

News snaps

2 extortionists caught

**FARIDPUR, Dec 25:** Two extortionists were caught red handed at the local branch of UCBL while they were demanding Tk 50,000 from the bank manager on Thursday, reports UNB. The hoodlums identified as Mizanur Rahman of Purbo-Kakoi and Aslam Chowdhury of village Duttapra of Shibchar thana of Madaripur district were handed over to police. Police said the extortionists phoned the UCBL Manager to pay Tk 50,000 staging a story that a director of the bank badly needs the money for repairing his car damaged by an accident. But the bank manager contacted with the head office and came to know that the story was false and he refused to pay the money when they called him again. In the evening a group of 6-7 men forcibly entered into the bank and demanded the money. At that time only one officer and two guards were present at the bank office.

Intellectuals' Day Observed

**BARGUNA, Dec 25:** Martyred Intellectuals Day was observed in a befitting manner recently, reports UNB. To mark the day, Barguna Press Club and Shishu Academy placed wreaths at local monument in the morning. Later a discussion meeting was held at press club auditorium with journalist Sanjib Das in the chair. Another discussion was held at the district bar council library. Another report from Narayan-ganj adds: The day was observed recently. On the occasion, a discussion meeting was held at Hanif Khan auditorium of local press club with its president Habibur Rahman Badal in the chair. Among others, former director of PIB Shamsul Huda, MA Hannan, Hanif Khan, Mahbubur Rahman, Abdul Khaleq, Shamsul Islam and Monirul Islam spoke on the occasion.

Clash leaves boy dead

**JHENIDAH, Dec 25:** A teenage boy was killed and four people were injured in a clash between two groups of people at Mokimpur village in Harinakunda thana on December 12, reports UNB. Police said supporters of Anisur and Mohit Ali locked in a clash with lethal weapons over gathering paddy from a disputed land, leaving five injured. Injured Rajan, Shariful, Tahura Khatun, Elom Mondal and his son Farook, 14, were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital, where Farook died later on the day. A case was filed with Harinakunda police.

41 uplift projects undertaken

**PABNA, Dec 25:** Pabna Zilla Parishad has undertaken 41 development projects in the current fiscal involving Tk 94 lakh, reports UNB. Officials said the Zilla Parishad will provide Tk 33.58 lakh from its own fund for implementing the projects while the remaining Tk 60.39 will come from the annual development programme fund for the year 1999-2000. The projects include construction and reconstruction of roads, educational institutions, bridges, culverts, passenger-shed and dukbanglows in different parts of the district. The authorities concerned have already floated tenders for the projects scheduled to be completed by March next. Upon completion of the road projects, some 10 lakh people of nine thanas will get better communication facilities.

Valuables looted

**JESSORE, Dec 25:** In a string of robberies, road pirates looted valuables from passengers of a number of coaches and trucks in Kotwali thana on Jessore-Benapole highway early Wednesday, reports UNB. Police said a band of about 25 robbers, including women, swooped on 12 night coaches and four trucks by blocking the road in Malauchi area and looted valuables of the India-bound passengers. "The bandits were equipped with sophisticated arms, including SMGs, cut-rifles and pistols," said a passenger. He alleged that police reached the spot three hours after the incident.

Pirates swoop on 4 trawlers

**BARGUNA, Dec 25:** Pirates swooped on four trawlers in deep sea near Patharghata on Friday and took away a trawler along with two fishermen, throwing eight others into the sea, reports UNB. According to Patharghata Trawler Owners Association, the bandits attacked the trawlers — FB Al Amin, FB Islam, FB Sabuj and FB Bhai Bhai — while they were fishing near Careway Boya. They looted fishes, nets and fuel worth about Tk 8 lakh, beating up the fishermen mercilessly. The two abducted fishermen were identified as Babul, 25, and Habib, 28 while the eight who were thrown into the sea were rescued by another trawler.

