

News snaps

Winter clothes distributed

MYMENSINGH, Jan 14: The administration in collaboration with local press club distributed winter clothes among the distressed people on Sunday night, reports UNB.

Chador and other warm clothes were given to 2,000 poor people in the town and two adjacent thanas of Fulpur and Haliughat. Deputy Commissioner Rafiqul Islam and senior officials took part in the humanitarian work that continued till midnight.

Loan for youths

MAGURA, Jan 14: Youth Development Department has disbursed soft-term loan totaling Tk 1.90 crore among 1,266 youths of the district, reports UNB.

Officials said the loan was given for cattle rearing and poultry farming, setting up of nursery, garments making and undertaking other income-generating programmes. The department is also imparting training to unemployed youths, the officials said.

Chehlum

COMILLA, Jan 14: Chehlum of Fauzia Khasru, wife of Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, was held at village Mirpur under Brahmanpara thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Dean of the diplomatic corp and Palestinian ambassador Muhammad Sata Zarab, political leaders of Comilla, judges, lawyers, government officials and a large number of people attended the Chehlum. Fauzia Khasru died of cancer on November 23 in Dhaka.

43 development schemes

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 14: The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has taken up 43 schemes for development works of transport and communication at a cost of Taka 4.46 crore, reports BSS.

According to official sources, an amount of Taka 38.72 lakh has been sanctioned for 22 schemes of reconstruction works in all the eight thanas of the district. Taka 3 crore 37 lakhs and 64 thousand for 17 schemes of infrastructure development and Taka 70 lakh for the rest four thanas to develop the cluster villages at Ramgar, Panchhari, Dhikinala and Mahalchhari thanas has been sanctioned.

Homecoming Day observed

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 14: The historic Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who returned to independent Bangladesh on January 10, 1972 from the captivity of Pakistan jail, was observed here on Monday in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Sheikh Kamal Smriti Parishad of the local district committee organised a discussion on the occasion with its president Advocate Abdul Quayum in the chair. The meeting was addressed, among others, by journalist Syed Mohammed Alzal, Prof Mohammed Ashraf, Prof Emdadul Haque and Poet Ratna Dey.

Ashrayan project progressing

CHHAGALNAIYA, Feni, Jan 14: Construction of Joy Chandpur Ashrayan Project under Suvapur union of the thana began recently, reports BSS.

The project has been taken up to rehabilitate homeless and destitute people. Two barrack type houses on three acres of khas land will be constructed under the supervision of Army personnel to provide accommodation to 20 families, 10 in each barrack, with toilet and tubewell facilities. The relevant authorities allocated 23 tones of wheat for earth filling work of the project.

VGF programme

COMILLA, Jan 14: The government sanctioned 1,663 tons of rice and wheat for distribution among the distressed and poor people under VGF programme in the district on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. One lakh sixty thousand five hundred poor families received the rice and wheat. Five kg rice and five kg wheat were allocated for every family under the programme in 179 unions of 12 thanas and pourasbas in the district. Relief and Rehabilitation Department sources said.

Discussion

NARSINGDI, Jan 14: A discussion organised by Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad (BMS), Narsingdi Zila Command to mark the Homecoming Day of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was held here at its office premises on January 10, reports BSS.

The discussion was presided over by Commander of BMS, Narsingdi Zila Command Abdul Motaleb. A large number of Muktiyoddha, or freedom fighters, in six thanas of the district attended the discussion. Later Abdul Motaleb distributed warm clothes among one hundred helpless people of the district from his own fund.

Three alleged dacoits held

MADARIPUR, Jan 14: A robbery was committed in a Brack office under Rajor thana of the district recently, reports BSS.

According to police, the dacoits numbering 7 to 8 centred the office by breaking open the door and looted cash, TV set and cycle worth about Taka one lakh. Police arrested three alleged dacoits from West Rajor in this connection. The arrested were identified as Chinu Mia, 30, Nazrul Fakir, 17, and Feraf Akan, 24, of Rajor thana.

133 projects implemented

KHULNA, Jan 14: Local Government Engineering Department executed 133 projects under Annual Development Programme in Dumuria thana of the district at a cost of Taka forty-four lakh, reports BSS.

Of the total projects, 58 were executed in transport and communication sector, 22 in agriculture and irrigation sector, 28 in infrastructure sector and 25 in education sector.

Food for Works projects

KUSHIA, Jan 14: The implementation of one hundred forty Food for Works projects in the six thanas of the district under the supervision of the Directorate of Relief and Disaster Management has been progressing satisfactorily, reports BSS.

