

News snaps

New women's college at Sailkupa

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 12: A women's college is going to start functioning at Sailkupa thana headquarters very soon. The college will be named as Sailkupa Women's College. A meeting was held at the local WAPDA quarters with its principal Shamser Hossain in the chair. An executive committee was formed with Abdul Hal and Jahidunnabi as president and secretary of the committee. Local MP MA Wahab is the chief advisor of the committee.

Theft committed

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 12: A theft was committed recently in the grocery shop of Zainal Mia of Kotadi bus stand bazaar. The thieves entered into the shop by tactfully opening the door and decamped with goods worth about Taka 60,000. It is worth mentioning here, burglary, robbery are on the rise in different areas of Kotadi thana for the last few months.

Medicine traders violating rules

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 12: Most of the medicine traders here are selling medicines without any drug licence. Some traders are reluctant to renew their drug licence as the concerned authorities are not allegedly taking any action against the rules violators. Local people alleged that the traders of unauthorised drugs with the help of some officials and staffers of the Drug Administration are doing such illegal trade. The representatives of different pharmaceutical companies also supply unauthorised medicines to the drug stores, many of which are injurious to human body. Usually time expired medicines are available in these stores.

Body exhumed for autopsy

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, July 12: Body of a boy was exhumed recently after 53 days of his death. According to a complaint Nazmul (Nazo) was killed by some miscreants at Aranghati of sadar thana. The body was recovered near the Ghani river and buried without autopsy just after his death. Following complaint the body was exhumed in presence of a magistrate for autopsy.

Body recovered

MYMENSINGH, July 12: Bangladesh Railway police recovered the body of a 14-year-old boy recently from a jute field near Biska railway station. The identity of the body could not be known immediately.

Rangpur Poura budget announced

RANGPUR, July 12: A Taka 17.86 crore balanced budget of Rangpur Poursabha for the 1999-2000 fiscal was announced here recently, reports UNB. Of the budget, Taka 5.17 crore will come from revenue earnings while the rest from government grants. A total of Taka 5.21 crore have been earmarked for revenue expenditures while Taka 1.41 crore for the infrastructure development and Taka 10.02 crore for the second water supply and sanitation project.

Training course

MADARIPUR, July 12: A three-day training course on self-employment for the unemployed youths organised by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) concluded recently at BSCIC, Kalkini office, reports BSS. A total of 30 youths both male and female participated in the training course. Kazi Mahdi Hossain, Assistant General Manager, BSCIC inaugurated the training course. The participants in the training programme will be later on provided with loan by the BSCIC for running small industries and business.

Workshop for journalists

RANGAMATI, July 12: A two-day workshop on orientation of health and population programme for journalists concluded recently in the conference room of Rangamati hill districts council here, reports BSS. A number of 12 journalists working with the local and national dailies as well as news agencies participated in the workshop organised by Behaviour Change Communication unit of the Directorate of Family Planning. Chairman of Rangamati hill district council Ching Knew Roaza inaugurated the workshop recently. Deputy Director of Rangamati hill district family planning unit Mohammad Rahim Box Patwary was in the chair.



MOULVIBAZAR: Dr Golam Rahman, Professor of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dhaka University addressing at a workshop for the journalists of Sylhet division held recently at Moulvibazar Press Club. — Star photo

Demonstration plots for Boro paddy

NETRAKONA, July 12: A total of 46 block demonstration plots for Boro paddy have been set up in 10 thanas this year under the supervision of Netrakona District Agriculture Extension Department, reports BSS. An official source here said, the demonstration plots were set up to acquaint the farmers on irrigation management, fertilizer use and integrated pest management system. The Agriculture Extension Department supplied seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and other agricultural equipment to the farmers free of cost to set up the demonstration plots.

Workshop on afforestation

TANGAIL, July 12: A five-day workshop on tree plantation and maintenance of road concluded recently at Madhupur Rani Bhabani High School premises, reports BSS. Sponsored by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the workshop was inaugurated by S K Chowdhury, Thana Nirbahi Officer, Madhupur. A total of 13 women of the thana participated in the workshop. They were imparted training on the scientific method of planting saplings and maintenance of roads and highways.

Massive afforestation drive

MEHERPUR, July 12: Afforestation programme has been going on steadily in 18 unions in the current season, reports BSS. A total of 1,20,000 saplings of different varieties will be planted in the district this year, an official source said. Thirteen kilometre rural roads, 15 km feeder road and 10 km roads and highways have been brought under this programme. The Forest Department has raised 2,25,000 saplings of different varieties of fruit-bearing and wooden trees in five nurseries for sale among the people and afforestation under the department in the zone.

