

News snaps

Bodies of abducted men recovered

CHUADANGA, Dec 8: The police on Monday recovered the bodies of Dr Osman and Babu Shankar Chandra, a UP member, who were abducted in March by underground activists, reports UNB.

With this, 10 bodies were recovered from Alamdanga thana during the last one month. All the victims had been reported missing. According to police, Nuruzzaman Latu, chief of underground Banglar Communist Party, in the name of special meeting called out Dr Osman and Babu Member from their house, took to Baro Gangul maidan and brutally killed them on March 19, 1999. Their bodies were kept under the ground. The victims hailed from Hironaghi and Jalshuka villages respectively of sadar thana. Police recovered the bodies following a confessional statement of arrested persons. Recovery of the bodies has created sensation in the area, infested with underground terrorists.

Computer training course

BRAHMANBARIA, Dec 8: A four-month long computer training course under the auspices of District Youth Development Department was inaugurated here at its office premises recently, reports BSS.

It was inaugurated by Additional District Magistrate, Brahmanbaria M Afzal Hossain. The course was presided over by Amarendra Kumar Banik. It was addressed, among others, by M Azad, Nasiruddin Howlader, M Jasimuddin. The speakers stressed the need of computer training course for generating trained manpower in our society. They also urged the local youths to come forward with a challenging view to face the new millennium. A total of 30 youths both male and female participated in the training course.

35 people injured in attack

SYLHET, Dec 8: At least 35 people of a picnic party from Tangail were injured in an attack at a Ballaghat restaurant in Goainghat thana on Sunday night by the local people who thought them as robbers, reports UNB.

Witnesses and police said when the picnic party was taking supper at Montaj restaurant, a gang of robbers raided the restaurant at 9 pm and decamped with Tk 70,000 in cash. Soon after the dacoity, local people rushed to the restaurant and beat the picnic party men taking them as dacoits. They also damaged the vehicle of the picnic party who came on excursion. In the early hours of Monday, unknown miscreants set the restaurant on fire that gutted also six or adjacent shops. The extent of damage was estimated at Tk 35 lakh.

Pest management works well

SHARIATPUR, Dec 8: Amid unabated environment pollution across the country, farmers of the district are happy with the environment friendly pest management, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) under its Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme organised a rally of farmers to impart them practical knowledge how they can effectively control insect in the field without using chemical pesticides. Agriculture officials cautioned the farmers about the adverse effects of chemical insecticides on the ecological balance and taught them various techniques of pest control. Speaking at the rally at Domsar union in Sadar thana agriculture officials urged the farmers to use light traps and net to control pests in lieu of chemical insecticides.

47,000 children immunised

BANDARBAN, Dec 8: A total of 47 thousand 741 under-5 children have been immunised at 969 centres in seven thanas set up by the District Health Department to implement the second round of the programme on the Sixth National Immunization Day (NID) on December 2, reports BSS.

Civil Surgeon of Bandarban district Dr Sarfaraz Khan Chowdhury told that the programme had started on November 28 in remote areas and continue through December 10 under the micro plan. He said a total of 3,480 health workers including volunteers had distributed Vitamin-A capsule among 47,741 children during the second round. The civil surgeon said 100 per cent target had been achieved in the NID programme.

419 uplift projects taken up

NARSINGDI, Dec 8: A total of 419 projects have been taken up under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme in the six thanas and three pourasabhas during 1999-2000 fiscal year, reports BSS.

About 714 tons of wheat have been sanctioned for the projects. The projects have been taken up to create employment opportunities for the rural poor. Of the total, 129 tons of wheat have been sanctioned for 62 projects in Narsingdi, 162 tons wheat for 69 projects in Raipura thana, 79 tons wheat for 62 projects in Belabo, 105 tons wheat for 94 projects in Monohardi, 107 tons wheat for 55 projects in Shibpur, 70 tons wheat for 39 projects in Polash thana, 30 tons wheat for 25 projects in Narsingdi Pourasabha, 18 tons wheat for 8 projects in Polash Pourasabha and 14 tons wheat for 5 projects in Madhabdi Pourasabha. The work of the projects has already been started and expected to be completed by December 31 this year.