Two thousand tones wheat has been sanctioned for these schemes. Of the total, 35 schemes are being implemented in Kushtia Sadar, 32 in Mirpur, 25 in Bheramara, 17 each in Kumarkhal and Daulpur and 14 in Khokhara. The projects include repair and reconstruction of roads and earth filling in religious, educational and other institutions.

VGF cards distributed

NAOGAON, Jan 14: The government allocated VGF cards for ninety thousand distressed people in a pourasava and 99 unions in the district on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, reports BSS.

A total of four lakh 47 thousand taka were distributed among poor people in this area. Five distressed persons in each of the union got one hundred taka per head. Nine hundred tones of rice and wheat were distributed under the programme.

Man killed in road accident

PIROJPUR, Jan 14: An NGO officer was killed in an accident on Pirojpur-Bagerhat road at Bakultala on Tuesday evening, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Alamgir Hossain, Programme Officer of an NGO riding on motor cycle, was dashed down by a bus coming from opposite direction. He died on the spot.

Teacher commits suicide

PIROJPUR, Jan 14: A school teacher committed suicide by hanging with rope in his house at Madhya Kalatia village on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Chittia Ranjan Dakua, 55, high school teacher, committed suicide because of long family feud, police said.

Uplift schemes taken up

NARSINGDI, Jan 14: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Narsingdi has taken up 78 schemes of seven development projects in the six thanas in the current fiscal year 1999-2000, reports BSS.

According to official sources the government has sanctioned Taka 7 crore 59 thousand 91 hundred for different development projects in the six thanas. The projects also included the development of rural infrastructure.

Phensidyl seized

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 14: The BDR jawans seized 457 bottles of phensidyl from the compartment of the train here on Friday, reports BSS.

The BDR sources said, the drugs were recovered from the compartment of Dhaka-bound train, Upaban. None was arrested. In another raid, BDR seized 503 bottles of phensidyl from Akhaura Railway Station recently. None was arrested in this connection.

Seed, fertiliser dearth may hit Rabi farming in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Jan 14: Rabi crops cultivation in the district may face a setback due to acute shortage of seeds, chemical fertilisers and other agricultural inputs.

Farmers face acute shortage of high yielding variety seeds and fertilisers, including TSP and SSP, in Mohanganj, Madan, Khalajury, Barhatta, Kendua, Atpara, Purbadhala, Durgapur, Kalmakanda, and Sadar thanas.

The Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has taken an ambitious programme to bring over 20 thousand hectares of land under wheat, potato and other Rabi crops cultivation here during the current season. All

these crops need TSP and SSP fertilisers for optimum production.

According to sources in AED, 4,800 metric tons of TSP and SSP are required during the current season, but supply in the local markets is not satisfactory.

Meanwhile, a section of unscrupulous traders are selling inferior quality Indian SSP and imported TSP, casting an adverse impact on the crops output.

Local people say the cultivation of Rabi crops will be affected mainly due to shortage of chemical fertilisers in the district unless the authorities con-

cerned take proper steps to handle the situation.

They have urged the authorities to provide the growers with quality seeds and fertilisers at cheaper rates.

BSS from Khulna says: Over 38,900 hectares will be brought under Rabi crops cultivation in nine thanas of the district.

The crops include boro paddy, wheat, maize and mustard, different types of pulses, onion, ground nut and winter vegetables.

Two lakh fifteen thousand tones of Rabi crops are expected to be produced in Khulna district during the current season, agriculture office

sources said.

Agriculture Extension Department and Agriculture Development Corporation will supply necessary seed, fertilizer, pesticides and other agricultural inputs.

Another report from Comilla adds: Over 1,80,200 hectares will be brought under Rabi crops cultivation in 12 thanas of the district. The crops include Boro paddy, wheat, maize, mustard, different types of pulses, onion, ground nut, and winter vegetables.

About 7 lakh 9 thousand tones of Rabi crops are expected to be produced in Comilla district during the current season, official sources said.

Ataur Rahman's anniversary of death observed

RAJSHAHI, Jan 14: The 20th death anniversary of celebrated political leader Ataur Rahman, who was a close political associate of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was observed here on Wednesday under the auspices of Ataur Rahman Smriti Parishad in Rajshahi Press Club premises, reports BSS.

Speakers at a meeting, organised to observe the death anniversary of Rahman, demanded Ekushey Padak be given to Ataur Rahman posthumously. Late Rahman was the leader of many progressive movements like Tebhaga Andolan, Anti-Ayub Movement, Language Movement and War of Liberation who was also put behind bar for eleven times during British and Pakistani rules.

