

News snaps

Founding anniversary

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, July 11: The 17th founding anniversary of Sandhani Donor Club at Jhalakati was observed recently. The programmes included colourful rally which paraded the main streets of the town in the morning and donation of blood including a gathering of the elite. A discussion meeting was held with the club president Anwar Hossain in the chair. Lutfur Rahman Mollah President, SBMC unit and Naim Ahmed Shah advisor, central committee were present there as chief and special guest respectively.

Man killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 11: A 21-year-old man was killed on the spot recently when he was run over by a passenger bus on Nandail-Tarail road at Barail in Nandail thana. The victim was identified as Nurul Islam, 27, of village Paikura in Kendua thana. He was returning home after visiting his father-in-law's house at village Barail. Police could neither arrest the driver nor seize the bus.

Silver coins recovered

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 11: Gaibandha Detective Branch (DB) police in a drive recently recovered 26 pieces of silver coins from village Barabalia in the sadar thana. A group of young men of the village were playing cricket on a ground. During playing they witnessed an edge of a pot. They, however, recovered the pot from ground and found the silver coins. Then some influential persons captured the pot. On being informed Gaibandha DB police raided the village and recovered coins from Mujibar Rahman. The price of coins in the local market is Taka 9,100. Police seized the recovered coins.

Another killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 11: One person was killed in a road accident recently at Helatala in Kalaroa thana on Satkhira-Jessore road. The victim was identified as Sahdev Karmakar, 35, of village Ramkrishnapur in Kalaroa thana. Police sources said that the victim while going to Sonapur for hiring a rickshaw van and reached the place of occurrence a Jessore bound minibus knocked down the rickshaw van and he died on the spot.



Plants for future: Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University Prof Abu Yousuf plants a sapling on the campus as part of a three-month afforestation campaign. — Star photo

Thunderbolt kills woman

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 11: A female day labourer of a paddy husking ground died recently on the spot when a thunderbolt struck her, according to local people. Halima Khatun, 25, was hit by the thunderbolt when she was working there. She gave birth to a child two weeks ago.

Kushtia Paura budget announced

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 11: Budget of Kushtia Paurasabha for the fiscal year 1999-2000 has been announced by Khondakar Israel Hossain (Apu), Chairman Kushtia Paurasabha recently in its auditorium. Income for the year has been shown at Taka 11,38,74,601 while expenditure has been shown at Taka 11,31,49,873 showing a surplus of Taka 7,24,728. Those who were present on the occasion are paurasabha commissioner Salam Rahman, Anwarul Islam, Banani Hasan, Hosne Ara Laili, Naimul Islam, Khondakar Sajedul Huq, Mujibul Alam Khan, Khan A Karim Nafiz Ahmed Khan, Mir Sawkat Ali, Alek Mahmood, Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Moniruzzaman, Ziaul Huq and Alhaz Rabiul Islam. Besides, journalists were also present.

Training on poultry

COMILLA, July 11: A three-week training course on poultry farming organised by Protigya Parishad, a non-government organisation, concluded recently at Beltoli Bazaar in Bijoypur union of the sadar thana, reports BSS. Twenty-five persons both male and female participated in the training on modern method of poultry farming. Joint Director of Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BARD) Md Mir Kashem distributed certificates among the participants at a function held at Beltoli Bazaar. The function was presided over by Alhaj M Alam Miah, President of Protigya Parishad.

Phensidyl recovered

NARSINGDI, July 11: Belabo police recently recovered 320 bottles of phensidyl syrup made in India from a house in Sarabud union of Belabo thana, reports BSS. Police acting on a secret information raided the house of Abdur Razzak and recovered 320 bottles of phensidyl from his house. Razzak is absconding. None has been arrested in this connection, police said.

Young man stabbed to death

JOYPUHAT, July 11: A youngman was stabbed to death and three members of his family were critically injured in attacks by kinsmen recently during a family arbitration in Panchabhi thana, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Sujaul Islam, 20, of Chakchur village in Aulal union of the thana. Police said Ansar of the same village married victim's sister Asma and there had been frequent quarrels between husband and wife ever since their marriage. Ansar and his family members equipped with sharp weapons attacked their kinsmen when they went to their residence to arbitrate the dispute between husband and wife. At one stage of the family arbitration, they became angry and stabbed Sujaul and injured three others. Sujaul died on the spot. The injured, identified as Sujaul's father Afazuddin, 69, mother Rokeya Begum, 48, and younger brother Saidul, 16, were rushed to Joypuhat Modern Hospital in critical condition. Police arrested seven people, but Ansar was absconding.