412 wanted criminals arrested

FENI, July 12: Feni police arrested 412 wanted accused in six thanas during first five months of 1999, reports BSS. According to an official source, the arrested are accused of various crimes including murder, dacoity, extortion, hijack and theft. A total of 3,291 police warrants were issued by different thanas between January and May. Terrorism has been checked considerably resulting in improvement of law and order situation during the last few weeks.

Social worker dies

RANGAMATI, July 12: Krishna Mohon Chakma, a retired government officer and a social worker of the area died of old-age complications recently at his house here. He was 76, reports BSS. He is survived by his wife and one son and two daughters. His body was cremated at Tabalchhari cremation ground in the outskirts of the town.

Work on Nalitabari town protection dam hampered

275 villages of Jamalpur affected by erosion

From Staff Correspondent

Severe river erosion, attributed to heavy downpour and onrush of hill water, has threatened some districts.

Our Jamalpur Correspondent says: River erosion has taken a serious turn here causing heavy damage in all the seven police stations for the last 15 days.

Belgacha, Sapdori, Nowar Para, Chinaduli of Islampur thana have already been washed away by the erosion. About 275 villages of Jamalpur sadar, Sarisabari, Dewanganj, Bakshigonj, Madergonj and Islampur thanas have been badly affected. Kadamtoli Bazaar and Ghutail Bazaar are also affected.

It has caused heavy damage to "Aman" seed beds, seasonal crops, dwelling houses, domestic animals and valuables. However, the exact figure could not be ascertained till filing of this report.

The river has already devoured the boundary walls of a mosque and a school near Jamalpur pourasabha is under threat and may go into the river bed at any time. Jaluparaghat of Sarisabari thana has been washed away. This was protected by the Army personnel in the last year's flood. It is now threatened. A vast area of Aman, Pigna, Poguldigha and Mohadan, Boira, Kuthuria, Hosnabad, Chapar Kona, Gobindapur, Bhabanipur, Pakhima, Polsha, Kandar para, Bariopati, Battikamari, Igara para, Fuldaha, Dobadaha, Chandar Nagar and Parpara of Sarisabari thana are badly affected by erosion.

BSS from Rangpur reports: The Water Development Board (WDB) has been implementing a massive flood and erosion protection scheme at Nohai under Gangachhara thana at a cost of Taka five crore, an official source said, reports BSS.

Under the scheme, a groyne is being constructed at Fomalari point to protect a vital embankment on the southern



Wrath of the Lord's child:

The boundary walls of a mosque and a school near the municipal office at Jamalpur have been eroded by the geologically young (200 years old) river Brahmaputra. — Star photo

bank of the River Teesta.

The work on the scheme is going on steadily and will be completed soon.

UNB from Sherpur says: To protect the tiny town from erosion by the river Bhogal and onslaught to recurring floods, a giant project, "Nalitabari Town Protection Embankment", is underway.

But the construction works on the embankment are being hampered due to a case filed by a contractor against Water Development Board (WDB) complaining irregularities in appointing contractor.

As per the project profile, undertaken in 1993, a total of 1,200 metres of the embankment were supposed to be constructed at a cost of Tk 2.44

crore. Accordingly, some 222 metres of the embankment were completed in 1993-94 fiscal costing Tk 77 lakh.

In 1995-97 fiscal, a contractor was assigned for constructing another 218 metres of the embankment. But later on the tender schedule was cancelled and fresh bid was floated. The work was then given to another contractor by WDB due to reasons better known to them.

Being angered by the cancellation, the contractor filed a case with the High Court, which is yet to be disposed off by the court.

There are also complaints of irregularities in the construction works of 423 metres and 237 metres completed in 1997-

98 and 1998-99 fiscal years respectively, involving Tk 85 lakh and Tk 77 lakh.

According to competent sources, substandard materials were used in the construction of blocks. On the slope of the riverbank, sand was used instead of brickbats.

They said it's not viable to use sand because it is washed away by the very first flow of water during the monsoon.

Local people said the portion of the embankment, the work of which still remained stopped, is very important for the protection of the town.

Meanwhile, floodwaters poured into the town threatening Nalitabari Madhyabazar and newly set up Shaheed Abdur Rashid Women's College.

'Godfathers' misguiding teens

JESSORE, July 12: The number of delinquent teenagers in the town has marked an unusual rise. The blame goes to some influential people and bootleggers, reports UNB.

A police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said a section of influential people, known as "godfathers", misguide these teenagers and engage them in various criminal and anti-social activities. He said top terrorists and smugglers of the town also use them in their various operations and carrying unauthorised arms and contrabands.

