

Cold wave paralyzes life in Nilphamari

People crowding winter garment shops in Magura

From Our Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Jan 6: Unprecedented cold wave during last four days has almost halted normal life in this district town. Severe cold wind coming from the Himalayas has made lives of the dwellers, specially the homeless people of this small town miserable. Severeness of the cold wave worsens after mid-day and turns extremely unbearable in the evening. Everyday, fog clouds the town until 8 to 9 am and vehicles ply in the streets with their headlights still on. Although the sun appears for a while around 10 am, but it soon disappears to the dismay of the dwellers. Last Monday morning drizzles made things even more worse. Destitutes are trying to combat this bitter wave through heats generated from burning heaps of straws and old rubber tyres. On the other hand, second hand warm cloth sellers making best use of this situation, are earning handsomely by raising the prices two and even three times. Diseases like fever, cough, cold and dysentery have also alarmingly increased. The only government hospital is crowded with bronchitis and asthma patients. But the hospital is short of oxygen and do not

have the 'lobolizer machine.' As a result distress and sufferings of the patients know no bounds. The medicine pharmacies also making good use of this abnormal situation have doubled prices of life saving 'salbutamol inhalers.' Severeness of cold wave in this small district town situated near the Himalayas is usually bitter than other areas of the country, which usually deteriorates in January and February. Observers feel that this cold wave will worsen further during next few weeks. Cultivation of winter crops, particularly potato is facing damage from this unnatural coldness. Although some voluntary organisations have come forward with warm clothing for the destitutes, but this is extremely meagre compared to requirements. Authoritative sources believe unless the government and the rich section of the country come forward with arrangement for distribution of sufficient warm clothing for the homeless people in this area, possibility of loss of life from this bitter and severe cold wave may not be ignored.

Our Magura Correspondent adds: As cold wave sweeps across the country, including the district,

people here are crowding winter garment shops.

Sellers display varieties of warm clothes in shops. Many vendors are also selling garments, including old ones, on footpaths and in public places. A large number of makeshift shops have also sprung up in Sub-registry Office, Head Post Office, Magura Government College and local Police Station areas in the town. But prices are comparatively high this year, local residents said. 'People of low-income group are flocking shops which sell old warm garments', said Abu Bashar Akand, a resident in the district headquarters. 'Nowadays people of all classes buy from us. Our clothes are not below standard. We only do not have permanent shops', said Altaf Mia who owns a shop in front of Head Post Office. Sales of clothes have marked sharp rise. Now daily sales range between 2,500 taka and 3,000 taka, said a shop owner in Sub-registry Office premises.

Most of the buyers are now showing interest to buy readymade winter clothes, according to the shopkeepers. Garments from popular Bangabazaar in the capital are in great demand here, they added.



Good news for the Sunderbans-seers

Two country boats pass by an under-construction Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) motel at Mongla. The motel, once inaugurated, is expected to eliminate the accommodation problem and attract more tourists, spinning more revenue from tourism.

---Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Five including a baby killed in two days in Pabna

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 6: At least five persons including an unidentified baby were murdered within a span of two days in greater Pabna district.

The victims were identified as Tanjila Khatun, 40, wife of a Union Parishad (UP) member named Amanot Ali of Koyra Dattopara under Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj district. Rabiul Islam alias Rabi, an activist of BNP (Habib group) of Iswardi upazila in Pabna district, Reza, 28, son of Mohiruddin of Jaganathpur under Santhia upazila in Pabna district, Baki Billah, 35, son of Yeasin Ali of village Folia under Faridpur upazila in Pabna district and another unknown

From Our Correspondent

baby aged seven to eight months of Sirajganj town.

Police and witnesses said a gang of armed miscreants raided the house of UP member Amanot in his absence at about 4am on Tuesday. They called out the victim, Tanzila, chopped her to death and left the place. Reason of the murder could not be known.

On Tuesday morning BNP activist Rabiul Islam Rabi was lifted from a tea stall owned by Dulal at Blockpara allegedly by the supporters of BNP Bablu group who stabbed him on board a rickshaw where he died on the spot. After the incident supporters of Habibur Rahman Habib, a central BNP

leader brought out a procession against the killer and paraded all the streets of Iswardi bazaar.

