

Indigenous Cultural Festival

RANGAMATI, Apr 7: The three-day Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) Indigenous Cultural Festival, 2000 will begin at the local Tribal Cultural Institute premises on April 8 ahead of the tribals' traditional new year's festival, Baishabi, reports BSS.

The culture, heritage and life style of the indigenous people of CHTs will be exhibited in the three-day festival, third of its kind in Rangamati, organised by local Jhoom Aesthetics Council, organisers said.

Seminars on education, culture and development of Chittagong Hill Tracts will be held on the occasion. Eminent literateurs, intellectuals and artists from Dhaka will participate in the festival.

Parshuram PS bldg may collapse

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Apr 7: Main building of Parshuram police station (PS) in the district may collapse anytime.

Local people said the building constructed during the British rule lacks maintenance and repair for many years. During the rainy season, water oozes from the ceiling and walls of the building, they added.

Mohammad Abdul Hanif, acting Officer-in-Charge of the police station, said during the rainy season it becomes difficult to save many documents from oozing water. The authorities should renovate the building, which was constructed in 1915, immediately to avert any 'tragedy', the police officer added.

The police station has other problems, he said. There is no toilet inside the *hazat*, or custody. Besides, there is no *hazat* for female detainees in police station, forcing police to make special arrangement for them. Moreover, the police station building lacks boundary walls.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to renovate the dilapidated building.

Plan to set up 30 community clinics in Khagrachhari

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 7: The government has decided to set up community clinics to ensure health and sanitation facilities to the distressed, reports BSS.

About 50 community clinics will be set up in the district by 2003. Thirty of them will be set up in eight thanas in the current financial year at the first stage. The Ministry of Health will set up these community clinics.

According to Health Department sources, each clinic will provide regular treatment facilities and services relating to family planning and EPI.

The local people will give land for the clinic. Thana Family Planning Officers will motivate the people to give the land. In the meantime, some land for the clinics has been given by the people.

15 injured by terrorists

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 7: At least 15 people were injured, five with bullets, when armed terrorists attacked a village arbitration here on Thursday morning, reports BSS.

Witnesses said the attackers swooped on the villagers, gathered in the arbitration of a water pump theft case at Plemkhali union in Sadar thana. They started firing as soon as the names of thieves were disclosed by the witnesses.

Over 100 bombs and cocktails were exploded during the vandalism.

They also damaged a number of shops in the area and confined UP chairman Abdur Rahim and his family members for over an hour.

The injured were admitted to the local hospital.

Hearing the news police rushed to the spot and arrested attackers Harun and Abu Hena from the spot.

Kidnapped boy found dead

GAZIPUR, Apr 7: An expatriate's son kidnapped to ransom from village Rasulpur in Kallakor thana was found dead in a ditch at a neighbouring village with his body burnt with acid, reports BSS.

Police said a group of terrorists led by Abdus Salam of village Barababha abducted Alhaj, 10, son of Ansar Ali who is living in Saudi Arabia, on the Eid day.

Later a series of village arbitration meetings were held on March 18 and 19 and Salam's elder brother, UP member Rahman, gave assurance of returning the boy.

But Salam, instead of returning the victim, asked his uncle for paying one lakh taka in ransom and took back the captive from behind the Globe Dairy Farm of the village at 10 pm on March 19. There was again village arbitration, with no results.

Later the villagers recovered the acid-burnt body with marks of injury in his head and throat on Tuesday. Post-mortem was performed on March 22.



Fortune may favour mango traders in off-year

(L) A mango garden in Chapai Nawabganj area where mango sprouts have grown abundantly. (R) A tree overburdened with green mangoes

AL-BNP clash in Feni leaves 5 hurt

From Our Correspondent

PATUAHALI, Apr 7: Five persons were injured in a clash between Awami League and BNP activists at West Chhaghalia area at about 11 am on Monday.

The clash started when Awami League organised a meeting. At that time a BNP procession was crossing. Angry activists of both the parties took part in the clash. They used lethal weapons.

Five persons were injured on the spot. All of them were Awami League activists. Firz, 30, and Jalal Hossain, 40 of village West Chhaghalia were critically admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital.

Awami League blamed BNP activists for the attack, but BNP denied.

1,200 bags of rice looted from barge

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 7: About 1,200 bags of rice were looted from a barge stationed at Daulatpur Shashan Ghat recently.

