

Gaibandha DIARY

Two killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Oct 8: Two persons including one woman were killed and 20 others sustained injuries when a speeding night coach turned turtle and fell down into a road side ditch on Bogra-Rangpur highway recently.

According to police, a Kurigram bound night coach was proceeding through Kalitala under Gobindaganj upazila. Eye witnesses said when the coach was taking side to avoid clash with a speeding truck at a turning point, the coach suddenly skidded off the road and fell down into the road side ditch.

Rup Kumar, 26, and an unidentified woman aged 50 died on the spot and 20 others received injuries. All of them were treated at Gobindaganj Health Complex.

A case was filed with Gobindaganj police station.

Husband sells wife!

A husband allegedly sold out his wife to another person at a cost of Taka 10,000 due to abject poverty at village Dusal under Sunderganj upazila.

Bulu Mia got married to Fatema Begum of village Dusal under Sunderganj upazila in 1992. Since then the couple was living with acute poverty. Being fed up Bulu Mia sold his wife to Haider Ali of the same village in exchange of Tk 10,000. Since then Haider was developed illicit relationship with her.

Very recently a quarrel developed between a vendor and Haider. As such the matter of illicit relationship was exposed locally.

With a view to resolving the problem a village arbitration was set up at the homestead of Dr Moslem Ali on September 25. There it was decided to pay the husband a fine amounting to Taka 20,000 and Haider Ali an amount of Taka 15,000 respectively.

Innocent people fall victims

Filing of false cases under Woman and Child Repression Act has been increasing in the northern districts.

Innocent people are falling victims of such acts.

According to the court informations, 90 per cent of such cases are found false during trial. Such cases are allegedly being filed just to harass the opponents. This has become a common weapon of village touts, musclemen, toll collectors and influential persons.

Digital telephone system in Natore PM's promise yet to be fulfilled

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, Oct 8: Telephone subscribers in Natore, suffering from various shortcomings of the outdated analogue system, are eagerly looking forward to the installation of a modern digital system as promised by the prime minister.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had assured the people during her visit to Natore in 1996 that a digital telephone system would be introduced soon. The Minister for Telecommunications Mohammad Nasim had also promised to set up a digital telephone exchange in Natore.

According to their commitment the telephone system here should be modernised within the year 2000.

But, local officials say the work may start in January, 2001, though the infrastructural development has already been completed. A Chinese company is likely to provide the technical support.

Meanwhile, telephone users have been suffering due to technical faults like a sudden loss of function, loss of dial tone, cross-connections and failure to get the right number inspite of correct dialling.

When the users complain to the authorities concerned, they are told that the analogue system is old and unreliable, and that the only way to improve the situation is

introduction of the modern digital system.

Moreover, overbilling and mismanagement are plaguing local telephone exchanges. There is no billing office here. The bills are processed from Rajshahi office. So, subscribers have to go to Rajshahi with complaints.

Wrong connections and noisy sounds are regular phenomena now which cause immense sufferings to the subscribers.

Local businessmen say their trade and commerce with the capital and other commercial places have become hazardous due to lack of smooth telelink facility.

Besides, local journalists are facing problems as they often fail to reach their news items to their concerned offices through telephone and fax lines.

People of Natore urge the authorities concerned to introduce digital telephone system in the district as early as possible. They also hope that government will soon take steps in this regard.

Meanwhile, most of the card phone booths here have been buying out of order from months together due to lack of proper maintenance.

At least 10 cardphone booths were installed by the

Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) in the town and other five upazila headquarters to provide better telephone service.

Local users say, the cardphone service has now deteriorated in recent time due to negligence of the TSS and T and T men in maintaining the lines and machines, though it was satisfactory in the beginning.

The users complained that the technicians, responsible for maintenance of the cardphone booths are not always available here even after repeated reminders by the officials.

Some of the sets have turned into 'unit eating machines', they said adding that these are now eating up more units than usual when they made calls.

Even valid cards are being rejected by some machines as those are out of order.

Cardphone users have urged the authorities concerned to take measures to correct the sets.

In Natore town now, out of five booths, only two are serving people while out of five booths in five upazilas, only three are working.