105 posts vacant at FP Deptt

**COMILLA, Dec 25:** Some 105 posts, including that of officers and employees, at Family Planning (FP) Department have long been lying vacant, hindering reproductive health services, reports UNB. The posts include one medical officer, 46 pharmacists, 12 family planning visitors, 13 thana family planning assistance, 21 family planning assistance, seven 'dai' and five 'aya'. Another report says: People of 26 unions are being deprived of healthcare facilities for lack of family welfare centres. The unions are Durgapur north and south in Sadar thana, Kaerlpar, Ajgara, Uttarda, Hasnabad, Lakshamanpur, Sarahspur, and north Hawla in Laksam, Furba Dhair and Paharpur in Muradnagar, south Bhagatpur and Birkandi in Daudkandi, north Gunaghar and Bhat in Debida. Mokra in Buriabang, Shahidal, Chandalla, Sidlat and Madhabpur in Brahmanpara, Mokra and Adra in Nangalkot and Chandanpur, Mathabhang and Gharmora in Homna thanas. The UPs have adequate staff for family welfare centres, but they are drawing salaries virtually doing nothing.

Poultry farms face closure

**SHARIATPUR, Dec 25:** Over a hundred poultry farms in various thanas face closure for lack of broiler chickens, reports UNB. About 50 poultry farms in Palang, Zazira, Naria, Bhedaganj and Gosairhat thanas have already been closed down, throwing hundreds of people out of jobs. Anwar Hossain, a poultry-farm owner in Palang thana, said import of hatching eggs has been stopped due to conspiracy by a section of unscrupulous traders, pushing up the prices of broiler chickens. Owners of poultry farms have to wait for about a month for broiler chickens even after paying money to hatcheries owners. A poultry farm owner in Bhedaganj thana said one of his two farms has been shut down due to shortage of broiler chickens.

Private car snatched

**SIRAJGANJ, Dec 25:** Bandits travelling in guise of passengers snatched a private car on gunpoint from Bangabandhu Bridge area on Thursday midnight injuring its driver, reports UNB. Police said the robbers in cover of boarder of Hotel Sheraton rented the car from Dhaka for travelling to northern Bogra district. When the car reached on the bridge, they took control over steering injuring its driver Hossain Ahmed, 30, hailed from Hija thana, Barisal, and threw him on the bridge. On information, police of the Bangabandhu Bridge West thana rushed to the spot and sent Ahmed to Sadar Hospital with critical condition. A case was filed in this connection.

BRCS AGM held

**BARISAL, Dec 25:** The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Barisal district unit of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) was held here at the unit office premises recently, reports BSS. Unit Secretary AHM Saleh presented the key note paper. A ten-member unit of BRCS was formed with Mahiuddin Ahmed and Manirul Hassan Khan as president and general secretary respectively. The other committee members, AHM Saleh, Mahjul Islam Jhantu, Syed Anisur Rahman, Talukder, Mohammad Yunus, Sheikh Mobarak Hossain, Abdul Bari, Anisuddin Ahmed Shahin and Shaiful Haque Ferdous. It was addressed, among others, by Hemaet Uddin Ahmed and Manirul Hasan Khan.

Loan disbursed

**RANGPUR, Dec 25:** Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) has taken up a programme to disburse Tk 1.10 crore as loan among 1,680 people in two thanas during the current fiscal year, reports UNB. Under its poverty-alleviation programme, BRDB has already disbursed Tk 31 lakh among 674 people in Sadar and Kaunia thanas. BRDB sources said the loans were given as financial support for self-employment ventures like poultry farming, goat and cattle fattening, pisciculture, vegetable cultivation and small trade. BRDB has also distributed Tk 45.80 lakh against the target of Tk 50 lakh among the members of cooperative societies in Mithapukur, Pirganj and Sadar thanas this fiscal year (1999-2000) under the Integrated Women Cooperative Societies Programme.

Monument of Liberation War martyrs in Jhenidah



Monument of Liberation War martyrs.

—Star photo

From Delwar Kabir

**JHENIDAH, Dec 25:** A monument of Liberation War martyrs was constructed with local initiative in front of Kaliganj Thana Parishad.

An amount of Taka 10 lakh was spent for its construction. Local people contributed generously for its construction work. The act is definitely an act of noble gesture.

Sushen Chandra Roy, Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Kaliganj said, he played a pioneering role with the help of local pourasaha chairman MA Mannan and 11 union parishad chairmen to pay respect to 14 sons of Kaliganj thana who sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War in 1971. The brave sons are: Motaleb Hossain of village Pukuria, Abdul Malek of Kadirdi, Abul Kasem of Madhabdi, Mahiuddin, Mosharrif Hossain and To-fazzel Hossain of Helai, Ator Ali, Amjad Ali, Wazed Ali and Basiruddin of Chapali, Hazari Lal and Matiar Rahman of Pirojpur, Rais Ali of Khaikula and another unidentified one.