Presided over by Advocate Nazrul Islam, president of Rajshahi Press Club, the meeting was attended by Bhasha Sainik Sayeed Uddin Ahmed as chief guest while ex-minister Sarder Amjad Hossain attended it as special guest.

Other speakers at the meeting were advocate Abbas Ali, Vice-President Rajshahi Bar Association, Dr Saiguddin Ahmed, Director of Varendra Museum of Rajshahi University, Elahi Box Mondal, Central President of Bangladesh Dalil Lekhak Samity, ANM Saleh, Associate Professor of Rajshahi University and wife of late Ataur Rahman, Begum Monowara Rahman.

Earlier fetecha was offered at the grave of Ataur Rahman and his portrait was garlanded in the morning.

9 alleged terrorists held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14: Nine alleged terrorists were arrested in a pre-dawn raid on different areas of Lalkhan Bazar, Deberpara, Pora Colony, Anowara Colony and MES College area under Double Mooring thana in the city, Thursday.

A combined force of thana, DB and reserved police in a nine-hour long drive arrested Md. Monir Hossen, 23, Md Jewel Hossen alias Tenu, 24, Md Hazrat, 26 and Md Rana Hossen Molla, 24, from Lalkhan Pora Colony in connection with various criminal activities including terrorism, mugging and extortion. Police also recovered one LG from them.

The team also arrested Md Jamal, 25, Sved Ohidul Alam alias Junu, 38, Md. Jamal, 26, and Md Bachelu, 22, and Mohammad Jamal, 32, from Deberpara and MES College areas for their alleged involvement in BCL leader Kaiser Hossain killing.

Work on voters' ID cards progressing

BANDARBAN, Jan 14: Work on the voters' ID Card Project is nearing completion in the district, reports UNB.

To prevent fake voting and 13 other purposes the Election Commission has undertaken the project for preparing 1,50,665 voters' ID cards.

Beginning the work in 1995, about 1,25,447 ID cards have been prepared till December 1999.

The election officials said the ID cards are being given to residents of the district, including Bengalees who have land in the mouza and who have specific address.

Poor children suffer from night blindness in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Jan 14: Over one lakh malnourished children in the district are suffering from night blindness and intestinal diseases for want of balanced diet, reports UNB.

The low-income group illiterate people in remote villages could not provide nutritious food to their children giving sharp rise in the number of malnourished children. They hardly get vitamin tablets from the thana health complexes for the sick children at free of cost.

The poor parents alleged hospitalised health complexes sell vitamin tablets to medicine shops instead of distributing free of cost to poor people.



Paddy sellers occupy parts of a road in Kaliganj thana under Jhenidah district, disrupting smooth movement traffic movement. - Star photo

Roadside weekly bazaars cause traffic jams

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, JAN 14: Weekly village markets in the district alongside roads and highways are causing hindrance to smooth vehicular movement as the makeshift bazaars occupy parts of the roads.

According to local people, weekly bazaars in Hatopulpur, Goalpara, Madhupur, Fultala, Bishoykhali, Nagarbatham, Dakleanga, Baidanga and Halidhuni under Sadar thana, Abajpur, Hatfajilpur, Royera, Shalakup, Ganaganj, Bhat, Madandanga and Seikhpara under Shalakup thana, Barobazar, Elangi and Kaliganj

under Kaliganj thana, Kotechandpurhat under Kotechandpur thana and Khalispur Moheshpur thana occupy most parts of roads and highways, causing hindrance to smooth traffic movement in the areas.

Asim Biswas, 34, of village Harihra under Shalakup thana, said that for want of space the sellers in Shalakup weekly bazaar are compelled to occupy parts of public roads. He said if the authorities concerned shift the present place to Habibpur paddy market, where two big buildings

remain abandoned on a spacious land, the problem will be solved.

When contacted, Khalilur Rahman, Chairman of Shalakup Municipality, said a new spacious market by the side of the river Kumar will solve the problem.

When contacted, the local administration officials failed to provide satisfactory suggestions. Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures to solve the problem.

Statues stolen from Chalan Beel Museum

NATORE, Jan 14: Three precious statues were stolen from the Chalan Beel Museum at Khubjpur village in Gurudaspur thana, reports UNB.

Officials said the blackstone made statues, including two of Hindu goddess Saraswati and god Sri Krishna, worth about Tk 6 crore, were stolen on December 26 last year.