The rice-laden vessel was bound for Narasingdi from Noapara of Jessor district. According to police, armed miscreants raided the barge, MV Rawnak, at about 11 pm, tied up the crew and looted the rice.

A case was recorded with Daulatpur police station in this connection and police arrested three people.

Typhoid takes serious turn in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Apr 7: Typhoid has broken out in an epidemic form here when about 60 children were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in last 15 days till Tuesday, reports BSS.

"Typhoid took a serious turn in last three days though it was noticed 15 days ago," said Dr Mirza Monzurul Huq, Child Specialist in MMCH.

He thought that the problem of safe drinking water might be the cause of spreading the disease.

President of local unit of BMA Dr Mirza Hamidul Huq and general secretary Dr ANM Fazul Huq Pathan in a statement has expressed concern over the situation. They urged the town dwellers to drink boiled water to avoid suffering.

The doctors also asked the people to be more careful about taking safe food and water and using latrine.

They called upon local administration to take steps to create awareness among local people.

Tragic

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Apr 7: Being denied of justice a rape victim and his mother took poison to kill themselves at Kalomkhali village under Sadar thana recently.

The mother died while the daughter is fighting her life at hospital.

Villagers said the 12-year-old girl was allegedly violated by an influential person in the village on March 6.

The mother of the victim lodged complaint with village elders, but they did not pay heed to them.

Being frustrated both mother and daughter took poison on Monday night.

15 injured as villagers clash in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Apr 7: At least 15 people were injured in a clash at Kodalkathi village in Godagari thana last week.

Police said the clash erupted over teasing a girl in the village. A young man named Alexander of the village teased the girl while she was returning home from school.

Later family members of the girl and the youth's supporters locked in clash.

Seriously injured six were admitted to hospital.

A case was filed in this connection.

Sued for extorting toll

MYMENSINGH, Apr 7: The general secretary of Tangail Bus-Coach Owners Association was sued on Thursday under the Public Safety Act for obstructing movement of vehicles on routes to Mymensingh and northern districts for extorting toll, reports BSS.

Mymensingh Motor Owners Association filed the case as a group of miscreants, learnt to have link with local bus owners association, stopped nine of its northbound buses in Madhupur area demanding toll.

Failing to pursue them, the musclemen forced passengers out of the buses, physically harassed them and ransacked one bus disrupting traffic on the route, it was stated in the case filed with Madhupur police.

The traffic movement resumed at about 2pm with the intervention of the Deputy Commissioner and Police Super of Tangail who rushed to the spot on information.

News Snaps

Day-Labourer electrocuted

PATUAHALI, Apr 7: Neglect of duty of the local power officials claimed the life of a day-labourer in Kalatola area in the town on Thursday, reports BSS.

Locals said Nitai Ranjan Das, 27, hired by power officials to cut trees along the power lines, died at about 4 pm, an hour ahead of the deadline for transmitting electricity, when a branch of a tree fell on the 33-kv line. Authority of the local power Sub-station earlier had announced through loudspeakers in the town that power supply would remain suspended from 10 am to 5 pm on Thursday for clearing trees alongside the live wires. But, power was supplied at about 4 pm without notice when the cleaning work was going on. A UD case was filed with Sadar thana in this connection.

422 deep tubewells inoperative

PANCHGARH, Apr 7: Some 422 deep tubewells in greater Dinajpur district, including Panchgargh, remained inoperative hampering irrigation to paddy fields, reports BSS.

According to officials, Boro cultivation on 8,000 hectares of lands in Panchgargh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts has become uncertain as Palli Bidyut Samity disconnected power lines of 341 tubewells due to non-payment of electricity bills. Besides, some 108 tubewells went out of order in three districts as their electric cables and a good number of transformers in the areas were stolen long ago. Power connections to some 1,200 tubewells under Thakurgaon Deep Tubewell Project have been restored after payment of electricity bills. Meanwhile, the arrears electricity bills of 211 tubewells in Dinajpur and 130 in Thakurgaon and Panchgargh districts now stand at Tk 2.85 crore.

19 uplift projects progressing

JHALAKATI, Apr 7: Nineteen development projects are being implemented in Kathalia thana costing Tk 20 lakh, reports BSS.

