

11 more die of cold related diseases in districts

BARISAL, Jan 22: At least six people died of severe cold wave swept over the southern districts of the region here in one week till January 12 last, a police source said, reports BSS.

Cold wave claimed two more lives in Barguna district of this region in the period raising the death toll to four. The dead men were identified as Nasir Uddin master, Keshta Chandra Das, Arsed Ali Sardar and Urman Mollah.

The cold wave, started sweeping the district from January 4 intensified from January 6, paralysed the normal life there.

Noorjahan, 28, a member of a destitute family, died of severe cold wave on January 10 last at Chack Bazar bridge of Bhola town. She left behind two children to mourn her death.

Taher Mollah died of this cold spell on January 6 at South Rajpasha village of Bhandaria under Pirojpur district.

Pneumonia, broncho-pneumonia, tuberculosis, asthma, diarrhoea and blood dysentery have broken out in the cold sweeping districts — Barisal, Bhola, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Barguna and Patuakhali. Physicians, however, said malnutrition was the main reason behind the outbreak of the diseases.

Fungus and other diseases due to chilly weather have attacked the potato fields and Boro paddy seedlings, agriculturists said.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports: Severe cold wave has been sweeping over Kushtia and its adjoining areas from the first week of January paralysing normal life, and activities of people.

Poor people and day labourers are suffering a lot for want of warm clothes. Patients in hospitals who are lying in floor have not been provided with blankets from the hospital as they have limited number of blankets. Any 100-bed hospital is to accommodate about 175 patients daily. About 75 patients have their seats in floor within room or in open verandah. Warm clothes, even in old clothes' shops, are not available within the purchasing capacity of the poor. Middle class people are seen visiting old clothes' shops, but due to high price some of them are coming back without purchasing any clothes.

Rickshawpullers, push cart drivers are seldom seen on road up to 11 am. Shopowners are compelled to close their shutters after sun set.

In village areas people are seen sitting around fire to save themselves from the biting cold which are sweeping over the district with severe intensity.

Child labourers who perform odd jobs in different places are the worst sufferers as they have no warm clothes.

Large number of beggars are seen coming from different parts of the district and begging for warm clothes for themselves and their children.

Sufferings of those who have been rendered homeless due to erosion of the River Padma and who have taken shelter on Raika Mohiskundi Flood Protection Embankment in Daulatpur thana know no bound. They are spending their days in makeshift structures for want of government or private help. They have become beggars as their paddy fields have gone into river bed. They have become jobless and suffering for want of warm clothes.

Most of their children are suffering from cold related diseases, villagers said. Five children have so far died of cold related diseases there villagers added.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kushtia Abdus Salam distributed some warm clothes among the residents of slum areas. Those warm clothes were purchased out of the saving money from the party which here cancelled. The DC has called upon the business community to extend help and cooperation by donating money to his relief fund.

Bijoy Kumar Kejriwal last president Kushtia Chamber of Commerce and Industries have appealed to all businessmen to donate generously for providing warm clothes for the cold wave victims. He expressed his resentment for not providing any warm clothes for Kushtia district from the government. He also criticised the local unit of Red Crescent Society for their inability to supply warm clothes to the distressed people. He said Kushtia Chamber of Commerce and Industries will distribute warm clothes. Lions Club of Kushtia distributed warm clothes. Shahidul Islam Khan president Truck Malik Samity said that they distributed warm clothes among the distressed people.

Eid reunion

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 22: The Eid reunion of Mirsarai Samity, Cox's Bazar will be held at Pariatan Cottage here on February 4, marking its first founding anniversary, reports UNB.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Eng Mosharrar Hossain will attend the programme as chief guest.

Kamaluddin Chowdhury, Zafar Ahmed, Giasuddin, Monzur Alam, Shah Alam Chowdhury, Monir Ahmed, Safiul Alam, Mosharrar Hossain Chowdhury and Abdul Awal will be present as special guests.

Mejban and cultural functions will follow the reunion.