Caretaker of the Museum under Archeology Department filed a case with Gurudaspur thana.

But police could not yet recover the statues.

Jahedul murder case: No headway in investigation

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 14: The police are yet to make any headway in investigation into Jahedul murder case after one month of his killing, reports UNB.

The victim's parents at a press conference on Wednesday said they have requested in writing the Inspector General of Police to hand over the case to the CID for proper investigation.

Jahedul Haq, 17, came out in a motor cycle from his uncle's shop in the town on December 7, 1999, and was found dead at Mustrhat Dauljore area under Admitari thana the following day.

Guest birds being killed in Kushtia, Rangamati

KUSHTIA, Jan 14: Guest birds are being killed indiscriminately and sold in various places in the district, reports UNB.

Some amateur hunters are allegedly engaged in the carnage. About 300 birds are being killed daily on an average, informed sources say.

In every winter guest birds come in shoal areas of the river Padma in Bheramara and Daulotpur. Most of the birds come from Siberia to the marshy land here to escape the biting cold there.

Birds from the region migrate to tropical countries like Bangladesh and at the advent of the spring they return to their homeland.

About 600 species of birds are found in Bangladesh and nearly one third of them are migratory which visit during the winter season.

Some government officials and well-known persons in the district are involved in hunting the migratory birds.

Another report from Rangamati says: A section of people are indiscriminately hunting guest birds from water various bodies of the district.

The guest birds from unbearable cold of parts of the

world including Siberia migrated to Bangladesh and are staying in beels, hoors and river areas since the middle of October.

An organised gang of hunters are catching and selling the birds in different markets of three Hill districts at high price.

As the meat of migratory birds is delicious, it occupies the dishes of the affluent section of the people, including high government officials who also often go for hunting.

Some 50 people are seen selling migratory birds at 8 different points of the town, including Assam Basti Bazar. Some of them are vending the birds in residential areas.

The country's law provides for a maximum punishment of 7 years for hunting or catching guest birds without permission of the administration.

Although the unscrupulous people are hunting and selling the birds openly in the market violating the law, the administration is playing the role of a silent spectator.

The police said a separate body is supposed to look into the conservation of wild birds and beasts, which is not carrying out the responsibility.

People taste date juice in rural areas

NATORE, Jan 14: With the arrival of winter extraction of date juice is going on full scale in the district, reports UNB.

People in remote areas of the district took iftar during the Ramadan with delicious juice and different kinds of winter cakes made with sweet juice.

The extractors of juice, locally called as 'Gachha' are busy trimming date trees to collect juice for making khejur gur or date molasses.

District Agriculture extension Department (AED) informed that at least 75,000 matured date trees in six thanas of the district, including 35,000 in Lalpur thana alone, are yielding juice regularly.

About 300 metric tons of khejur gur with attractive shape and colour are being produced and marketed every week at Bonpara, Walla, Lalpur, Bilmaria, Nazirpur and Chachkoir bazars of the district.

An extractor, Akhter Ali of Yasinpur village in Sadar thana, said the production cost of shaped molasses (patali gur) is around Tk 12 to Tk 13 kg as against the retail price of Tk 22 to Tk 24.

He said, he earns at least Tk 200 a day by selling date juice and molasses from 25 date trees.

Winter brings a festive mood in most homes of the rural areas where female inmates are busy making different kinds of delicious cakes by the just-harvested Aman rice, flour and molasses.

Another report from Kushlia says: Extraction of date juice is also going on in full swing in the district and its adjoining areas.

Juice extractors are moving from one tree to the other. From time immemorial, the people rural areas have been extracting juice from date trees in the winter.

Solid khejur gur known as patali gur, especially the Nalini patali gur, occupies a distinctive place for its taste and flavour.

Recent survey conducted by an NGO revealed that there are some 50,000 date trees in the district. About 500 metric tons of molasses are produced from the juice extracted from the trees annually.

Sherpur-Jamalpur ferry services threatened

SHERPUR, Jan 14: Sharp decrease of navigability in the river old Brahmaputra threatens the ferry services between Sherpur and Jamalpur districts, reports UNB.

Sources at Sherpur-Jamalpur Ferry Ghat said navigability problem might force Roads and Highways Department to stop its ferry service at any time.

A Water Development Board source said vast tracks of land on both sides of the river were flooded due to the onrush of hilly water in the rainy season.

The mud and silt of the floodwater fill the riverbed every year but in the absence of dredging the situation has now aggravated causing a threat to the ferry service.

Roads and Highways Department sources said the ferry service was being continued somehow as the water level is falling.