About the role of law-enforcing agencies, he said they are in fact doing little to contain the growing menace. "The reason is simple: underhand dealings." He said residents of old Kasba, Uposhahar Railgate, Barandipara, City College area, Bakchar, Bezpara and Railgate areas have virtually become hostage in the hands of terrorists.

Recently, a delinquent boy was killed and another injured while making bomb in Hsmatpara area.

Some college and schoolteachers also blamed a section of guardians for not giving adequate attention to their children, giving a rise to juvenile crimes.



A gift of Allah!

From A correspondent

MAGURA, July 12: Water is oozing out continuously from a tree in the college para area here. The tree is locally called "Paltay Mandar".

Now many people have been using this water as medicine. Miracle water is oozing out from the stalk, leaves and branches of the tree. Sick people are using this water with the hope of getting cured. Some are drinking and some are rubbing this water over their body.

People from different districts are also gathering here to collect this water. Even many from Chittagong and Sylhet have also rushed here for this natural gift. They are terming this water as a special gift of Allah. So they consider it as a sacred thing.

It may be mentioned here, Anwar Hossain is the owner of the tree. But at first Abdul Khaleque of the same area who is a devoted Muslim followed the miraculous incident. As he was suffering from various diseases, he drank and rubbed this water over his body in good faith. According to his opinion, he got cured using this water. Many other people also opined the same way.

Meanwhile, some dishonest people wanted to trade with this water. But due to interference of the local police and conscious people their evil design has been foiled.

Natural surprise:

Water is oozing out from the leaves and branches of this tree at Magura. People of the area are awe-struck at the miracle and believe the water to have healing powers. — Star photo

122-year-old Faridpur Judge Court building needs renovation

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, July 12: The 122-year-old district judge court building here is now in dilapidated condition.

The district judge himself, other judges, employees, lawyers and litigants feel insecure in this building. Any tragic incident like that of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University may take place any time.

The two-storey building built in 1878 stands in the court compound with all its architectural beauty and grandeur. The building is so imposing in appearance that it draws the attention of any stranger at first sight.

For lack of repair work and maintenance innumerable cracks have been developed on and inside the roof. Plasters on roof of all the rooms on the first floor have started falling down occasionally posing danger to the inmates.

Recently a portion of the plaster on the roof of the district judge's court fell down on the floor during court hours with a loud bang making the inmates terribly terrified. Fortunately none was hurt.

The district judge, Ali Ashraf Khan Lodi when interviewed in his chamber told this correspondent, he can not properly concentrate on his judicial works. He can not give patient hearing to the arguments in apprehension of its collapse. He also said that he had repeatedly wrote to the Public Works De-

partment (PWD) executives regarding the matter, but they simply came and saw for themselves the condition of the building, but expressed their inability to repair it for want of fund.

He also said that about seven years ago they had sent a pro-

posal to the higher authorities for sanctioning a project of Taka 4.30 crore for construction of the building anew demolishing the old one. They also proposed for construction of quarters for the accommodation of judges in an integrated complex. But they did not get any re-

sponse as yet.

The president of the district bar Ahamed Hossain Mia, expressed his view for the removal of its roof and its reconstruction keeping all other aspects of this imposing building intact. It would require Taka 50 thousand only.



Colonial beauty:

The 122-year-old bungalow that houses the Judges' court in Faridpur needs immediate repair. The roof is coming apart and can cause disaster anytime. — Star photo

Declining trend in using bridge

Revenue earning from Bangabandhu Bridge falls

SIRAJGANJ, July 12: The number of vehicles crossing Bangabandhu Bridge has reduced remarkably in the recent weeks for various reasons, bringing down its revenue earning, reports UNB.

Official sources said during the last one year ending on June 23, a total 8,17,000 vehicles used the bridge and the authorities earned about Tk 50 crore in revenue.

The officials, who insisted not to be named, said the number of vehicles using the bridge declined in the months of August, September, October and November due to the last year's devastating flood. Many roads were damaged by the floodwaters.

With the overall improvement of the flood situation, traffic movement on the bridge started to increase and it returned to normal during the months of December 1998 and January, February and March this year.

The highest number of vehicles, about one lakh, crossed the bridge in March this year.

But in April, May and June, the number of vehicles again showed a downtrend due to transport strike in the northern region of the country, contributing to the fall of revenue earning.

Officials said the overall use of the bridges is less than their expectation.

They also attributed the declining trend in using the bridge to internal conflict between transport owners and workers, extortionism at various places and substantial increase in water level of the River Jamuna.

They said many vehicles are now passing through Aricha ferry ghat as the ferry services have now become smoother with the increase in water level of the river. Besides, the ferry fare is much lower than the toll of the Jamuna Bridge, they added.