Celebration on new millennium

BARISAL, Jan 22: The celebration of new millennium organised by local Jari Shilpi Sangathan (JSS) was observed here at the Aswini Kumar town hall premises recently, reports BSS.

It was presided over by president of JSS A Kader Boyati.

Yeahia Mollah, Divisional Commissioner of Barisal Division attended the function as the chief guest.

The function was addressed, among others, by SM Iqbal and Cultural Officer of Shilpakala Academy Rafikul Alam.

News snaps

Army's service for cold victims
KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 22: Army in Khagrachhari region has been rendering humanitarian services for the cold-stricken poor people of the area, reports BSS.
The army has distributed winter clothes of about Taka four lakh among the poor recently. The army in the zone distributed lungi, saree, shirt, pant, blanket and *chadar* among the poor in Baghalhat, Dighinala, Panchhari, Longung, Mohalchari and Khagrachhari areas.



A milad mahfil was arranged at the Narayanjan DIT mosque annexed madrassa on Wednesday by local district unit of Zia Memorial Committee on the occasion of the 64th birth anniversary of ex-President Ziaur Rahman.

Krishak League conference
FENI, Jan 22: A special conference of the workers of Feni District Krishak League was held on January 20 at Shahid Zahir Raihan Hall, reports BSS.
The meeting was presided over by Advocate Liaquat Ali, President Feni District Krishak League. Al-haj Rashed Mosharrar, President of Bangladesh Krishak League and State Minister for Land attended the meeting as the chief guest while Haroon-ar-Rashid Howader, Secretary General Bangladesh Krishak League, Abdul Latif Mirza, Organising Secretary and local MP Zainal Abedin Hazari were the special guests. Earlier the minister met the district officials at Feni Circuit House. The minister in his address mentioned about various development activities of the present government, particularly for the development of agriculture as well as the farmers during the last three and half years.

Zafarullah visits fire affected market
FARIDPUR, Jan 22: The Chairman of the Privatisation Board, Kazi Zafarullah, on January 20 visited the fire affected New Market here which was gutted on Tuesday night, reports BSS.
Zafarullah talked to the businessmen and consoled them. He urged them to face the situation with patience and courage. The affected businessmen will be rehabilitated through coordinated planning and assistance, he added.



A procession was brought out in Jhenidah town recently to mark the National Social Welfare Day. — Star photo

Uplift projects progressing
JOYPURHAT, Jan 22: Work on 331 projects under rural infrastructure maintenance programme is progressing fast, reports UNB.
A total of 406 metric tons of wheat were allocated to implement the projects in five thanas and three municipalities. The programme include development and renovation of rural roads ravaged by floodwaters last year, construction and repair of culverts and renovation of different educational institutions.

Bangabandhu Mahila Parishad formed
KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 22: District Bangabandhu Mahila Parishad was formed here in a general meeting held at the district Awami League office on January 17, reports BSS.
Minister for CHT Affairs Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, MP, attended the meeting as the chief guest while Chairman of Hill District Council Jyotindra Lal Tripura, Dr Maksuda Anjum Nahar, General Secretary of Central Bangabandhu Mohila Parishad Jebunnesa Aktar Khatun Muni were the special guests. The meeting was inaugurated by Prof Salina Akhtar Jahan, Convener of Central Bangabandhu Mohila Parishad. A 45-member committee of Bangabandhu Mohila Parishad, Khagrachhari district unit was formed with Llamayi Chakma and Amio Chowdhury Nayan as president and secretary respectively.

Housewife elopes with house tutor
PATUAKHALI, Jan 22: A young housewife of Chalitabunia village in Mirzaganj thana has allegedly eloped with the house tutor of her children, reports UNB.
A mother of four, Bilkis Begum, 35, wife of Farid Uddin, developed an illicit affair with house tutor Zafar, 25, as her husband lives away in Saudi Arabia. On the night of January 15, Bilkis disappeared with Zafar leaving behind her children and ending their 18 years' of conjugal life. Her elder daughter Rani Begum, a Class X student, filed a case with the local police the following day.