The projects included development of hats and bazaars, construction and reconstruction of roads and bridges, setting up of libraries in educational institutes and renovation of residential buildings of government employees. The works are expected to be completed by June this year.



Poor road signs

Names of road signs are not visible in Nilphamari. This is because of sheer negligence of Nilphamari Municipality authorities. They have become quite indifferent to their duties of renovating the road signs at regular intervals. Photo shows a poor road sign of Asir Uddin Ahmed Lane at Sabupara in Nilphamari town. Besides, at present there is no trace of the concrete road sign of Asir Uddin Ahmed Road running from the intersection near the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) official residence to the Headmaster's quarters of Nilphamari Government Boys' High School. Even any town dweller can hardly locate the road sign of Shaheed Captain Bashar Road, which runs from the New Market intersection and meets with Asir Uddin Ahmed Road. — Star photo by Z A M Khaizurzaman

Teen killed by fiance

GAZIPUR, Apr 7: A teenage girl was killed allegedly by her fiance in Sadar thana early Tuesday, reports BSS.

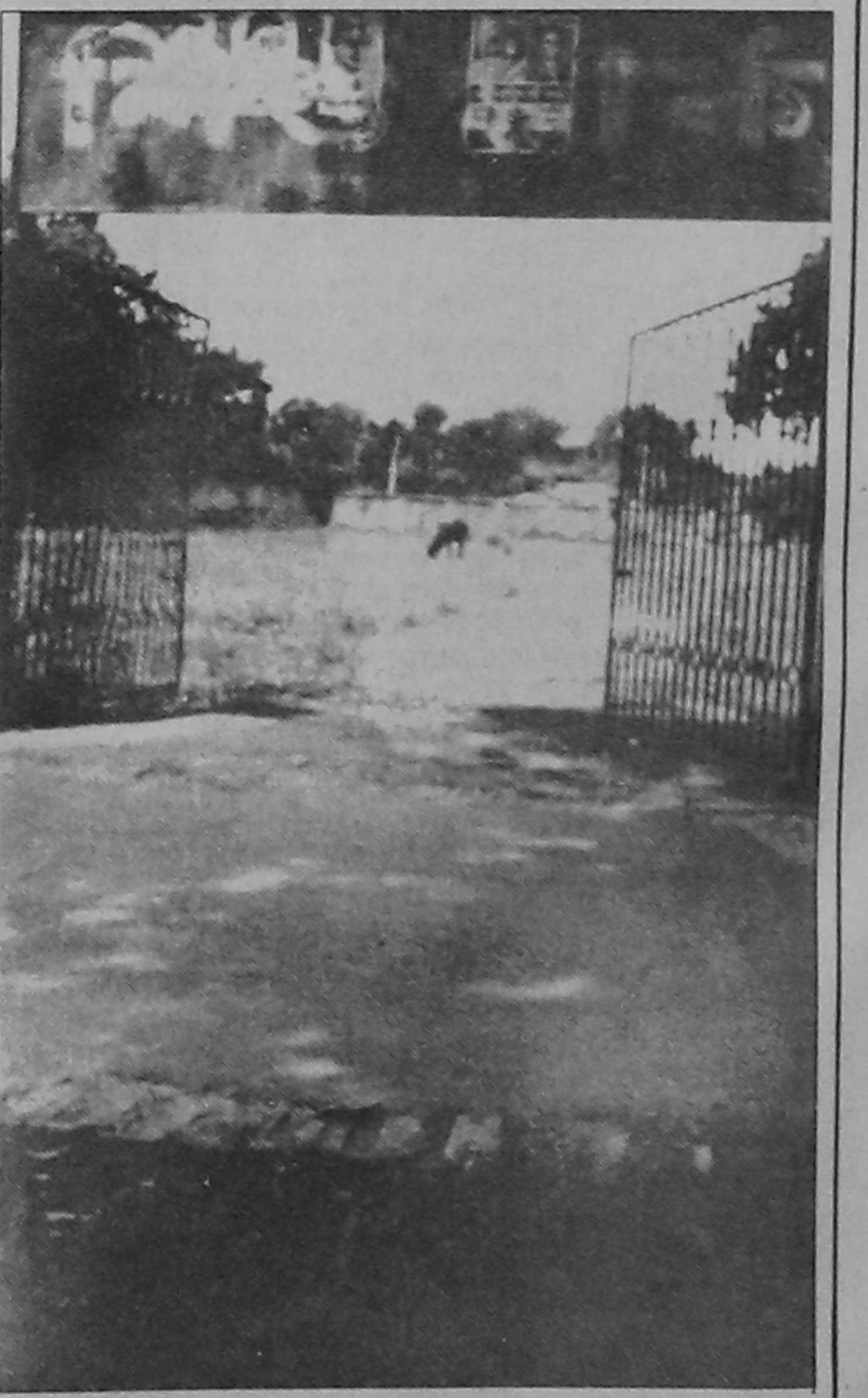
The dead was identified as Amena Begum, 17, daughter of Hazrat Ali of Khalikur village. Police said Amena, who had an affair with Nazrul of the same village, was called out of house by her elder brother, Habibur Rahman and they poured poison into her mouth. Hearing hue and cry, local people rescued the girl and sent her to Sadar Hospital where she died on Tuesday morning. A case was filed with local police.