Sirajganj Sadar thana police on Tuesday evening also recovered the body of an unknown baby aged seven to eight months from the Sirajganj University Government College old building premises. Police suspected that some miscreants murdered the baby before leaving the body. Cut marks of injuries were found on the body. Five separate cases were lodged with Ullapara, Santhia, Faridpur, Iswardi and Sirajganj Sadar police station in this connection, but none was arrested till filling of this report.



As a bone-chilling cold wave sweeps through the entire country, traders in old warm clothes reap rich at Magura as elsewhere. They have simply doubled, if not trebled, the prices overnight to make most of the helplessness of the low- and middle-income buyers. -- Star photo

Criminals remain at large

Law and order worsens in eleven districts

JESSORE, Jan 6: Despite hectic efforts by law enforcing agencies, law and order situation in 11 districts, including Feni, was not improved desirably during 2000 in comparison to previous years, reports UNB.

The failure of the law enforcing agencies to nab the criminals and slow progress in investigation raised question about their sincerity and competence.

According to press reports and police records, some 296 murders, 2,526 unnatural deaths and 137 rape incidents were occurred in the region during the year. Of the incidents, Janakantha reporter Shamsur Rahman murder, Awami League leaders S M A Rob and Kalidas Boral killings, and Sramajibi Mukti Andolon leader Meer Elias Hossain murder in Jhenidah shocked the nation and triggered vigorous protests from different quarters.

However, most of the killing incidents occurred over family feud and land related disputes while others over political rivalry, establishing supremacy and extortion, sources said.

Besides, about 5,000 incidents of robbery, dacoity, extortion, terrorism and other kind of criminal activities were reported in different press media or recorded in police stations during the period.

Road and Highway robberies in different routes in southern districts and piracies in the

Sundarbans and different riverine routes were high compared to previous years.

Another report from Feni says: Criminal activities like killing, rape, looting, abduction and riots surpassed the previous records in the violence-torn Feni district last year due to the inaction of police and political patronisation to the culprits.

A total of 3,000 crimes occurred in five upazilas last year, according to statistics given by police sources and reports published in various dailies. The crimes included 56 killings, 121 unnatural deaths, 132 dacoities and snatching, 14 abductions, eight rapes and 53 looting and ransacking incidents. At least 200 people were injured in various incidents last year. Of 56 killing incidents, 21 feel victims of political conflicts and all were the leaders and activists of ruling Awami League and opposition BNP and their front organisations.

Twelve of them were the leaders and supporters of Awami League and its front organisations while nine others of opposition BNP and its front organisations.

The dead were identified as Motaleb Hossain Taleb, Zane Alam Kiran, Mominul Haque Sohag, Abul Bashar, Mohammad Yusuf, Saiful Islam Nayan, Alauddin Tipu of Chhatra League and Belayet Hossain, Humayun Kabir, Mazal Haque, Belal Hossain and Abul Kalam of Jubo

League.

The BNP leaders and activists killed were identified as Khurshid Alam, 30, Abdul Mannan, Nazimuddin, Khurshid Alam, 27, Yusuf Shipan, Ismail Hossain, Kamaluddin, Joyanal Abedin and Nizamuddin Sujan.

Some 35 people were also killed in addition to political killings. Of them, nine housewives were killed by their in-laws, 10 people by terrorists, three by BSF men, eight by rivals and three by robbers and two others in mob beating.

'On average five people were killed per month during 2000,' said a police official.

The killing incidents rose by geometrical progression, which has been called a valley of terrorism. A total of 25 people were killed in 1995 while 30 in 1996, 49 in 1997, 36 in 1998 and 56 in 1999.

Police could not make any headway in their investigation in most of the cases filed with various thanas. Not only that, they could not make any arrest in connection with the killings.

Besides, a total of 121 unnatural deaths were reported last year. Of them, 36 people were killed in separate road accidents while 14 in fire and electrocution and thunderbolts, 21 committed suicide and 50 died taking poisonous liquor.

hectares in Chuadanga and 15,000 hectares in Meherpur district would be cultivated. Besides, potato would be cultivated on 13,700 hectares of land with a production target of 1,37,000 tons and maize on 5,450 hectares with an output target of 14,414 tons.

Official sources said that all necessary measures have been taken to distribute quality seeds, fertilisers and other agricultural inputs among the growers at fair prices to make the scheme a success.