Journalist beaten

NOAKHALI, Dec 8: Armed terrorists roughed up UNB Correspondent and his money, ID Card and wrist watch were taken away on Saturday, reports UNB.

The incident took place at Ramgati where the Correspondent, Chowdhury Mohiuddin Manzoor, went on an assignment. Chowdhury was caught by the terrorists who forcibly took him to a secluded place behind the office of Assistant Commissioner (Land) and beat indiscriminately and attempted to kill him at about 6:30 pm. He was, however, rescued by the local people who sent him to Lakshimpur sadar hospital where he was undergoing treatment. Chowdhury came under attack of terrorists for his reports against their activities in the area, suspected Ramgati police where a case was filed.

Body recovered

MUNSHIGANJ, Dec 8: The police on Sunday recovered the body of an unidentified young man from under the hyacinth of a ditch in village Ragurampur in sadar thana, reports UNB.

Hands and legs of the victim were tied with rope. A case was filed with the police. Another report from Naogaon said: Mystery shrouds the death of a newly married young man who was found hanging with a mango tree on November 28. The police recovered the body from village Tilnabazar Para in Sapahar thana. The victim, Alamgir Hossain Alam (21), who hailed from adjacent village Sutarapur was missing since November 27. The body was sent to the sadar hospital for autopsy.

Crop output decreasing

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Dec 8: Crop production has been decreasing alarmingly due to sharp fall of minerals in soil, according to agriculture experts, reports BSS. About 70 per cent land of the region has deficiency of minerals like sulphur, zinc and other necessary minerals. This deficiency has caused adverse effect on soil fertility. The experts attributed the minerals deficiency in soil to overuse of chemical fertilisers in the land. According to many cultivators, production of paddy, jute and other crops has decreased to a great extent due to mineral deficiency in soil. Experts have suggested that cultivators should be encouraged to use natural fertilisers in the interest of maintaining fertility of the soil.

Discussion on Dada Bhai

NARSINGDI, Dec 8: A discussion was held here at the death of distinguished journalist Rokonzaman Khan Dada Bhai at Narsingdi Press Club on Monday, reports BSS.

The discussion was presided over by the President of the club Niharon Roy. It was attended, among others, by Vice President of the club and District Correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Samithi (BSS) M Abu Taher, General Secretary of the club and District Correspondent of Daily Janata M. Abdur Rahman, District Correspondent of Bangladesh Observer M. Nurul Islam, Correspondent of Bangladesh Television M. Nurul Islam, District Correspondent of Banglar Bani Badal Kumar Saha and District Correspondent of Mukta Kantha Asadul Haque Polash. They expressed their profound shock at the death of Dada Bhai and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. They also expressed their deep sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

Harvesting of T-Aman begins

KUSHTIA, Dec 8: Harvesting of transplanted Aman began in six thanas of the district amid much enthusiasm with the expectation of bumper production in GK project areas, reports UNB.

The thanas are Sadar, Kumarkhali, Khoksha, Bheramara, Mirpur and Daulatpur. According to officials about 55,000 hectares of land were brought under transplanted Aman cultivation with production target of 1,30,000 metric tons of paddy. The farmers say they expect more than the target because of a bumper crop. With bumper crop, rice price has come down in the market.

Erosion renders hundreds homeless

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Dec 8: In the winter season the water level in rivers falls significantly.

Despite this fact river erosion is going on unabated in the southern districts. As a result hundreds of people have become homeless. The Kirtankhola flowing beside Barisal town already engulfed a vast tract of land along its bank a few days ago.

BIWTA ghat and some of other establishments have been threatened.

River erosion continues unabated throughout the year in this region. In the process several thousand acres of croplands, hundreds of dwelling houses, business establishments, educational institutions, huts and bazaars are getting devoured by different rivers like Mughna, Sugandha, Kirtankhola, Paira, Atrial Khan, Kalabadar, Sandhya, Tetulia and Baleswar in Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Jhalakati and Barguna under Barisal division.