Rewarding the best: Prizes were distributed to the best Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) members at Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, Faridpur recently. — Star photo

Flood situation deteriorates in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 11: Flood situation in the district deteriorated as heavy downpour and onrush of flood waters continued.

River erosion in the district took serious turn at many points along Brahmaputra and Bangali rivers with major rivers flowing above the danger level.

Parts of Bridge road, David Co. para, Sandherpara, Purbopara areas in Gaibandha town have already gone under knee-deep water.

The worst hit areas are parts of Gaibandha sadar thana, Fulchhari thana and Shaghata thana.

Teestamukh Railway ferry ghat has been shifted to Fulchhari from Balashi following rise in water level.

On the other hand, erosion by the river Bangali has already devoured village Panthapari under Gobindaganj thana. Besides, seven other villages are facing the threat. Last week about 15 houses of village Chakuli, Bangabari and Jirai were destroyed by the flood waters. About 30 families of these areas shifted their belongings to other places. Moreover, 150 families of these areas are passing their days under the threat of erosion.

A nursery under Forest Department at Kanchipara under Fulchhari thana went under flood water, damaging different kinds of saplings worth about taka five lakh.

Highway robbery on rise in S-W region

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, July 11: Night journey by buses and cars has become risky on roads and highways in south-western region of the country with the rise of frequent incidents of highway robbery.

Robberies are committed frequently at Jagla bridge and Shimkhali bridge areas on Jessore-Magura road, Kanoitala on Jessore-Monirampur road, Paddabila on Jessore-Khulna highway, Hazaribagh on Jessore-Benapole road, Mandertola on Jessore-Jhenaidah road and Hamkura bridge on Jessore-Narail road, local people said.

Check points manned by BDR personnel were established in six important entry and exit points in Jessore town. But the situation remains unchanged, alleged local people.

It is learnt in most cases of highway robbery, drivers and passengers do not lodge complaints.

Journey by buses on Jessore-Magura via Khagura and on Jessore-Khulna highway has become more risky, local people.

It is alleged that Khajura Bazar and Shimkhali areas on Jessore-Magura Road has been the den of armed terrorists.

When contacted, a number of passengers told this correspondent that absence of police patrol in area between Khajura and Shimkhali bridge is encouraging the dacoits.

'Baro Mia' of Akram Bahini arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 11: He is generally known as 'Baro Mia' of the Sunderbans where he has set up his stronghold guarded by a dozen of stout-bodied armed cadres.

His name is Akram Mian, 40.

Mongla police arrested him on Sunday along with some of his close associates after trading fires for half-an-hour. Many illegal arms were recovered from him and later on from his associates.

Akram Khan heads 'Akram Bahini' based in the Sunderbans. Police recovered a six-shooter gun from Akram, the first of its kind ever recovered from the southern part of the country, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Rashidul Alam of Mongla thana.

The revolver-shaped six-shooter can be loaded with six bullets. It can be dismantled part by part if needed. The mechanic of this six-shooter gun is an Indian who is often hired for making firearms in a clandestine factory in Khulna city. The factory is run by a trader of legal firearms, Akram said to police during interrogation.

For the sake of investigation police did not disclose names of those dealers who sell illegal arms to terrorists as was learnt from Akram Mian who, 10 years back became a terrorist.

Police quoting the ring leader of Akram Bahini said, there are some more six-shooter guns in possession of terrorists of the forest who are still at large.

Tk 2.41cr irrigation scheme on progress

JHALAKATI, July 11: Works on the FCD Project, a Tk 2.41 crore irrigation scheme undertaken in three thanas are on progress, reports UNB.

The project, being implemented by LGED, is expected to be completed by the year 2000.

The project works include canal excavation and construction of cross dams in different unions in Sadar, Rajapur and Nalchhiti thanas.