DAE also has taken up a programme under its rehabilitation plan to distribute seeds free of cost among the flood-hit poor farmers of the areas.

Feni DIARY

Feni Diabetic Hospital inaugurated

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Jan 6: Feni Diabetic Hospital was formally inaugurated here in the town on January 1.

Joyanal Hazari MP inaugurated the hospital constructed at a cost of Tk 2.75 crore. Chairman of Feni Municipality Mosharraf Hossain Hazari, Deputy Commissioner Devashis Nag, Superintendent of Police Manwar Hossain, Civil Surgeon Dr Moinuddin Ahmed Chowdhury and Secretary of Diabetic Sanity (association) Dr Toharukullah Biadiz, among others, were also present on the occasion.

New weekly launches

Fenir Alo, a new weekly based in the town, started publication on Wednesday.

Many locals appreciated the first issue of the paper. Sukdev Nath Tapon is the editor of the vernacular weekly.

Two teenagers electrocuted

Two teenagers were electrocuted in the district recently.

According to locals, Abdul Karim, 15, Mamun, 17, from North Josphur and South Josphur villages respectively under Chhagalniya upazila, were injured when they came in contact of live wire. They succumbed to injuries in hospitals. Karim died in Chhagalniya Health Complex while Mamun breathed his last in Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

600 poultry birds roasted alive

Some 600 poultry birds were roasted alive when a poultry farm was gutted at Lalpur in the town on Tuesday.

According to local people, some miscreants set fire on the farm, causing a loss of about Tk two lakh. Owner of the farm ABM Fazlur Rahman lodged a complaint with police in this connection.

One beaten to death

A man was beaten to death at Daganbhuiyan recently.

The victim was identified as Monial Sutradar, 55, son of Norendra Kumar Sutradar of village Yeakubpur under Daganbhuiyan upazila. According to local people, Monial was found dead on a road at village Yeakubpur. Locals said he was beaten to death as the body wore several marks assault. Earlier, he was missing.

Housewife strangled

A housewife was allegedly strangled by her husband at village Jangalgone under Forshuram upazila recently.

The victim was identified as Serin Akhter, 22, wife of Mizanur Rahman of the village. According to neighbours, husband strangled his wife. Neighbours also said the husband often put pressure on the wife to bring dowry from her parents' house. Police recovered the body and sent to Feni Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

News snaps

Mushroom growth of medicine shops

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 6: At least 1,200 unlicensed medicine shops have been running in the town and different rural markets with impunity, reports UNB.

A license holder medicine trader, wishing anonymity, said the unlicensed medicine shop owners have been running their businesses allegedly by paying bribes amounting to Tk 200 Tk 500 per month to the concerned officials. He said the duty of the drug officials is to supervise and detect the unauthorised medicine shops. But so far they took no attempt to curb the unauthorised business. Locals alleged that a number of unlicensed medicine shops have been selling substandard, banned and date-expired medicines endangering the lives of the patients since long.

Besides, a number of pharmacies also lack of requisite facilities and proper environment for preserving and selling medicines in appropriate temperature.

Free distribution of saplings

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 6: Some 28,000 saplings will be distributed free among 1,400 farmers under a special post-flood rehabilitation programme in 11 flood-hit districts, reports UNB.

Officials said the government has taken up the programme to distribute five lakh saplings among 25,000 farmers of Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Satkhira, Meherpur, Jessore, Magura, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Kushtia, Pabna and Sirajganj districts at a cost of Tk 50 lakh. A large number of fruit-bearing trees were damaged in the districts by the last year's devastating flood, prompting the government to under take the project. Each farmer will be given 20 saplings under the programme being implemented costing Tk 2.8 lakh.

50 landless families rehabilitated

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Jan 6: Fifty landless families have so far been rehabilitated in five barracks constructed under four asrayan projects, reports UNB.

Officials said the work on the government-sponsored asrayan project, aiming to provide homes to the homeless people, began in 1997 and three barracks were completed in 1998 and another in 2000 under the programme. Of the barracks, three were constructed in Sadar and one in Bholahat upazilas. The five barracks were constructed with 10 units each with a provision to rehabilitate 10 families. Meanwhile, the authorities have started imparting training to the rehabilitated people on dairy, poultry, fish farming and plantation in an effort to make them self-reliant.