Last month a huge area had been devoured in the River Sandhya along Banaripara thana headquarter. Many dwelling houses and business establishments have been threatened by the erosion.

Meanwhile, the Saheberhat embankment has been damaged further severely. This dam needs to be repaired immediately.

Besides, to protect Bhola, Water Development Board (BWDB) had undertaken Bhola Town Protection Project during 1992-93 fiscal year. The project work has been delayed due to fund constraints. An amount of Tk 2 crore had been allocated for the project, an official

source said.

The Meghna along Daulatkhan thana area in Bhola is also eroding vast tracts of lands continuously.

Experts said, due to morphological change along the Meghna estuary, erosion has been intensified than ever before. It will continue for years together in the coming days.

Mirjaganj in Babuganj thana of Barisal district is also being eroded unabated by the River Atrial Khan. This river becomes very furious during the rainy season, local people said.

At least 20 villages of Sreepur union in Mehendiganj thana have been shrinking gradually due to non-stop erosion of the Tetulia.

The Kakchira bandar area in Patharghata thana of Barguna district is about to be abolished due to unabated erosion by the River Baleswar.

We don't know when river erosion will be stopped and we shall be able to sleep peacefully at night, said local people.

UNB from Madaripur says:

Due to unabated erosion by the River Atrialkhan a vast tract of land and homesteads of Kalkini thana of Madaripur district have gone into the river rendering a large number of people pauper and homeless.

Some 40 dwelling houses, 500 acres of cropland of Anderchar and Natunchar villages, a rural hat, Karimkhan Post Office and a mosque in the thana have been eroded.

Anderchar Government Primary School is under threat of erosion.

Some one hundred families affected by the erosion have been living in utter distress in a newly emerged shoal.

Special step to grow panifal applying modern method

NATORE, Dec 8: Panifal (water chestnut), a highly nutritious fruit, are grown in abundance in waters of low lying fallow lands here, reports UNB.

In the past no effort was given for the growth of the fruit in Natore and other northern districts. But in recent days, a special initiative has been taken to grow the fruit applying modern methods.

The scientific name of panifal is 'Trapa Bispinosa'. The fruit originally came from across the border. The former Agriculture Training Institute had taken up a scheme for its mass cultivation. But the scheme was abandoned.

Panifal is introduced from hydrophyte floating thorny plant which is usually grow in low lying water lands including beel, haor, canal and roadside ditches.

Of the two types of the fruit

the taste of soft kernal of green coloured is better than reddish one.

Panifal is a popular fruit of the children and adolescents in the rural areas.

According to a nutrition scientist, the fruit is rich in carbohydrate, protein and mineral salts, which stimulates digestive function. It gives energy to the sick and the weak.

Besides, the fruit with its medicinal properties, relieves bile, bad tempers, diarrhoeal disease and abdominal pains.

Generally tender plants are separated from the mother plants (cluster type plant) for its cultivation.

Seeds are sown in ground in the month of December and new plants grow from the seeds in January and February. Then new saplings are collected and planted in the wet lands at a specified area collected and planted in the wet lands at a

specified distance. The over all method of cultivation is easy and cost-effective, said agriculturist Ayub Hossain Khan.

Natore Horticulture centre took a special initiative to popularise the fruit and increase its production last year.

It cultivated the fruit in its large fellow watery lands in the Farmer's Practical Training Complex in Fulbag area in the town.

The centre started growing saplings and distributing them to the interested growers providing modern technologies to promote its cultivation and production in the district.

The fruit is now available in the district at the rate of Tk 6 to Tk 8 per kg.

A good number of farmers of the remote areas of the district started cultivation of panifal in lands, which remain fallow almost round the year.

Seed crisis may hamper onion farming in dists

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Dec 8: Onion cultivation in nine districts of south-western region may face serious setback this season due to acute seed crisis.