Upon implementation of the project, some 4,700 hectares of land will come under irrigation facilities.

Army's help sought to save Fulchhari in Gaibandha dist

Panic of erosion grips entire S-region

By Staff Correspondent

River erosion is a constant threat for people of the entire southern region and of Gaibandha district in the northern region.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal says: Erosion has been intensified further and it took a serious turn in the districts of Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barguna, Jhalakati and Projpur under Barisal division due to incessant rainfall and onrush of floodwater along different rivers.

Almost everyday in the rainy season rivers have been engulfing several thousands acres of cropland along the riverside areas including homesteads. As a result several hundreds of families become homeless and shelterless.

According to different statistics, statements and reports published in various local and national dailies during last ten years, some 25 to 30 thousands dwelling houses and big commercial establishments, more than five lakh hectares of cropland, over 10 to 15 thousands educational institutions including religious establishments were devoured in different rivers in the southern districts. It is still continuing almost unabated.

Almost throughout the year, erosion continues in the rivers of Meghna, Tetulia, Lohalia, Paira, Sugandhya, Sandhya, Karkhana, Bishkhali, Ilisha, Kacha, Kirtankhola, Baleswar, Atrial Khan and some other smaller rivers in Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakati and Bhola districts in the southern region.

Naturally, people who are living by riversides, become panic stricken due to erosion along the river banks with the advent of rainy season.

For this reason, in the meantime, many families have been shifting their homesteads and dwelling houses somewhere else to save their lives and movable property.

Many people who are living nearer to the erosion prone areas are passing sleepless nights remembering their previous experiences.

Sreepur, Kazirchar, Lata, Alimabad, Kaliganj, Andharmanik, Bhanga, Mallickpur and Dewanbari in Mehendiganj thana, Memania, Badartuni, Hizla-bandar, Aliganj of Hizla thana, Muladi Bandar, Saffur, Patarchar, Khaserhat of Muladi thana, Doarika ferryghat, Mirganj, Rahimganj in Babuganj thana, Shikarpur Bandar, Dasherhat of Ujipur thana and Sandhya river along the Banaripara thana area of Barisal district are threatened by erosion as the rivers Atrial Khan, Sandhya, Sugandhya and the mighty Meghna continue to erode huge areas.

Erosion has already taken a serious turn in Projpur district in this year, according to reports received so far from the local people.

At least 10 rural bazaar areas along the rivers of Baleswar, Kacha, Sandhya and Madhumati rivers are being eroded following continuous erosion by these rivers for the last couple of years. Hularhat, Kaukhali, Swarupkati, Inderhat,

the last two years.

Seven people died at the erosion affected Hularhat area after the liberation in 1971.

Mozahar Ali, a 70-year-old man of Hularhat 'bandar', living here for about 40 years, said, there are many people who lost everything in the erosion had already left the place. "We have already urged the government of different regimes to protect us from such non-stop erosion, but all appeals have gone in vain. Nothing has been done yet", he added.

Now the food godown, fertiliser godown, BIWTA's pilot office are on continuous threat of erosion. Erosion has also engulfed a portion of Telikhali bazaar area. As a result a primary school nearby, a 'fazel madrasa', a secondary school, a post office, a seed godown, are on the verge of total extinction.

Inderhat of Swarupkati thana is now being threatened by the river Sandhya. Meanwhile, two rice and saw mills had been devoured in the river two years back. Bekatia ferryghat has already been disappeared into the riverbed of the Kaliganj.

The Bishkhali river of Barguna district is considered to be one of the furious rivers of the district. Now it has become more furious due to strong current with increased water level in the rivers in the rainy season. Erosion has been spreading fast from Barguna lauchghat area to Shoubunia and Horinghata point to Patharghata.

At least at four points of the riverside embankment some areas were almost devoured into the river bed. As a result several hundreds of trees planted earlier there by the Forest Department virtually disappeared.

Sekandar Ali pointed out towards some places in the river where there were some trees 15 days ago on the bank.

In Patuakhali, Lankati and Lohalia rivers have

been devouring Lankati, Telikhali and Bighai villagers. Villagers have become panic and are passing almost sleepless nights.