The TNO informed that the design of the monument of Liberation War martyrs at Jessore Cantonment was followed in the lower portion of the monument, while it was decorated with 14 leaves at its top as the symbol of 14 martyrs of Kaliganj.

The TNO acknowledged with gratitude that people of all walks of life contributed greatly in construction of Kaliganj Liberation War martyrs' monument. The construction work was completed in early December.

Deputy Commissioner Md Shoyebur Rahman unveiled the plaque of the monument on December 8. A discussion meeting was arranged at the monument premises where MA Sattar, thana commander, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Kaliganj thana presided over, about 200 freedom fighters and elite were present. The meeting was presided over by the TNO.

When this correspondent talked to some freedom fighters and local people they appreciated the local initiative highly. The attractive monument draws the attraction of many people as it is located by the side of Jessore-Jhenidah highway. The names of 14 brave sons of son are inscribed there.

64 community clinics to be set up in Pirojpur

**PIROJPUR, Dec 25:** Health and Family Welfare Ministry will set up 64 community clinics in the district in the current financial year, reports UNB. Construction and Maintenance Unit of the ministry will implement the project at a cost of Tk 1.47 crore with the financial assistance of Islamic Development Bank.

Of the total clinics, nine will be set up in Bhandaria thana, four in Kowkhali, 16 in Mathbaria, 10 in Nazirpur, 13 in Nesarabad and 12 in Sadar thana. Officials said works on the project would begin soon and are expected to be completed by June next.

Medicare service will be readily available to the poor people with the setting up of the community clinics. The department constructed six thana health complexes at a

cost of Tk 2.32 crore during the last fiscal.

Another report adds: Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) will implement 181 schemes, costing Tk 11.20 crore, in the district during the current fiscal year. Of the total amount, Tk 5.36 crore will be provided from OPEC fund and the rest from the government.

The project works include construction and reconstruction of roads and culverts, and repair and maintenance of roads and bridges.

Thana-wise break-up of the schemes are: Nazirpur-18, Nesarabad-43, Mathbaria-49, Kowkhali-18, Bhandaria-20 and Sadar-33.

Upon completion of the schemes by June, road communications in the district would be improved to a great extent.

2,000 homeless families leading miserable life

**SHARIATPUR, Dec 25:** About 2,000 families who were rendered homeless by the erosion of the river Padma have been leading a miserable life due to lack of proper rehabilitation, reports UNB.

Sources said the people, who once lived in Khejurtala, WAPDA, Chandipur, Naopara areas in Naria thana, now have taken shelter at Banshtala and Naria after losing their property in the river Padma.

Most of the families had their own farmlands and maintained their families with the outputs of the lands.

But losing all their cultivable lands in the river they have become day labourers and have been leading a subhuman life.

The victims said the authorities are yet to take any steps to

rehabilitate them. After last year's devastating flood some families got a little assistance.

Taslima, once a housewife of a well-off family and now took shelter in Khejurtala area, told the news agency that they are being deprived of basic needs like medical and education facilities apart from accommodation.

Most children of the evicted families have been suffering from various diseases mainly due to malnutrition. As health workers are not used to going there adoption of family planning measures is a far cry.

Taslima said, "Medical facilities is also far from their reach," she added.

The victim families urged the authority concerned to take rehabilitation programme for their survival.

Accommodation problem in two prisons

**BAGERHAT, Dec 25:** The district jail here is overcrowded with six times more prisoners than its capacity, reports UNB.

At present, Bagerhat district jail has 748 inmates, including 19 women, against its capacity of 121 male and nine female prisoners.

Official sources said the district jail was upgraded from sub-jail in February 1998, but its capacity remained as before.

Construction of the new jail building that began in 1997 on 10 acres of land in the town's Nutun Court area has not been completed.

Male prisoners are kept in seven rooms and two tin-shed rooms while the female prisoners in two rooms, including one tin-shed room.

"Sometimes, the number of prisoners reaches over 800 and they sleep on rotation in the cell," said a prison official wishing anonymity.

He said an 8-year-old boy, Sagar, of Chandpur village in Comilla district is now detained

in the jail. Four elderly people above 75 are languishing in the prison for long.

