It may be mentioned here that doctor's post in Jessore Central Jail is a lucrative post.

Middlemen controlling Boro markets in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 10: Poor price of Boro paddy has frustrated the farmers of the south-western region.

Moreover, the paddy markets are being controlled by 'farias' and middlemen, they alleged.

At present the farmers are not in a position to repay the loans they borrowed from banks and 'mahajans'. Despite prolonged drought, unprecedented power disruption and shortage of seeds, farmers of the 10 districts of south-western region harvested a bumper production of boro paddy. They were over-

joyed with the bumper harvest. But the poor price of paddy smashed their hopes.

Abdul Gofur, a farmer of Nondalpur village in Kumarkhali thana told this correspondent that production of Boro paddy this year had surpassed all the previous records in years. Fahad Hossain another cultivator of Ziaraki union of sadar thana said with a heavy heart, he spent a lot of money for irrigation of his lands this year. As a result, the cost of production of a maund of paddy rose to Taka 280.

But now the farmers have been compelled to sell a maund of paddy for Taka 240 to Taka 250, Fahad Hossain added.

When asked Abdul Rahman, another grower of Alamdanga thana in Chuadanga district told that he had been eagerly waiting for fair price of Boro paddy this year.

Abdul Huq, a paralysed farmer of Mohajanpur village in sadar thana of Meherpur district to give the marriage of his youngest daughter by selling Boro paddy. But it would not be possible due to poor price of paddy, he added.



COX'S BAZAR: Noted actor of the sub-continent Sunil Dutt recently visited the resort town of Cox's Bazar. In his honour Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre arranged a cultural evening at the local Hill Town Circuit House. Picture shows Sunil Dutt (Sitting in front row 2nd from left) with the artistes of the centre.

— Star photo

Illegal liquor trading flourishing in Natore

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 10: Illegal liquor trading is flourishing in six thanas of the district due to failure of government agencies, encouraging people to grow the fatal habit of drinking alcohol.

Young men, irrespective of family background and economic condition, are victims of the illegal business.

Officials in the local Department of Narcotics Control declined to comment on the mushrooming growth of illegal liquor business establishments in the district. However, they said we are trying our best but our manpower is inadequate.

Asked about the responsibilities of police to check the illegal trading, a police official said, "Department of Narcotics control is entrusted with this. We have to remain busy with other day to day affairs."

Any brand of wine can be found in the district town and in other sadar thana headquarters, alleged local people.

Narcotics Department officials, however, informed that they unearthed two big liquor factories at Bagatipara thana recently.

Acting on a tip off, the department unearthed clandestine liquor producing factory at a house of one Meher Ali Mondol at Chitalipara village.

About 1,200 liters of cholai mad, country made liquor, were recovered from the house. Meher Ali had been producing wine at his house for a long time.

Narcotics officials, in another drive, unearthed another clandestine wine factory at the house of one Mansur Ali at Bi-harkok village under Bagatipara thana.

Two separate cases were registered with police in these connections.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to stop the illegal business.

Netrakona farmers facing shortage of farm animals

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, July 10: Farmers in the district have been facing acute shortage of farm animals, causing hindrance to crop cultivation.

About 40 per cent to 50 per cent crop growers in the district do not have bulls for tilling their lands and they cultivate their lands by hiring bulls from better off farmers during the sowing season.

Many of the farmers cultivate their lands on share-crop basis as they are unable to purchase farm animals due to sharp rise in prices.

The price of a pair of bulls, at present, ranges between Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000.

In most places farmers are compelled to use their milch cows to till lands, causing reduction in milk production.

Moreover, cattle diseases break out in an epidemic form in different parts of the district every year, taking a heavy toll on the poor farmers.

Farmers in remote villages do not get services from veterinary doctors for medical treatment of their domestic animals. Veterinary doctors stationed in thana headquarters hardly go to remote village.

Non-availability of life saving medicines in government veterinary hospitals is also reported.

Because of the non availability poor farmers have to buy necessary medicines from outside of the hospitals at exorbitant prices.

A meatless day in a week is not observed here. Defying government order, a section of unscrupulous meat traders slaughter a good number of farm animals on all days of week in hats and bazaars of the district, deteriorating the shortage of farm animals crisis.

Prices of all kinds of fodder have shot up in local markets as most of the grazing fields of the district have been turned into crop lands.

Another report adds: About 5,000 imams, Muslim clergymen who conduct prayers at mosques, and muazzins, who herald prayer calls from mosques, in the district have been passing their days in misery for a long time as the salaries they receive are not adequate to meet their demands.