Computer training course
JHALAKATHI, Jan 22: A four-month-long computer training course has got underway, reports UNB.
Youth Development Directorate has organised the course for the first time aimed at making the unemployed male and female youths self-reliant. A total of 30 youths from Rajapur, Nalchhiti, Kathalia and Sadar thanas are taking part in the training course. The directorate will provide necessary loans to the trained youths after completion of the course.



This is the oldest building in Sirajganj town. Established in 1897, the building has 12 rooms upstairs and 12 rooms downstairs. The original owner of this house was late Ram Narayan Sarder. Now his son Manik Chand Sarder resides here. — Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Bablu

Diarrhoea in Joypurhat
JOYPURHAT, Jan 22: Diarrhoea that broke out in different thanas claimed two lives and attacked 230 people last week, officials said, reports UNB.
The deceased were identified as Farooque Hasan, son of Haider Ali of Atapara village in Panchbibi thana and Arifa, daughter of Tazrul Islam of Khatanpur area in Sadar thana.
Some 1,127 people were attacked by the waterborne disease during the last one month from December 21 to January 20.
Civil Surgeon Dr Anwar Ali said 32 medical teams are working in 32 unions to combat the waterborne disease.

Pneumonia deaths up
JHENIDAH, Jan 22: Mortality rate from pneumonia is increasing in an alarming proportion, creating panic among the people, particularly the expectant mothers, reports UNB.
The deadly disease claimed about 200 lives and attacked another 35,000 children last year. Local civil surgeon office sources, however, confirmed 74 deaths.
Besides, a good number of poor children died of pneumonia outside the hospital without getting treatment facility, sources said adding that treatment of pneumonia is very expensive.
Many of the children attacked by pneumonia died due to wrong treatment provided by local quacks and unawareness of mothers.
A physician said, "We have nothing to do when children attacked by pneumonia were brought to hospital at the eleventh hour."
On average, 5-10 children were being attacked by pneumonia everyday, he added.

Clash over fishing in Sirajganj: 50 injured
From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Jan 22: Fishermen and a group of musclemen locked in a clash over fishing in Pouronghali beel in Tarash thana recently, leaving at least 50 people injured.
The critically injured people were admitted to Tarash health complex and Sirajganj General Hospital.
Local people said the clash erupted when a group of musclemen, hired by local influential people, obstructed fishermen, mostly landless, from fishing in the water body, which was leased to Bangladesh Pragati Sangstha (BPS), a local NGO. They also said the influential people claimed the water body is disputed as a case was lodged against the lease.
The NGO brought the water body under pisciculture and sold the fish to fishermen.
The executive director of BPS said the musclemen also looted Tk 60,000 from NGO officials present there.
A case was filed in this connection.

Punishment to killers of Kazi Aref demanded
From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Jan 22: Speakers at a recent meeting, organised by Kazi Aref Ahmed Parishad of Kushtia chapter held at Zilla Parishad Hall, demanded immediate trial of the killers of Kazi Aref Ahmed, a renowned politician and freedom fighter, and others.
Kazi Aref Ahmed along with Advocate Yakub Ali, Lokman Hossain and two others was killed on February 16, 1999 when gunmen sprayed bullets at a public meeting at Kallidaspur High School ground under Dhulapour thana.
The speakers also demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

Jeweller kidnapped in Ctg
From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Jan 22: A jeweller was kidnapped from in front of Zahur Hawkers' Market in the city on Thursday afternoon.
The victim was identified as Raju Roy, 32.
Some unidentified miscreants dragged the jeweller in a waiting baby taxi at gunpoint and whisked away.
Family sources said earlier extortionists demanded Tk one lakh from Roy, but he refused to pay.
Whereabouts of Roy could not be known. None was arrested in this connection.

Businessman succumbs to injuries in Ctg
From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Jan 22: A businessman, who received bullet injuries and got his leg tendons severed as terrorists attacked him on January 5 in Debarpara area, succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital on Thursday morning.
The victim, Bashar Sawdagar, a resident of Debarpara under Double Mooring thana in the city, fell victim to the "wrath" of local hoodlums when he refused to pay toll to the extortionists.
A pall of gloom descended on the locality following the death of Bashar Sawdagar, 40. Local people brought out a procession, demanding exemplary punishment to the killers.

