

Cold wave paralyses five districts

By Staff Correspondent

Severe cold wave sweeping across the country has paralysed normal life in Netrakona, Jamalpur, Feni, Rangamati and Khagrachharai districts as elsewhere.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports: This winter's cold wave brings misery for poor people in the district. Marginal farmers, landless people, day labourers and rickshawpullers are the worst sufferers, as they cannot buy warm clothes.

Dense fog descends just after the dusk, disrupting smooth movement of traffic. The sun now appears late in the morning.

No political parties or socio-cultural organisations have distributed any warm clothes among the distressed people.

Our Jamalpur correspondent adds: A bone-chilling cold wave has caused havoc to people of low-income group people. Dense fog, which starts from mid-night and continues up to mid-day, hampers day to day activities of local people and movement of vehicles.

Smooth movement of night

coaches is being disrupted, causing sufferings to hundreds of passengers.

Just after the sunset people are forced to remain indoors.

Poor people are suffering a lot. Local people have urged the authorities concerned to distribute warm clothes among the destitute people

BSS from Feni say: After the dusk owners of most business establishments pull down shutters. People prefer staying indoors in the night.

Roads and bazaars wear deserted look before the sunset. Only a few rickshaws are seen on the roads.

Sudden cold wave has caused cold related diseases in the district. Children and old men are sufferers of such diseases.

UNB from Rangamati says: The cold wave has hit hard the people living in inaccessible areas of Baro Harinabarkol, Bilaichhari and Baghaichhari Majek upazilas of the hill district.

The cold spell forced the locals, both tribal and non-

tribal, to keep indoors for the last several days. Many of them were trying to protect themselves by burning firewood in their own houses.

Roads and bazaars in the district wear a deserted look with the sunset. The sun is hardly seen in the areas before 10 am due to thick fog.

Another report from Khagrachhari adds: The cold wave with higher intensity from Sunday caused untold suffering to the people. The old and children are the worst victims.

According to official sources, temperature varied between 10 and 12 degrees Celsius at night in the last few days. Plying of vehicles has also been hampered.

Landless slum dwellers have been passing hard days.

Vehicles are plying behind the schedule causing suffering to the passengers.

Army and police have distributed warm clothes among the poor people, but it is quite insufficient to meet the requirement, said the local people.

Pottery faces extinction threat in Jamalpur

From Muhammad Ali



Potters of Islampur in Jamalpur district have been facing multifarious problems including transport problem. Push cart and rickshaw van are the only means of transport to carry pottery items here and there. The traditional industry of rural Bangladesh has been facing the threat of ruination. ---Star photo

Paul of Islampur, he said that as the demand of potters products are static they cannot earn profit.

He also said that they have not enough capital for running their industry smoothly. They have to borrow money from the rich land lords at high rate of interest. The Social Welfare Department banks and upazila parishad can

help the owners of the industry by providing necessary loans at easy term.

BCIC should also arrange training programmes for quality products and its preservation.

Recently Grameen Bank is giving loans among the pottery industry owners.



Inferior quality of work has been done in the name protecting land and property from the Jamuna erosion by Sirajganj Water Deveopment Board (WDB) at Vatpiari under Sadar upazila in Sirajganj district. ---Star photo

Alleged irregularities in Sirajganj WDB work

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 10: People have demanded of the authorities concerned to form a high powered investigation team to probe into the alleged misappropriation of two crores of taka by the staffers of Sirajganj Water Deveopment Board (WDB) in collaboration with some dishonest contractors in the name of protecting two erosion affected areas from the gorge of the Jamuna.

The big amount of money was allegedly misappropriated through tender rigging and producing fake bills. It is learnt that two contractors offered the work order again and again in the name of protecting Perpachil and Vatpiari areas under Sirajganj Sadar upazila from the Jamuna erosion.

The tender was distributed among three groups. The value of the work was estimated at Taka 96 lakh during last year. Three persons named Jahangir Chaklader of Kazipur Upazila, Saiful Islam of Dhanbandhi in Sirajganj town, Abdur Rahman son of Mokbul Hossain of Bonogram village under Bera

upazila in Pabna district got the work order.