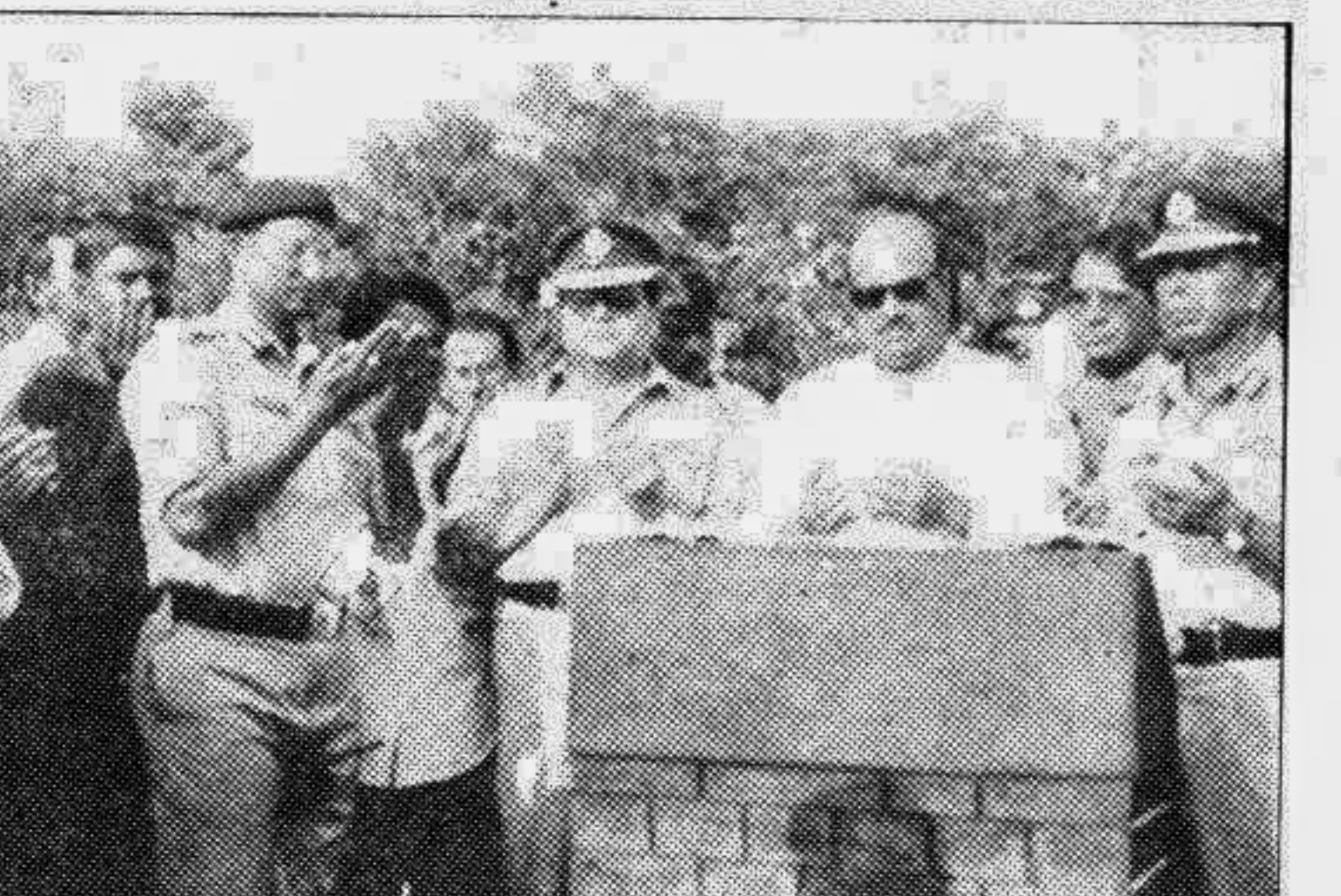
According to the district branch of Islamic Foundation source, there are 2,500 mosques in the district and about 2,555 imams and 2,375 muazzins are performing duties in these mosques.

An imam and a muazzin get only Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 per month as salary.

Moreover, their services depend on the 'mercy' of the influential persons of the villages.

During the last 10 years, a total of 315 imams in the district received training sponsored by the government.

The imams and muazzins of the district have urged the concerned authorities to raise their salaries.



JHENIDAH: Home Minister Mohammad Nasim laid the foundation stone of a police outpost recently at Hatfapilpur in Salika thana. Inspector General of Police, Additional Inspector General of Police, Deputy Commissioner of Jhenidah and the local district Superintendent of Police were also present on the occasion.

— Star photo



NATORE: Shuyasree Bagchi, daughter of the last king of Natore speaking at a condolence meeting held here recently at Joy Kali temple to condole the death of Queen Tara Devi the sixth successor of Queen Bhawani.

— Star photo

Two rubber dams to be built in Noakhali soon

NOAKHALI, July 10: Two rubber dams, aiming to remove the sufferings of 10 lakh farmers in four thanas of the district, will be constructed here soon, reports UNB.

Sources said a proposal to construct the dams in-between Rahmatkhali and Noakhali canals awaits the approval of higher authorities.

They said famers of Sudharam, Begumganj, Chatkhali and Senbagh thanas would be able to avail themselves of modern irrigation facilities if the dams could be set up as per the plan.

Over 1.10 lakh acres of land in the four thanas are brought under boro farming every year, but the farmers face various troubles in cultivation for lack of irrigation facilities.

Another irrigation scheme of the Rahmatkhali canal undertaken by Water Development Board some 25 years back remained shelved for reasons unknown.

Another report adds: Construction of a police investigation centre in Begumganj thana could not be completed in 24 years due to administrative wrangling.

Officials said 1.53 acres of land had been acquired in Sonaimuri area near Dhaka-Noakhali highway in 1975 to build the centre.

But works on the project did not take off till 1997 due to reasons better known to the authorities. PWD started the works in March 1997, involving Tk 20 lakh.