Good mustard output likely in Mymensingh

From Aminul Islam



A mustard field at village Char Laxmipur in the Sadar thana of Mymensingh district. — Star photo

MYMENSINGH, Jan 22: The farmers of Mymensingh district are expecting a good production of mustard in the current Rabi season.
According to local Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, a total of 7,500 hectares of land have been brought under mustard cultivation in 12 thanas of the district in the current season. AED fixed 6,510 metric tons as target of production this year.
AED sources said, 700 hectares of land were brought under this crop's cultivation in Sadar thana with a production target of 630 metric tons (MT), 550 hectares in Haluaghat with a target of production 495 MT, 350 hectares in Dubaura with a production target of 315 MT and 650 hectares in Phulbaria while the production target has been fixed at 585 MT.
AED gave all necessary supports to achieve the cultivation target that will help achieve the target of production here.
As the favourable weather condition is prevailing here, the farmers are enjoying a good prospect of mustard harvest this year.



It's a 'disputed' crop field in Chargarguria under Mehendiganj thana of Barisal district. But who is going to reap the crop? — Star photo

Living with violent incidents

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Jan 22: Violent incidents have kept hundreds of people in Chargarguria, a shoal land area under Mehendiganj thana of Barisal district, terrified as hired goons, commonly known as *lathials*, clash over harvesting for years together.
With the advent of harvesting season in the *char* (shoal) area *lathials*, from different quarters prepare themselves for looting harvests in disputed paddy fields.
Farmers who cultivate crops on *char* lands are left with nothing as these hired goons reap their crops. Every year many people are killed in clashes in croplands, mostly disputed, over harvesting.
Moreover, illegal occupation of lands by local influential people, commonly known as *jodars*, and armed musclemen also cause clashes in Chargarguria.
In a recent incident a group of *lathials* from neighbouring Bhola district swooped on **Eid donation**
MAGURA, Jan 22: A special allotment of 333 metric tons of rice and wheat were distributed among 33,000 poor people of four thanas on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, reports UNB.
Breakup of the distributed rice and wheat among people: 117 mts among 11,700 poor people in Sadar thana, 70 mts among 7,200 people in Sreepur, 72 mts among 7,200 people in Mohammadpur and 63 mts among 6,300 people in Shalikhata thana.
Besides, 9 mts rice and wheat were distributed among 900 distressed people in the municipality area.
District administration every year deploys police in the shoal land areas, but it helps little to prevent bloodshed and clashes.
Local people say the unscrupulous and influential local *jodars* create the problem. The *jodars* always try to grab the shoal lands, mostly newly emerged, by showing fake documents, they allege.
When contacted district administration officials said they tried best by deploying security personnel in disputed shoal areas, but sometimes situation goes beyond their control.

Each village to be electrified by 2006

SAKHIPUR (Sariatpur), Jan 22: Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak has said that the government has taken massive programmes to reach electricity in each village of the country by 2006, reports BSS.
"Availability of power is the prerequisite for development. And the government is committed to making power available in the country," he said while inaugurating "Sakhipur Thana Electrification Project" here on January 19.
The project is being implemented at a cost of Taka 92.54 crore aimed at bringing the recently declared Sakhipur thana under electrification. The government of Bangladesh and the Kuwait Fund are the co-financiers of the project.
Parliament members Colonel (Rtd) Shawkat Ali, Master Mujibur Rahman, Chairman of Palli Biddutayan Board Brigadier MA Malek, LGED Chief Engineer Mohammad Monwar Hossain Chowdhury and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League Enamul Huq Shamim, among others, addressed at the inaugural function.
Earlier, the minister also inaugurated the development works of Bhedorganj-Dimkhali-Kashimpur highways in Sariatpur district.
Local Government Engineering Department is implementing the development works under Food for Work programmes of the government.