Besides, 8-10 people are confined in the prison for long awaiting trial.

Another report from Magura

Acute scarcity of drinking water

From Our Correspondent

**KUSHITIA, Dec 25:** Acute scarcity of drinking water is prevailing in rural areas of the district.

The existing number of tubewells in six thanas is inadequate to meet the demand of people. More over, many tubewells have remained out of order for a long time, causing untold sufferings to villages.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to repair the tubewells.

Various water-borne diseases have broken out in rural areas due to scarcity of tubewell waters.

adds: Over 400 prisoners are huddling together in the district jail built during the British period to hold 45 prisoners.

Jail sources said the jail inmates have to sleep at night by rotation for lack of accommodation.

The authorities shift prisoners to Jessore District Jail only when they fail to accommodate the inmates.

There have been allegations that the 'mates', the RI prisoners who are entrusted with some specific duties, torture the other prisoners and collect toll from them.

Sources said the jail inmates, who live in filthy like rooms, are served with low quality foods. When under-trial prisoners are brought to court from jail, they are not served with food on the day, they alleged.

When contacted the jail authorities down played the allegations and said a new prison is being constructed at a cost of Tk 7 crore.

Photography show begins in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

**SYLHET, Dec 25:** A two-week long photography exhibition of Kismat Khondker began at the newly inaugurated 'Heritage Art Gallery' in the town on December 17.

A total of 50 photographs on display depict Bangladesh's scenic beauty, seasonal variations and people, besides the changing trend in urban architecture and political unrest.

Khondker, a former college teacher, is now pursuing photography as his career.

Everyday many people are visiting the show in the gallery in Shahjalal Upashahar area, the first of its kind in the town, which was inaugurated by Sylhet Municipality Chairman Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran.

I feel encouraged as a large number of people are visiting the show, the photographer told this correspondent.

"If people show interest, photography training courses for interested people can be organised," he said in response to a question.

Rabidas Mission congregation

From Our Correspondent

**MYMENSINGH, Dec 25:** The second annual congregation of Tarakandi Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission was held recently at local Bangabandhu College compound at Tarakandi.

The largely attended function was presided over by Bigu Rabidas, M Shamsul Huq MP was the chief guest while Kanai Lal Rabidas Mohanta, Secretary General of Bangladesh Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission, was present as special guest, among others.

M Shamsul Huq MP in his address said that the present administration believes in communal harmony and he donated Tk 5,000 towards Tarakandi Rabidas Dham (Temple) Fund.

Fresh date to start dredging in Karnaphuli

From Staff Correspondent

**CHITTAGONG, Dec 25:** Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has set a fresh date January 1 to start dredging in the river Karnaphuli, port sources said.

The dredging will be done in jetty areas in a bid to facilitate smooth berthing of cargo vessels, port sources added.