Onion seed is selling between Tk 700 and Tk 800 per kg in local markets against the normal price of Tk 600 per kg, farmers said.

Growers alleged BADC (Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation) seed dealers are charging higher price against the fixed price.

Besides, the BADC has failed to supply the required quantity of onion seed to farmers, local people said.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, 7,000 kg of seed are needed to grow onion on 1,000 hectares of land in Jessore, 15,000 kg for the cultivation on 4,800 hectares in Jhenaidah, 3,750 kg for the cultivation on 500 hectares in Magura, 750 kg for the cultivation on 100 hectares in Khulna, 1,500 kg for the cultivation on 200 hectares in Bagerhat, 750 kg for the cultivation on 500 hectares in Satkhira, 7,000 kg for the cultivation on 1,000 hectares in Kushtia, 7,000 kg for the cultivation on 1,000 hectares in Chuadanga, 3,750 kg for the cultivation on 500 hectares in Meherpur district.

UNB from Netrakona adds:

The prices of onion seeds has gone up in local markets, which may hamper its production this year.

Onion seed is being sold in markets at Taka 32,000 per maund compared to Taka 20,000 last year.

Officials said acute scarcity of onion seeds might seriously hamper its production.

Sahel Ali, a farmer of Bishnupur village in Atapara thana, attributed the scarcity of onion seed to frequent hailstorms and foggy weather, which caused damage to onion seed last year.

As prevailing price of onion seed is abnormally high,

marginal farmers will not be able to cultivate the crop as per their target. Most farmers could not procure seed, although the peak period of cultivation was almost over now, local people said.

Farmers in Kailati village in Sadar thana said they would be able to cultivate onion only on 45 per cent land of their target for the year.

An onion trader said the prospect of onion cultivation is bleak this season.

About 250 hectares of land have been brought under onion cultivation this season in ten thanas of the district with the production target of 2,500 tons, officials said.

BSS from Tangail says: An acute scarcity of onion seed is

prevailing in Tangail district.

The local seed is being sold at a cost of Taka 1,400 per kg, but Indian onion seed is being sold at a cost of Taka 800 per kg, local sources said.

Agriculture department source said, the target of onion cultivation in 2,500 hectares in Mirzapur, Delduar, Nagarpur, Tangail, Sadar, Kalihati, Bhupur and Gopalpur thanas in the current season. But the target may be hampered due to scarcity of seeds.

UNB from Shariatpur adds: Acute crisis of boro seeds has been prevailing in most areas of the district that might hamper cultivation of boro in the ensuing season.

The thanas from where scarcity of seeds reported are Damuda, Bhedorganj, Gosayirhat, Palong, Zajira and Naria.

Four youths languishing in jail hajat sans probe

From Our Correspondent

BENAPOLE, Dec 8: The court sent four young boys to jail hajat after they were arrested by Sharsa police without any investigation on charge of trafficking women to India, reports UNB.

Local people said six girls of village Bhabherber went together to their relations on a pleasure trip recently. But a influential man in a bid to achieve personal gain informed the police that the girls were sold out to Indian women traffickers. He accused Lalon, Rustom, Badal and Selim of the same village.

They were charged with trafficking Polly, 14, daughter of Tokabbar, Fatema, 15, daughter of Mohammad Ali, Sheuli, 14, daughter of Rabul, Bithi, 14, daughter of Dabir, Gazi, Mitu, 13, daughter of Delwar and Kulsum, 15, daughter of Manna.

Without any investigation police arrested the young boys and thrown them into jail hajat.

The incident, including the names of the girls, was reported in the press. Finding the newspaper report, the girls rushed back to their house the following day and told the fact to their parents.

But police came and arrested the girls ignoring their statement that they were not victimised by anyone nor fled the home.

The girls were, however, later released. But the young boys were still languishing in the jail hajat.

Guardians of the young boys appealed to the Human Rights groups in securing the release of their sons.