Apart from these, some drivers opt out the route due to deplorable condition of Tangail-Gazipur road.

House building loan programme remains suspended for 11 yrs

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, July 12: House building loan programme by Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHHBFC) has remained suspended in greater Jessore for the last 11 years, aggravating the housing problem in the region.

The suspension decision was taken by the authority in view of chronic non-recovery of the loans worth taka 28 crores, official sources said.

According to official source, the Regional Office of the BHHBFC, was set up here to feed the interests of Jessore, Jhenidah, Magura and Narail people in 1975.

This office started its operation in greater Jessore. A total of taka 31 crores were disbursed among 1200 loanees by this office.

Rules and regulations were not followed while disbursing loans. So taking advantage of these loop holes, the loanes changed the purpose of the loan and invested it elsewhere including the business other than house building. This practice of the loanes created problem for its recovery.

According to official statistics, the outstanding loans stand at taka 28 crores and that

is why the loan programme was stopped in 1988.

It is reported that a large number of people from different places under the jurisdiction of this office, are seeking fresh loans for the house building.

But not a single case has been entertained so far following the latest order of the BHHBFC, which has very clearly informed that no fresh loan will be given only to the residents of an area where the recovery position of outstanding loans is not at least 40 per cent.

But Jessore Regional Office presents a different picture. The recovery rate under this office is only 12 per cent.

When asked whether any step has been taken by the authority to recover the outstanding loans an official of this office on condition of anonymity told the Daily Star that already 500 cases have been filed with courts for recovery and filing of more cases are in the process.

The chairman of the BHHBFC, SM Atiur Rahman, visited Jessor recently and met the local elite, defaulter loanes and press men to exchange views on improving the loan recovery position and make the fresh loans available.

Standard of living declines in Satkhira

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, July 12: The standard of living of the people in Satkhira district has been declining due to absence of employment opportunities and development activities and sharp fall in agricultural production.

Agricultural sector has already been ravaged by repeated devastating natural calamities like floods, droughts, hailstorms, cyclones and unabated pest invasion on crop lands.

The communication systems in the district are not suitable for the growth of industrialisation.

More than 90 per cent roads in the district are in deplorable condition. About 60 per cent people depend mainly on river transport, but the massive siltation and emergence of shoals in the rivers have jeopardised the river communication. No step has been taken so far to dredge the river beds. Most of the 77 unions under seven thanas do not have direct communication with the thana headquarters.

Different educational institutions of the district have been facing shortage of teachers,

hampering the academic atmosphere.

Buildings of a larger number of primary and high schools and colleges in different thanas of the district are damaged every year by natural calamities and are left unprepared.

The elites of the district have demanded MA and M Com courses in Satkhira Government College be introduced to widen the opportunities for the youths to have higher education.

The leaders of different political parties, including Awami League and BNP, have urged the authorities concerned to set up industrial factories for creating job opportunities. They said the district has the bright prospect for jute and textile mills.

Local people have called for setting up of radio sub-station and television station in the district.

They also have called upon the government to create tourism spots in the district, which has several historical and attractive places.

Tale of an unfortunate death

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 12: Who is responsible for the death of Kamal Sheikh, 32, a bus driver?

Kamal Sheikh, an under trial prisoner, died on June 25 of burn injuries he received when he set himself on fire in prison hospital on June 19.

Kamal Sheikh, son of one Shahabuddin Sheikh of village Bhanjandanga on the outskirts of the town, was arrested allegedly by mistake for his alleged involvement in the sensational Mukshed murder case on March 21 this year.

It was alleged that Kamal Sheikh whose name was included in the FIR lodged with Kotwali thana in connection with Mukshed murder case.

Kamal Sheikh, however, several times prayed for bail during the last three months. But he could not receive.

Finally Kamal Sheikh developed insanity. Jail authorities then sent him to jail hospital where he set himself on fire in a bid to commit suicide.

He was immediately rushed to Faridpur General Hospital and later he was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital following the deterioration of his condition.

After fighting death for five days Kamal Sheikh finally succumbed to his burn injuries.

When body was carried to Faridpur town on June 27, gloom descended on the town dwellers, especially on the working class people.

People in their hundreds brought out a mourning procession in the town carrying the dead body.

The processionists went berserk and pelted brick-bats at the offices of Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police.

However, the situation was brought under control with the help of local leaders and high officials.

Later, the processionists held a rally on Janata Bank square here demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for this unfortunate death.

One man committee, however, was formed to investigate into the incident.

Pest-attack on Aus paddy

BARISAL, July 12: Aus paddy on more than 5,000 hectares in five southern districts of Barisal division has been attacked by Pamari and Majra insects, official sources said, reports BSS.