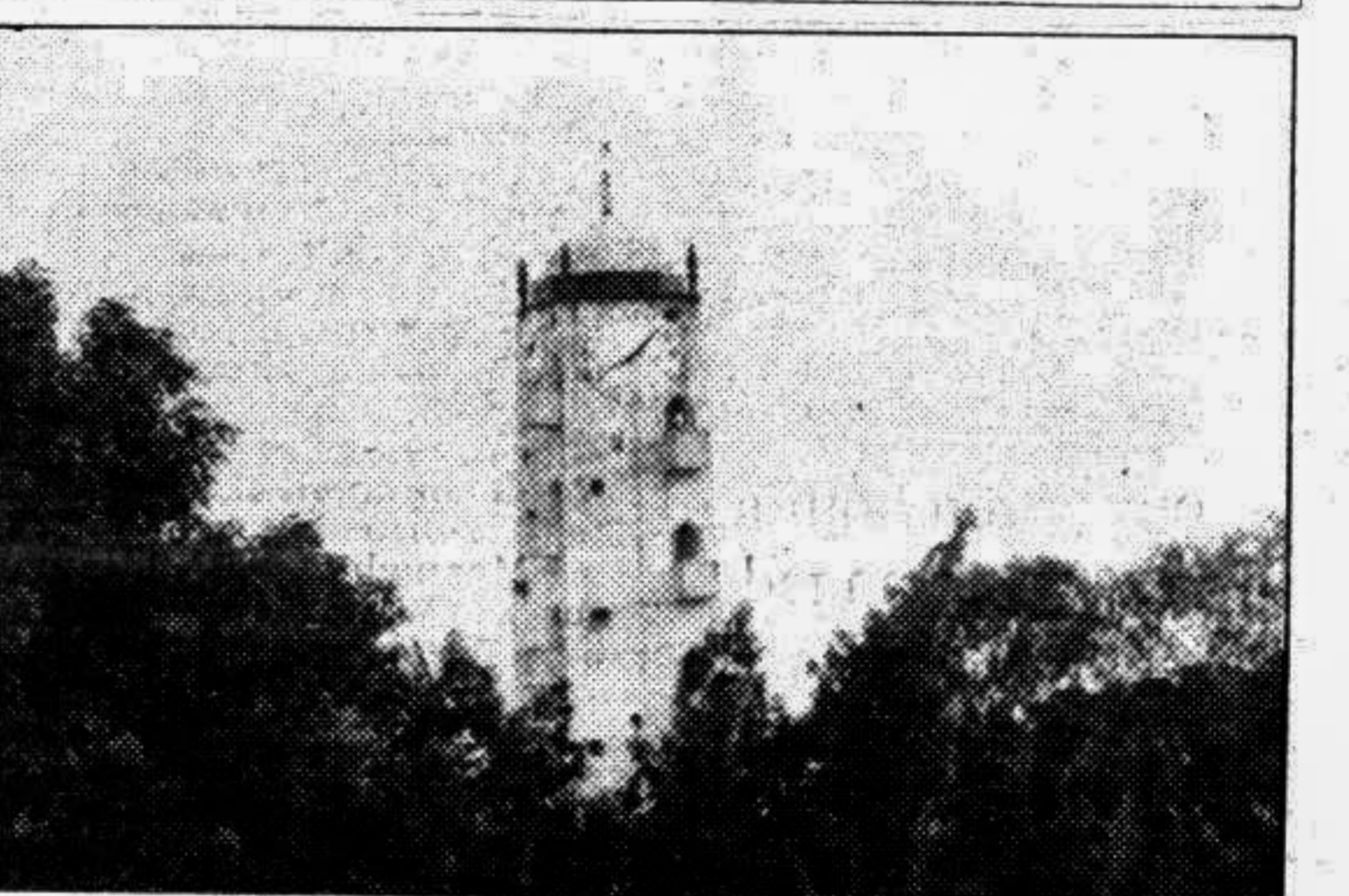
The decision was taken at a meeting held at port office attended by port officials and port users on December 19.

Earlier, the dredging in around 13 jetties was supposed to begin from December 11.

Sources also said that the dredging was being delayed against the backdrop of congestion at the jetties and the outer anchorage of the port.

If the dredging starts, at least two jetties alternately at a time must be kept idle to run the work, port sources said.

Events of districts in picture



A photograph of minaret of the mosque of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) by Kismat Khondkar was on display in the exhibition.

—Star photo



Kanailal Rabidas Mohanta addressing the Rabidas congregation at Tarakandi in Mymensingh district.



A colourful rally was brought out in Netrakona town on the occasion of Begum Rokeya Day. Women Affairs Department organised the rally.

—Star photo



Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) organised a colourful procession on the university campus to celebrate the UNESCO declaration on International Mother Tongue Day.

—Star photo

Quiz competition for school students

From Our Correspondent

**MOULVIBAZAR, Dec 25:** A 'quiz' competition among the secondary school level students of Moulvibazar town was held at local Saifur Rahman Auditorium recently.

Organised by 'Parasporik, Moulvibazar an educational, cultural and sports organisation, the final round of competition was held in presence of invited guests and spectators. Sultana Shamsunnahar

Chowdhury, president of the organisation presided over the function, while Rahimunnessa Begum, an elderly educationist of the town attended as the chief guest.

Students from six schools of the town took part in the competition. Competitors of All Anzad Government Girls' High School secured the highest score and became the Champion. Personal achievement

prize went to the same school. Moulvibazar Government Boy's High School and Flower K G and Junior High School jointly secured second position while Kashinath of Alauddin High School got third place. Equal prizes were given to all teams except the Champion team.

Chief guest of the function distributed prizes among the competitors.

Such programme was lauded highly by the audience.



Quiz competition progressing at Saifur Rahman Auditorium in Moulvibazar.

—Star photo