The government has disbursed Tk 3 lakh as loan among 30 families of the three-asrayan projects in the sadar upazila.

Goods worth Taka 8 lakh recovered

DINAJPUR, Jan 6: Hakimpur Thana Hill Customs seized Indian smuggled goods worth over Taka 8 lakh from two buses near Hill check post on Monday, reports BSS.

Official sources said, acting on a secret information, the Customs officials raided two Dhaka-bound buses coming from Calcutta and recovered sarees, spices, shawl, cosmetics and other goods. The goods were deposited with the Customs godown.

This was for the fourth time the unauthorised goods were recovered from the buses of Dhaka-Hili Hakimpur route within a few days.

Rampant stealing of electric cable

COMILLA, Jan 6: Stealing of electric cable has become rampant in different areas of Chouddagram upazila where thieves took away 3.6-km cables worth about Tk 1.5 lakh within two weeks till December 7, reports UNB.

Official sources said some 700 metres cable was stolen from a deep tubewell in Razapur area of Uzirpur union on November 23. The thieves lifted 1.85 kms aluminum cables from an 11kv feeder lines from Noabazar of Kalikapur union on November 27. About 1.75 kms electric cable of 11kv feeder line in Noabazar was also stolen on December 7. During the period four electric poles in Noabazar area were broken down disrupting electricity supply in the area. A case was filed with Chouddagram police in these connections.

New bridge opens at Araihaazar

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 6: The 100-metre long Enamul Hoq Bhuiyan Setu (bridge) constructed over Uchitpura-Lakhimpura river was opened for traffic at Khakkandi Union under Araihaazar upazila on Friday morning, reports BSS.

Deputy Minister for LGRD and Co-operatives, Saber Hossain Chowdhury inaugurated the bridge by unveiling the plaque at a simple ceremony held at the bridge site.

The 3.66-metre wide bridge was constructed by LGED with the financial assistance of US PL-480 in a year.

More than one lakh villagers of Khakkandi, Bisnandi and Kalapaharia unions would be benefited with construction of the bridge.

The bridge was named after late Enamul Hoq Bhuiyan, a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist who was killed in a road mishap a few years back.

Addressing a gathering at local Eidgah ground, the deputy minister

said the present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made a great stride for the development of communication sector.

He said the government has taken up a massive plan to construct 200 new bridges at a cost of Taka 1800 crore in the country. Referring to the development of Araihaazar upazila, he said Taka 30 crore has already been disbursed for the construction of 120 kilometres long road, 40 schools, and 20 community health clinics.

Presided over by Suleman Bhuiya, president of Araihaazar upazila Awami League, the meeting was also addressed by Emdadul Hoq Bhuiya, MP, Muzahidur Rahman Helo, chairman, Khakkandi Union, Nazrul Islam Babu and Haji Motiur Rahman Sarkar, headmaster of the local high school.

Earlier, the minister opened an eye camp at Shanlehpura High School compound.

Extensive Rabi farming in 10 southwestern dists

KUSHTIA, Jan 6: An extensive Rabi crop cultivation scheme has been taken up in 10 districts of south-western region of the country in the current season, reports UNB.

Department of Agriculture Extension sources said some 6,37,620 hectares of land would be brought under the cultivation with an output target of 15,84,004 metric tons. Of the total, Boro paddy would be cultivated on 4,16,300 hectares of land of which 4,03,100 hectares would be brought under high yielding 'ufsi' variety and the rest 13,200 hectares under local variety.

Of the land, 29,550 hectares in Kushtia, 1,27,600 hectares in Jessore, 71,580 hectares in

Jhenidah, 35,000 hectares in Magura, 19,200 hectares in Narail, 16,700 hectares in Khulna, 21,170 hectares in Bagerhat, 47,500 hectares in Satkhira, 29,500 hectares in Chuadanga and 18,500 hectares in Meherpur districts have been earmarked.

Official sources said wheat would be cultivated on 87,900 hectares in 10 districts with a production target of 2,02,170 metric tons. Of the land, 18,000 hectares in Kushtia, 9,000 hectares in Jessore, 12,500 hectares in Jhenidah, 7,000 hectares in Magura, 3,000 hectares in Narail, 200 hectares each in Khulna and Bagerhat, 2,000 hectares in Satkhira, 21,000