Flood victims throng for relief at Jibonnagar College flood shelter in Chuadanga district. ---Star photo

An ambitious target

PIROJPUR, Oct 8: An ambitious target has been set to free the district from illiteracy by mid-2001 under the government-sponsored TLM programme, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, Primary and Mass Education Department have given some 23,000 illiterate people of Sadar upazila the knowledge of letters under a pilot project.

Inspired with the success, the department has taken up another project, 'Shikhdhaptaya Pirojpur', under the Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme for the remaining five upazilas of the district.

Under the programme, a total of 2,29,495 illiterate people, including 1,02,500 women of 11-45 age group, will be acquainted with letters this fiscal.

To make the programme a success, a massive campaign has been launched in the district in addition to forming executive committees comprising of the Deputy Commissioner, politicians, professionals, public representatives and people from all walks of life.

Official sources said it will take Tk 7.18 crore to implement the

programme.

They said the illiterate people would be taught in two shifts: women in the afternoon and men at night. Some 7,660 centres, including 3,760 for women, have been set up in five upazilas and two municipalities.

A total of 7,660 teachers and 515 supervisors have already been appointed to conduct the mass literacy programme.

A monitoring cell with computer and other modern facilities has also been opened in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, the officials said.

Relief operation

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Oct 8: British American Tobacco, Bangladesh (BATB) has been distributing relief materials among the flood victims of greater Kushtia and Jhenidah districts.

The tobacco company, which started its relief operation on September 29, is distributing dry food and medicine among the affected people of Jibannagar, Kusumpur, Mothespur, Teltupi and other remote areas of the districts.

Official sources said it will take

4 outlaws held in Rajshahi village

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 8: Local people on Wednesday night caught four activists of outlawed Sarbabora Party with arms and ammunition in a remote shoal area in Bagha upazila and handed them over to police.

Police said locals led by Gargari UP chairman Azizul Azam caught the four Sarbabora men from house of Lalu of Char Kalidashali village and handed them over to police on Thursday.

The outlaws, identified as Belal and Milan alias Asad of Bheramara upazila of Kushtia, Nurul Islam of Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia district and Rupechan of Kalidashali in Bagha upazila had taken shelter in the village following raid in the southern region. They used to visit Lalu.

The arms and ammunition recovered from them include two revolvers, two shutter guns and 15 rounds of bullets. Police rushed to the spot and arrested them. A case was filed in this connection.

Officials said the municipality is working with five trucks in removing the garbage instead of its requirement of 45 trucks.

Garbage is dumped in the municipality's own disposing place at Lalmatia but the area is shrinking due to rapid urbanisation.

Farmers here alleged that cultivation on 3,000 to 4,000 acres of arable land is being hampered due to dumping of some solid things, such as polythene, iron, tin and glass.

Local people demanded to stop dumping garbage on Lalmatia haor to save it and save the people from pollution, but the authorities are yet to consider the matter.

A source of the municipality said that a special project proposal on infrastructure development and conservancy system was sent to the higher authority to clean the town.

Chuadanga flood victims need food, water

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Oct 8: Severe food crisis has been prevailing in three flood affected upazilas and two municipalities of Chuadanga district.

Besides, severe drinking water crisis has also been prevailing in all the flood shelters. Even there is no latrine and urinal system in these camps.

The flood victims who have taken shelter in the camps are responding to the call of nature in the nearby open places and bushes near the camps.

When this correspondent visited over 50 flood shelters of the two most flood affected

A city of garbage

SYLHET, Oct 8: The district town has turned into a 'city of garbage' due to piling up of huge garbage on the road, reports UNB.

According to the municipality officials, 150 tons of garbage is deposited here every day, of which only 30 to 40 tons are removed.

It said population of the municipality area increased largely since its inception in 1878, but conservancy service is not improved proportionately. At present, six lakh people are living in 13 wards of municipality area.

The municipality area lacks necessary dustbins, forcing the dwellers to dump their wasteage haphazardly on the roads.

Municipality authority warned the dwellers on several occasions to dump their wasteage into the dustbins but they hardly pay heed in this regard.