Mentioning unnecessary work the WDB authority stopped the work order instead of providing scheduled work order.

After a few days in exchange of bribe and in collaboration with some WDB officials, they purchased the work order through affidavit after June 2000. They completed the work with inferior bricks no-2 and 3 and submitted false bill amounting to Taka One crore ninety-six lakh.

In the mean time, part of the amount has been paid. When this correspondent visited the Perpachil and Vatpiari areas, some residents named Porbat Ali Sheikh, Abdur Rahman, Sefali Khatun, Golenur Khatun, Lipi, Tashrima Khatun and Omor Faruk alleged that the contractors did not even work whose cost would not be even Taka Two lakh. They further commented that the aforementioned places do not require to be protected. They also alleged that the contractors in collaboration with dishonest staffers misappropriated a large amount of govern-

ment fund.

They added that during Khaleda Zia's regime, due to submission of fake bill amounting to Taka One crore fifty lakh, a total of 11 staffers including the then executive engineer lost their jobs, but the concerned contractors remained safe due to political affiliations with the party in power. This time also the contractors adopted old ploys.

Similar incident happened at Enayetpur under Chowhali upazila where the contractors, in the name of protection work, did nothing, but submitted fake bill of Taka 10 lakh in tender which was illegally extended it to Taka One crore ten lakh.

One supervisor of WDB town protection division who was recently promoted as a Section Officer remained involved in a conspiracy with the Sub-Divisional Engineer and drew an amount of Taka 30 lakh preparing fake bill.

However, when this correspondent contacted with the Executive Engineer of Water Deveopment Board, Abul Hashem, he denied all the allegations.

News snaps

Rabidas memorial meet

From A Correspondent

NAOGAON, Jan 10: "Members of Rabidas community all over Bangladesh are leading a sub-human life," said Master Kanai Lal Rabidas, Director General of Bangladesh Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission at memorial meet held recently at Par Naogaon Shiva temple premises by Bangladesh Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission Naogaon branch. Speaking as chief guest at the meet he maintained that socially backward Rabidas community is discriminated against in Govt service and facilities and are victims of human rights abuses.

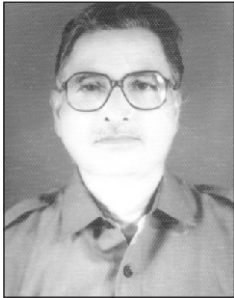
The meeting was presided over by Bhadu Rabidas and attended, among others, by Chittaranjan Saha, Naogaon district General Secretary of Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad and Advocate Babul Rabidas who conducted the meet. The speakers demanded quota fixing for Rabidas in Govt service, cultural access of the community in govt controlled electronic media and administrative protection against all kinds of oppressions. The meeting was rounded off with a prayer seeking relief of all from the vice of drug abuse.

Anniversary of death

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Jan 10: A doa mahfil has been arranged at Al-medina Complex Jame Mosque at Luxmipur, Sonagazi here at 10 am on Friday on the occasion of the first death anniversary of earstwhile EPCS officer, ex-student leader and a noted freedom fighter late A S M Mostafa.

Friends, relatives and well-wishers of the deceased have been requested to attend a milad mahfil and Quran Khwani and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



A barbaric revenge!

BOGRA, Jan 10: In a barbaric revenge, a little girl was slaughtered allegedly by the rivals of her father in a remote village of Adamdighi upazila on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police and locals said Abdul Jobbar, father of victim Jannatun Nesa, 8, of Bheima village was the accused of a murder case. On the fateful night, the opponents attacked the house of Jobbar in an attempt to kill him, but he fled the house sensing their presence. The angry attackers then slaughtered his little daughter. A murder case was filed.

Body recovered

JOYPURHAT, Jan 10: Police Monday dug out the body of an unidentified youth from the Tulsiganga riverbank in Sadar upazila, reports UNB.

On information, police unearthed the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.