Unabated theft of agri equipment

JHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 22: To the utter frustration of farmers, theft of agricultural equipment continues unabated in the Barind project area, reports UNB.
District Barind Development Authority said thefts are taking place one after another since the beginning of the project but police failed to recover any of the stolen equipment.
They alleged that police in few cases arrested people but they were later released on bail. The bailed out people again started stealing agricultural equipment.
Official sources said 255 transformers and huge quantity of irrigation equipment worth 90.25 lakh were stolen in last five years and 540 cases were filed with police.
Farmers said they suffer from insecurity and are afraid of theft of their equipment every season and the recent Boro season was not exception.
Official sources said the authority failed to get any positive result from the higher authority of police after informing them of the mysterious role of local police.
There are 1,450 deep tubewells including 700 tubewells in Barind Development Project which facilitate irrigation on cultivable land.
Farmers pay Tk 75 per hour for using power-operated tubewells and Tk 1,350 as annual charge for using engine-operated tubewells.
They said they have to pay the charge even after theft of machinery, which adds to their production cost.
The farmers drew the attention of the minister concerned to this matter so they do not have to incur financial loss on this account.

Ambitious irrigation scheme

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 22: An ambitious scheme for irrigation of 73,190 hectare land in the Teesta Barrage command area has been taken up for the ensuing Kharif season February 15 to April 30, reports UNB.
Water Development Board sources said the scheme was taken to irrigate 65.70 per cent of the command area comprising 1,11,406 hectares. The experimental scheme covering 30,000 hectares was implemented last year.
With the excavation of 33.76 km main canal, 74.85 km major secondary canal, 211.70 km secondary canal and 387.65 km 'tarshyari' canal, the entire command area will be brought under irrigation network.
It is expected that the Teesta Barrage irrigation project will give an additional yield of 4.87 lakh metric tons of paddy and 82,000 metric tons of wheat worth about Tk 452 crore.
About 15 lakh families comprising some 3 lakh families of Sadar, Gangachara, Badarganj, Taraganj thanas of Rangpur; Sadar, Jaldhaka, Syedpur, Dimala and Kishoreganj thanas of Nilphamari district; Chirbandar, Panchipur, Khansama thanas of Dinajpur district and a part of Bogra district will be benefited from the irrigation project.
The irrigation project was started on experimental basis in 1993-94 on 6000 acres of land along the Rangpur irrigation canal. The following year it was extended to 23,000 acres.
Meanwhile, hydrology department recorded flow of 1520 cusecs of water per second at Dalia on January 16, which is likely to decline within the next 2-3 weeks.
Officials said, about 1500 to 2000 cusecs of water is required in the main canal to maintain the irrigation scheme operative.
They said there would be no problem after February as the flow of water gradually increases from the last week of the month.

1200 render homeless in Kushtia Erosion threatens 8 frontier villages of Sunamganj

SUNAMGANJ, Jan 22: Eight frontier villages in Tahipur thana are threatened by erosion by the River Jadukata, reports UNB.
Located near the Indian State of Meghalaya, the river-eroded villages are Pathanpara, Lauragarh, Garhkati, Chorah, Miarchar, Gagrah and Modargati.
The people of these villages have to face river erosion on the one hand and the problem of hilly sand on the other.
A vast tract of arable land and homesteads have been devoured by the River Jadukata leaving hundreds of villagers homeless.
Some 200 families of these villages are now under the threat of river erosion.
Local people urged the concerned authorities to take measures to check the river erosion.
BSS from Barisal reports about 1200 families were rendered homeless in two thanas of Kushtia district during the last two months due to continued erosion by the River Padma.
The situation took an alarming turn in Daulatpur and Kumarkhali thanas with the continuous threat of erosion of the mighty River Padma. The river already engulfed a vast tract of land stretching from Moricha-Chilmari to Phillipnagar point in Daulatpur thana. One high school, five government primary schools, hats and bazars have already been washed away.
Besides, a number of nearby dwelling houses and commercial buildings are also threatened due to erosion by the River Padma.