The mighty river Meghna in Bhola is engulfing huge areas of Chowkhata of Daulatkhan thana area, Mirjaku, Sarajganj and Hajiganj.

Mirganj along the Atrial Khan river under Babuganj thana of Barisal is becoming small to smaller gradually due to continuous erosion. Shikarpur and Doarika ferryghat area are also threatened by the Sandhya river. Sataraj and Kabal bandar areas are now on the verge of total abolition in the near future.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: the river Brahmaputra has devoured Fulchhari market within 48 hours.

Facing havoc of the river erosion the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gaibandha has sought the cooperation of the Armed forces.

Meanwhile, an Army team from Rangpur Cantonment visited the affected areas. They also met the district administration and officials of WDB and discussed about the measures to halt the erosion.

With the slight recession of water in the Brahmaputra basin, erosion has taken an alarming turn in Fulchhari thana headquarters. The river has continued its devastation along 10 kilometres western bank from Balashi to Fulchhari area.

With sharp changing of water course and with the high velocity of surging water the river has been hitting Fulchhari thana headquarters since July 7. Two kilometres' long two Water Development Board (WDB) flood control cross embankments at the upstream of Fulchhari had already been devoured by the river. Its devastation has been increasing in the area. Within 48 hours Fulchhari river port together with the local market place have already been engulfed by the river.

Fulchhari thana headquarters is situated on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. The river erosion in the area remained stopped for the last few years following deployment of RCC blocks and other precautionary measures taken by WDB.

This year the erosion has taken a serious turn like those of previous years. If the present pace of erosion is continued the entire Fulchhari thana headquarters will no doubt be washed away. The dwellers and shop-owners have started shifting their belongings to nearby railway track and other high lands. Besides, the river has already devoured huge areas at Balashi, Kanchipara, Shankibhanga and Nikuthi of Fulchhari thana.

Gaibandha Water Development Board has undertaken an emergency measure to halt the devastation of erosion with bamboo piling and throwing of sand bags. However, this measure proved to be ineffective to control the erosion.

Local people are anxious witnessing the havoc of erosion along the western bank of the river Brahmaputra.

Another usage of power tiller

From Anwar Ali



Multi-purpose machine: Shallow pumps originally meant for irrigation is now being used for mechanising surface transport after being used earlier for water transport. — Star photo

NATORE, July 11: Power tillers are being used for other purposes instead of tilling crops.

A number of power tillers are plying on the town streets everyday. The power tillers generally carry goods.

Small lorries are hooked behind tillers and in this way the new type of vehicle for transporting goods was innovated.

These are now engaged in transporting rice, oil drums, woods, brick, cement and what not.

"The numbers of power tiller driven vehicles are increasing in the district day by day," said Idris, a manufacturer of the vehicle.

There are about one hundred such vehicles plying on the town streets, Idris said.

Abdus Samad, a farmer from Dattapara areas of Sadar thana, said he commercially engages his power tiller, which is mainly meant for tilling crop lands, in carrying goods on roads during off season. His earnings range from Tk 300 and Tk 800 a day.

When asked if they had licences or any other legal papers for using power tillers on the town roads all the owners, interviewed by this correspondent, replied in the negative.

Some van drivers said they pay a certain amount of money to traffic police for plying their vehicles on the roads.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps so that these vehicles cannot ply on the roads.

Distribution of voter ID cards hampered

MOULVIBAZAR, July 11:

Distribution of voter identity (ID) cards is being hampered due to inexperience of the two concerned organisations and irresponsibility of the field-level workers, reports UNB.

Sources at the district Election Commission office said some 18,000 ID cards remained undistributed because of murky and wrong placement of photographs and faults in writing the names and addresses of voters. Correction of these cards is underway.

They said the two entrusted organisations — Siskon and Computer Point — have no modern photography equipment.

Local EC office, however, distributed 5,63,433 ID cards out of 7,39,638.

Siskon and Computer Point were entrusted with the job to prepare ID cards in 1995 for the voters of Kulara, Barolekha, Sri Mongal, Kamolganj, Rajnagar and Sadar thanas. They have so far prepared 7,39,638 cards spending Tk 1.5 crore.

Meanwhile, some 47,000 people have become eligible for votes in the district and their list has been made locally.