Unabated erosion by the River Sandhya in Banaripara area of Barisal rendering scores of people homeless in this ongoing winter season. —Star photo

Re-union of freedom fighters

JESSORE, Dec 8: To celebrate the liberation of Jessore area, a re-union of the freedom fighters belonging to Sector 8 of the Liberation War in 1971 was held at the war memorial 'Rakta Rin' beside Monoharpur lake adjacent to Jessore Cantonment on Tuesday morning.

About seven thousand freedom fighters including the Sector Commanders and Sub-Sector Commanders as well as members of the Shaheed families took part in the re-union.

One of the valiant Sub-Sector Commanders and Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Bir Bikram graced the occasion as the chief guest.

While recollecting his memories of the Liberation War Gen Mustafiz said that in response to the declaration of independence and call of freedom struggle by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the 26th of march in 1971 members of the Armed Forces along with the patriotic people fought shoulder to shoulder that ultimately paved the way to liberate the Jessore area on this historic 7th December.

Gen Mustafiz paid rich tributes to the memory of the martyrs of the Liberation War in 1971 and termed 7th December a red letter day in the history of our freedom movement.

He said that the supreme sacrifices of the undaunted freedom fighters and the saga of their heroic deeds would remain ever shining in our history.

Terming the independence war as our national pride, Gen Mustafiz called upon all to work together to make Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty in keeping with the spirit of the Liberation War, he added.

Earlier, the Army Chief inaugurated the newly constructed road that has linked the Rakta Rin with the Jessore-Jhenidah highway. The four-kilometre road named as Rakta Rin Sarak has been constructed jointly by the local Government Engineering Department and Bangladesh Army. Later on he placed a floral wreath at the war memorial Rakta Rin to pay his respect to the martyrs of the great War of Liberation in 1971.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Energy Secretary Dr Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, Commandant of the Bangladesh Ordnance Factory Major General Abdul Wahab, Retired SP Mahbub Uddin, Bir Bikram, Local members of the parliament Tipu Sultan and Sarder Tabibur Rahman, President of the Muktiyodha Command Council Principal Ahad Chowdhury and Major Abdul Hafiz Bir Bikram, MP.

Earlier local Area Commander of Bangladesh Army Major General Jamil D Ahsan read out the address of welcome.

The re-union was attended, among others, by wife of Shaheed Noor Muhammad, Bir Shrestha, Wife of late Lieutenant Colonel Nazmul Huda, Bir Bikram, former GOCs and high civil and military officers.

Filaria patients increasing

PANCHAGARH, Dec 8: The number of filaria patients in greater Dinajpur district, including Panchagarh, has doubled in last 10 years and many of the affected people turned into beggars, reports UNB.

According to an estimate, there are about 3,000 patients in sadar thana of Panchagarh district and 5,000 in sadar thana of Thakurgaon district.

A large number of patients in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts are begging on the streets enduring elephantiasis for a long time.

The history of filaria goes back to 1947 when a good number of people migrated there from the Indian State of Bihar carrying the germ of the disease.

To combat its outbreak, a filaria research institute was set up in Thakurgaon in 1967, but the institute was closed down in 1984 for reasons unknown.

A team of experts has recently visited Thakurgaon and after testing blood it found many people affected with filaria.

Meherpur BNP leaders join JP(Ershad)

MEHERPUR, Dec 8: Some top BNP leaders of the district on Monday joined Jatiya Party (Ershad), reports UNB.

They are senior vice-president Islam Ali, general secretary Shafiqur Rahman Badsha, Sadar thana Unit president Mozammel Haque, general secretary Mohammad Alaiddin and Mujibul Haque Khan Helal.

JP district leaders said the newcomers would formally join Jatiya Party in presence of Chairman HM Ershad at a function on December 10.

Reception to Bibi Rassel

RANGPUR, Dec 8: A civic reception was accorded to internationally renowned fashion model Bibi Rassel at the local Town Hall on Friday on her appointment by UNESCO as special envoy for design development, reports UNB.