Besides, the municipality lacks a disposing place of garbage. Shortage of manpower and vehicles is making it impossible to clean the town.

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Depositors lay siege to Faridpur ITCL office

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Oct 8: Hundreds of money depositors laid siege to the local branch office of Islamic Trade and Commerce Limited (ITCL) located in Goalchamot area of the town recently demanding withdrawal of money they had deposited with ITCL being allured of higher rate of interest.

In view of reports published in a section of national dailies to the fact that ITCL is going to be wound up for deceiving its customers, the depositors who have become scared of losing their deposits with the institution thronged at the office premises to get back their deposited money.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: The employees of Northern Agro-Marketing Company (NAMCO), an allied organisation of ITCL situated in different places under Gaibandha district fled away together with their belongings in fear of public attack.

The employees of NAMCO in the Bridge Road area fled away at night recently. While fleeing one

all the money if they sincerely want to withdraw the same.

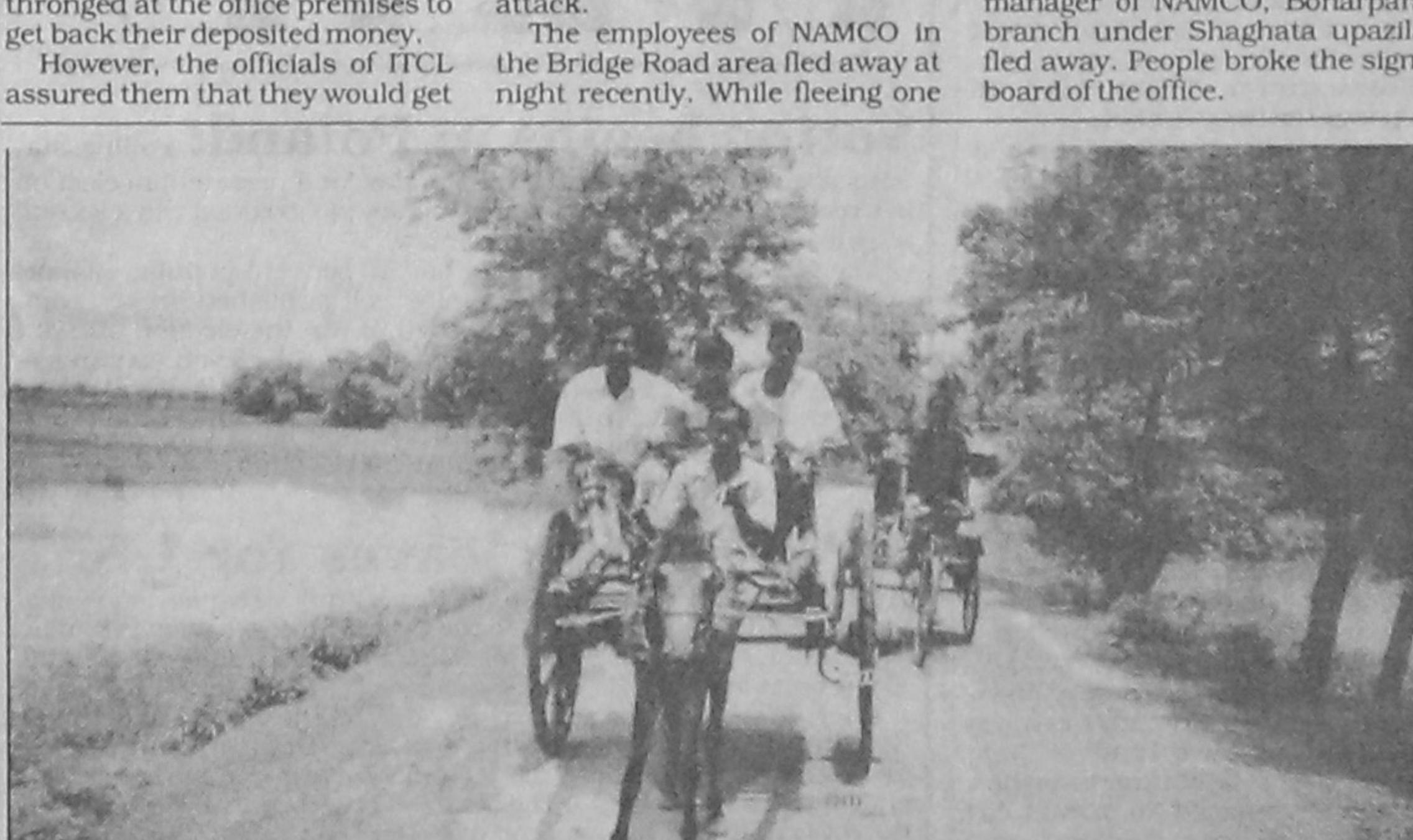
However, police have been employed there to avert any untoward incident.