Timber recovered from Babupara

BANDARBAN, Apr 7: About 3,000 cubic feet of valuable timber worth about Taka 12 lakh were recovered from Babupara area on the Matamuhuri river recently in a special drive by the Bangladesh Army team, reports BSS.

Official sources said, the recovery of Segon, Gamari and Safalish have been collected from reserve areas of Matamuhuri forest illegally. An army team, in a special drive, recovered the timbers.

The recovered timber was handed over to the Forest Department. A case has been filed in this connection with Alkadam thana.



A town not worth living for children

Brahmanbaria town is now a district town. But the lone children's park here has become a grazing ground of cattle. No child comes here for recreation. So now the town is not worth living for innocent children. Will the authorities concerned take a little step to reshape the children's park properly?

— Star photo by Sk Shahidul Islam

Use of firewood in brickfields rampant

NAOGAON, Apr 7: Despite strong concern by environmentalists, local administrations have virtually done nothing to check the growing use of firewood in brickfields in northern district, including Naogaon, reports BSS.

It revealed that some 2 crore quintals of timber are burned in brickfields of the region everyday and some 14.5 lakh trees are apprehended to be logged this season if the present trend



Living with traffic jams

Feni has become a town of traffic jams. Photo shows a regular scene of Trunk Road situated in the heart of the district town.

could not be checked.

The country has a law, 'Brick Burning Control Ordinance 1992', to regulate the activities of brickfield owners. But the brickfield owners care little about it.

The law makes it mandatory for the brickfield owners to use coal for burning bricks and

prohibits setting up of brickfields on croplands.

Another report from Jessor says: Though the country has a good stock of coals, brickfields owners in the country's southwestern region are burning timber causing extensive damage to the environment.

The use of timber in brickfields as fuel continues to rise as Environment Department and local administration have turned out to be onlookers, retreating a retired college teacher.

Official sources said there over 600 brickfields in 10 districts of the region and 200-250 mounds of timber are being burnt in each field everyday, raising the total to 1.50 lakh mounds.

But each of the brickfields always shows a stock of about 150 mounds of coal, which are hardly used.

Even though the expense of using coal and timber does not make a big difference, the brickfield owners prefer using logs probably because of its easy availability.

Environmentalists here said forest areas of the region are rapidly shrinking due to indiscriminate logging of trees.

While talking to the news agency, some coal importers said over 20,000 metric tons of coal remained stockpiled at Noapara, the main coal depot of the region, for lack of buyers.

"But they have not yet set up that connections," one local PDB official said.

Overall power supply situation in the region now fell in an adverse situation as PBSs collect power through tapping system. And so load-shedding and low-voltage problem became rampant, the sources said.

However, the PDB head office in a letter informed the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources that per-unit power generation cost of PBS is Tk 2.22 while it is supplying to PBS's at Tk 1.77, incurring huge loss each year.

The PDB officials said soon after handing over of lines to PBS, loss reduced drastically. "After handing over of lines in Rajshahi, PDB loss in the area decreased to 23 per cent from 32 per cent in 1998-99 fiscal year."

REB Secretary Shamsul Huq informed that Palli Bidyut had recovered the PDB about Tk 470

crore in revenue. The money helped PDB save Tk 150 crore in revenue loss under its own power distribution system.

Meanwhile, the Power Development Board has asked PBS to pay Tk 295 crore in price for the assets and consumers bills taken over by Palli Bidyut by June 30.