Bibi Rassel who hails from Rangpur came here on a three-day visit on Thursday. She visited Nishibetganj panchayat in Sadar thana, which is famous for Shatranj project run by the local weavers.

Convenor of Civic Reception Committee, Advocate Abu Mohammad Mozammel Haque, presided over the function.

It was addressed, among others, by elderly politician Advocate Karl Mohammad Yahya, District Awami League president Abdur Razzak, former Rangpur Pourasabha chairman Mohammad Afzal, Rangpur Press Club president Sadul Alam Dulu and general secretary Abdur Rashid Babu.

Severe traffic jams in Faridpur bus stand area

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Dec 8: Severe traffic jams in the local bus stand area have become a common feature, causing untold sufferings to pedestrians and passengers.

The bus terminal is situated at Goalchamot, a densely populated area in the town, on 1.19 acres of land.

The situation aggravates when long route buses plying via Faridpur halt at the bus stand for few minutes.

In view of this problem local people have demanded of the government to construct a full-fledged bus terminal in the town.

In 1989, Taka ten lakh was sanctioned for the construction of a full-fledged bus terminal. Later tender was also invited for the construction. But project was not implemented.

However, in early 1996, Asian Development Bank (ADB) sanctioned Tk 40 lakh for the construction of the bus terminal under Secondary Town Development Project.

Pourasabha Chairman Hasibul Hasan said site has been selected. The construction work of the bus terminal will be started soon, he added.

'Digital telephone network in all dists'

PABNA, Dec 8: Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister, Mohammad Nasim on Tuesday said all districts of the country would be brought under a digital telephone network, within a very short period, keeping pace with latest development in the telecommunications sector, reports BSS.

A total of 2,16,000 telephones will be installed under a project for which China is providing \$213 million in assistance, he said at the foundation laying ceremony of Pabna digital exchange. The minister said through this project all the districts of the country will be brought under digital exchange.

This heralds a new era in turning the current analog exchanges into digital ones throughout the country, the minister said.

The function was addressed, among others, by Wazuddin Khan MP, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Wang Chungul, Chairman of T&T Board Khondakar Abdul Hamid and Chairman of Pabna municipality Mosharraf Hossain.

Nasim said digital exchanges are in operation in 24 districts and three more districts — Gazipur, Laxmipur and Tangail — will be brought under digital exchange this month.



Kazi Faruque Ahmed, chairperson of ADAB and president of Proshika, addressing the meeting of NGO workers in Pabna on December 4. —Star photo

NGO workers' rally in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Dec 8: A big rally of about 1,500 workers of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of the northern districts was held here on December 4.

Kazi Faruque Ahmed, chairperson, ADAB and President of Proshika addressed the mammoth meeting.

Held at Pabna Banamali Institute, the rally was presided over by Abdul Kader, Managing Director, Samata, a Pabna based NGO and President of Land Network for Development (LAND).

It was addressed, among others, by Shamsul Huda, Director, ADAB, Dr Nawshad Ahmed, Programme Officer, Asia Foundation, Mahin, M Sultan, Programme Officer, SDC Hosne Ara Khanam, Executive Director, Usha, Ranesh Maitra, Pabna correspondent of The Daily Star and Mustafizur Rahman of Rajshahi.

The ADAB chief criticised the main opposition party for forming an alliance with anti-democratic forces. He also accused the ruling party for playing the same game a few years back. He also slated the government for evicting lakhs of helpless slum-dwellers in Dhaka. He called upon the patriotic and democratic elements to build a strong third force for implementing the ideals of the

Liberation War.

The inaugural session, presided over by Abdul Kader, was also addressed by Mosharraf Hossain, chairman, Pabna Municipality, Dilip Kumar Das, ADC (Rev), Pabna, Shamsul Huda, Director, ADAB and Mustafizur Rahman.

The rally paid rich tributes to late Rokanuzzaman Khan (Dadabhai), Begum Sofia Kamal, National Professor Abdur Razzaque and Pabna Press Club President Mirza Shamsul Islam.