The water level has dropped to 5-6 feet against the minimum requirement of 8-9 feet for the movement of ferries. Due to this problem the ghat was relocated several times.

Local people urged the authority concerned to take immediate measures to continue the ferry service for sake of easy road communications between Dhaka and Kurigram district via Sherpur.

Events of districts in picture



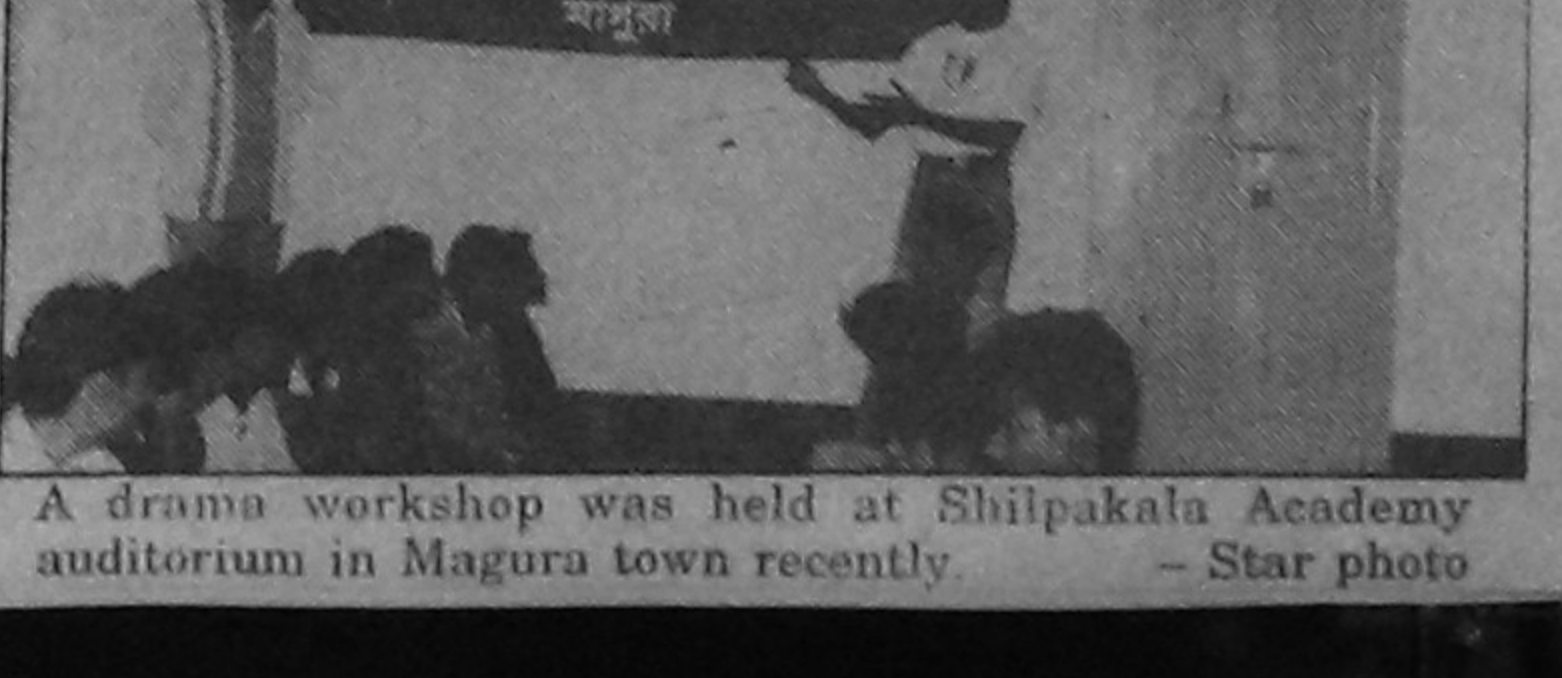
Teachers, students, officers and employees of Bangladesh Agriculture University brought out a colourful procession recently on the campus to celebrate the Unesco declaration to observe February 21 International Mother Language Day. The procession was led by Prof Muhammad Hussain, Vice-Chancellor of the the university. -Star photo



Renowned freedom fighter Major General (Rtd) Subid Ali Bhuyian addressing a meeting in Shaheed Nagar High School premises at Daudkandi under Comilla district recently. - Star photo



A colourful rally was brought out in Sylhet town in observance of World AIDS Day. - Star photo



A drama workshop was held at Shilpakala Academy auditorium in Magura town recently. - Star photo