'Environmentally sensitive' areas will be identified

MOULVIBAZAR, July 11:

The government is planning to identify some places in the country as 'environmentally sensitive' areas to restore the lost bio-diversity and ensure their protection, reports UNB.

According to official sources, all activities that might harm the bio-diversity could be banned in the areas.

The Environment and Forest Ministry with the recommendations of Global Environment Facility (GEF) has decided to declare some parts in the Sunderbans, Teknaf valley in Cox's Bazar, Hakaluki haor in Moulvibazar and Tangor haor in Sunamganj as environmentally sensitive areas.

Local experts have already identified these areas 'highly environmentally sensitive' as per the GEF guidelines after visiting the spots.

They said forest resources in the Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, are on the verge of extinction due to unabated felling of trees and shrimp cultivation by the people in the adjoining areas.

Forest resources of Teknaf and fishery resources of Hakaluki and Tangor haors are also being destroyed due to the same reasons.

Sources concerned informed that the GEF will finance Tk 24

179 crimes committed in 2 months

From A Correspondent

FENI, July 11: At least 179 crimes, including six killings, were committed during last two months in the district.

According to police and local news paper reports, 116 crimes, including four killings, were committed in the last May. In Sadar thana, 1 killing, 4 dacoities, 5 hijacking, 1 kidnapping were among 50 crimes committed during the period.

In Daganbhuiyan thana, 1 killing, 1 rape, 2 clashes, 1 dacoity were among 15 crimes.

In Chhagalnaiya thana, 17 crimes were committed. In Sonagazi thana 13 crimes, including 1 killing, were committed. In Parshuram thana 1 killing and 13 dacoities were committed out of 16 crimes. In Fulgazi thana 5 crimes were committed.

In the month of June, 63 crimes were committed in the district. Of them, 2 killings and 2 dacoities were committed.

Restoration of train service demanded

HABIGANJ, July 11: Local people under the banner of Habiganj-Shayestaganj Railway Restoration Committee will lay siege to Shayestaganj railway station on July 31 demanding restoration of train services on the route, reports UNB.

The decision came from a meeting of the committee at the auditorium of District Sports Association.

The committee also had a programme to lay siege to the station on May 8 and postponed it following assurance by the authorities to restore the rail communication soon.

But the authorities failed to fulfil the commitment.

Rail communication on the route remained suspended since October 26, 1996 after a bridge was washed away by flood waters.

Sailkupa Shop Owners Assoc office-bearers



JHENIDAH, July 11: The Al-Amin --Mahadev panel won eight out of 10 posts in the biennial election of Sailkupa Shop Owners' Association held here recently.

Nurul Islam Al-Amin was elected president bagging 446 votes, while his rival Najrudin got 271 votes. Mahadev Shah, the newly elected Secretary secured 401 votes, while his rival Madan Bhowmik got 314 votes.

Other office-bearers of the committee are Master Fazlur Rahman--Vice President, Amirul Islam --Joint Secretary, M A Baker--Treasurer, Showkat Ali--Organising Secretary, Zaman Mia--Publicity Secretary, A K Azad--Office Secretary and Munsif Akbar Ali --Religious Secretary.

The election was conducted by Moazzem Hossain, while Joyal Abedin, Thana Statistical Officer, was the presiding officer. About 800 voters cast their votes.

PIB training for Comilla journalists

COMILLA, July 11: The certificate giving ceremony of the training course organised by the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) for the local journalists was held at Comilla Press Club last week, reports BSS.

Press Club president Rezaul Karim Shamim presided over the function.

Nurul Rahman, Nazrul Islam Babul, and Syed Nurul Rahman, among others, spoke on the occasion.

BCL sweeps in college union poll

PIROJPUR, July 11: Ruling party student from Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) swept in the student union election of Government Suhrawardi College here recently, reports UNB.

College sources said Chhatra League bagged 11 posts, including the post of Vice President (VP). Independent candidates got three posts, including the General Secretary (GS).

Jatilyotabadi Chhatra Dal won two posts while Chhatra Sankhaone.

Mahbub Sheikh, Bahar Uddin Ahmed and Sayed Enam Uddin have been elected Vice-President, General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary respectively.