It is reported that some hoodlums of the area taking advantage of this situation are trying to fish in the troubled water.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: The employees of Northern Agro-Marketing Company (NAMCO), an allied organisation of ITCL situated in different places under Gaibandha district fled away together with their belongings in fear of public attack.

Meanwhile he sought help of the upazila administration and later on police sealed up the godown. The manager, however, fled away to avert the situation.

On the other hand the branch manager of NAMCO, Bonarpara under Shaghata upazila fled away. People broke the signboard of the office.



Horse driven carriage 'Tumtum' was once the only mode of transport in rural Bangladesh. People from far flung areas of the country used to travel from various places through this carriage. Even the ancient 'jamindars' also travelled through 'Tumtum' which was once a luxury carriage. At the advent of modern age buses, auto-rickshaws, tempos and other vehicles have captured the place of the 'luxury transport'. Ultimately 'Tumtum' has disappeared from everywhere. People who earned their living by driving 'Tumtum' have shifted to other professions. Even many turned destitutes. But Shahar Ali of Dostpara Monakhali village under Tarash upazila in Chalan Beel area of Sirajganj district is an exception. He could not desert his paternal profession. 'Tumtum' is his only source of income. Each passenger travelling from Ningachhi to Gulta pays Taka 10. He informed this correspondent that he maintains a family of nine children earning Taka 300 every day. Photo shows Shahar Ali carrying passengers through his carriage.

--Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Babul

News snaps

Durga Puja in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Oct 8: Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindus of the country, is being celebrated here like other places with religious fervour and gaiety.

Sunday was last day of the five-day long festival. Many idols were erected in different parts of the district where a large number of devotees were visiting every day. 300-year-old Panchgaon Puja Mandap at Rajnagar upazila is famous in the area. Many devotees from different parts of Sylhet division and neighbouring India were visiting the mandap. During a visit to Panchgaon on Friday this correspondent found about one and half kilometre long queue of people on road leading to mandap.

Traders stage demonstration

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Oct 8: Shop owners and traders in Kumarkhal in the district brought out a procession recently protesting what they said the negligence of police in preventing robbery in Nurjahan Supermarket and Ajmeri Market on September 27 night.

During the robbery a man was killed. Traders and shop owners said police have failed to maintain law and order in the area, much to the chagrin of local people. However, Kushtia Police Super following agitation has closed SI Motif.

Two killed in Feni road accident

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Oct 8: At least two people were killed and 10 others injured in road accident at Mohipal, two kilometres from the town.

The dead were identified as Abul Basher, 50, of village Matheara, and Pradip Kumar Debanath, 30, of village Kajirbag under Sadar upazila. According to police, the accident occurred when a Feni-bound passenger bus hit a cycle and motorcycle on the road after driver of the bus lost control over the steering. The cyclist and motorcyclist died on the spot. The bus was seized. The driver managed to escape. A case was lodged in this connection.

Valuables looted

MUNSHIGANJ, Oct 8: Terrorists looted valuables and cash worth about Tk 20,000 from a grocery shop of Machhu Bazaar in Sadar upazila on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said an organised gang of armed terrorists stormed the Machhu Bazaar and looted cash and valuables from the grocery shop of Shahabuddin at gunpoint. They also ransacked two other shops, fired one round of bullet and ran away by a microbus. Local Bazaar committee urged the authorities concerned to take legal action against the terrorists. A case was filed.

Loan disbursed