

# Water level falls alarmingly at Hardinge Bridge point

**UNB, Kusthia**

Alarming decline in water level at the Hardinge Bridge point has rendered the Ganges-Kobadak (G-K) Irrigation Project inoperative at the beginning of the dry season.

Low flow of water also gave rise to shoals in the riverbed causing disruption in the navigation and the ferry service between Bheramara and Pakshey.

According to the Ganges water sharing treaty with India, Bangladesh should get a minimum of 35,000 cusecs of water at the Hardinge Bridge point during the period from March 1 to May 10. But informed sources said the flow at this point on March 2 was much lower.

Residents apprehend that the situation would worsen in the peak dry season.

An operator at Pakshey-Bheramara ferry service said the water level has come down alarmingly. Shop owners at the ghat, Omar Ali, Abdus Rashid and Hazrat Ali informed that occasionally the water level goes up sharply at night, but declines more than the rise during the daytime.

As the water level in the river is declining, officials of Roads & Highways Department said they are compelled to shift the ghat from one place to another almost everyday resulting in traffic congestion.

As the flow in the river declined, the G-K Irrigation Project turned idle. A big shoal, almost 700 metre-long, emerged from the main pump house at the mouth of intake channel. Dredging vessel SD Chandama remained stuck up in the shoal.

Another dredging vessel SD Kittinasha was found trying to lift water artificially. An official in the vessel declining to be identified said that the G-K project might not be able to pump water for irrigation this year if the river water continues to recede.

G-K project is to provide irrigation to 1.25 lakh acres during the current dry season in Kusthia, Chuadanga, Rajbari, Magura and Jhenidah districts. There is not even a drop of water in the 183.13-km main canal of the project.

Newaz Ahmed, Executive Engineer (Irrigation), said, "It is true that water required by us is not available in the river. But it is not correct that the pump house is closed for want of water. The pump house will be brought under operation after dredging the intake channel."

Informed sources said the water level at Hardinge Bridge was less than 4 metres on March 2. It should be at least 4.57 metres to make the pump house operative.

# Prices of construction materials up

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj**

Prices of construction materials have shot up in the northern region, including Sirajganj district in recent days, hampering construction works.

One metric ton of rod is now being sold between Tk 24,000 and Tk 27,000 as against Tk 17,000-18,000. The price of bricks per thousand has increased by Tk 200-300 while price of iron pin shot up by Tk 6-7 per kg.

Apart from this, the price of sand has increased in local markets due to an increase in transport cost, sand traders said.

When contacted, rod traders have attributed the increase in price to price-hike of raw materials. They also said the government has imposed 'hefty' customs duty on imported raw materials.

Although the price of cement remains stable, local markets have been flooded with substandard cements. Some dishonest traders are selling adulterated and poor quality Indian cements. Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to stop selling of spurious cement.

# Woman killed in Magura road accident

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura**

An old woman was killed and ten college students were injured in two separate road accidents in Magura district on Wednesday.

Police and witnesses said Jhulan Bibi, 70, was crushed under the wheels of a Dhaka-bound in Atankhail area on Magura-Jhenidah Highway. The accident occurred when the woman was trying to cross the road.

In the other accident, ten students were injured when a bus carrying a picnic party of Rajendra University College fell into a roadside ditch near WAPDA Square on Magura-Faridpur Highway.

The injured were rushed to Magura Sadar Hospital.

# Timber seized

**UNB, Mymensingh**

Forest rangers seized a truck loaded with smuggled timber worth Tk 5 lakh from Muktagachha upazila early Friday.

Police said the truck driver and smugglers escaped the place leaving the Tangail-bound truck coming from Haluaghat when a patrol team of forest rangers challenged the driver. Meanwhile, the rangers seized another shawl timber-laden pick up from Uthura in Valuka upazila on the same night. Separate cases were filed.

# NEWS SNAPS

## Two policemen killed in road mishap

**UNB, Kishoreganj**

Two policemen, including a sub-inspector, were killed in a road accident at Syedgaon on Pakundia-Mathkhola road in Kishoreganj district on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as SI Minhazuddin, 35, of Dhuburia village in Nagarpur upazila, and constable Yakub Ali, 35, of Phoolata village in Kalihati upazila of Tangail district. Police said the accident took place at about 5:45 pm when a truck laden with goods dashed the motorbike of the on-duty policemen. They were returning to the police station in Pakundia after an inquiry of a UD case in the area. Constable Yakub died on the spot while the SI at local hospital. The bodies were sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee the scene.

## Foreigner mugged

**UNB, Cox's Bazar**

Armed muggers stabbed a foreigner and took away his belongings at the sea beach in Cox's Bazar on Saturday.

The muggers attacked the Japanese national at 7 pm while he was walking on the beach, stabbed him severely and snatched his foreign currency, camera and other belongings. He was admitted to Sadar Hospital. None was arrested in this connection.

In separate incident on the same day, another gang of muggers snatched Tk 10 lakh from employees of a shop at Fire Brigade Mosque road in the town. The muggers, numbering 7/8, waylaid the employees of 'Al-Amin Store' while they were carrying the money from the shop to another place and snatched the money after beating them mercilessly.

## Three women commit suicide

**UNB, Madaripur**

Three women allegedly committed suicide in separate incidents in two upazilas of Madaripur district recently.

Police and family sources said Lajur Akter, 16, an SSC candidate of village Auz in Sadar upazila allegedly took her own life by hanging in her room on February 25. Family feud was the reason behind the suicide. Police also said Hartaki Rani Sarkar, 50, of village Kadambari in Rajoir upazila and Reshma Akter, 20, of village Khagchhar in Sadar upazila allegedly committed suicide on the same day following family troubles. Separate UD cases were filed with the police.

## BCL factions fight: 5 hurt

**UNB, Shariatpur**

Agunfight between two factions of Chhatra League left five people injured in Shariatpur town Tuesday night.

Witnesses said the clash between the supporters of Tutul and Swapan of BCL took place over establishing supremacy in the area. Valuables worth Tk 10,000 were looted from different shops and house in the area during the clash.

## Body recovered

**UNB, Kishoreganj**

Beheaded body of a teenage girl was recovered from Baghmara area in Kuliarchar upazila in Kishoreganj on Tuesday.

Police suspect that the miscreants killed the unidentified girl aged about 18 after rape. Police sent the body to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

## 1,000 landless tribal families rehabilitated

**UNB, Khagrachhari**

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board so far rehabilitated one thousand landless tribal families in Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts. Board sources said 500 families of Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari and 500 more families of Bandarban were rehabilitated under the project by constructing one thousand shanties on 4.50 acres of land costing Tk 1.25 crore. As part of the rehabilitation project, 1,000 acres under horticulture and 4,000 acres under rubber plantation were brought in the two districts costing about Tk 10 crore. Besides, under the project five community centres, 20 link roads, primary schools and temples were constructed and 80 ring-wells and tubewells were installed for the benefit of the rehabilitated families.

## PTraining course progresses

**UNB, Gazipur**

A month-long training course on modern method of paddy production began at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) Training Centre in Gazipur recently.

Officials of Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute and representatives from different NGOs including BRAC, Proshika, World Vision and MCC are taking part in the course. BRRI organised the course with the financial assistance from the British Government funding agency DFID. The course will conclude on March 10.

## One kg heroin seized

**UNB, Madaripur**

Detective Branch police seized one kg heroin worth Tk one crore and arrested two people in Madaripur recently.

Acting on a tip-off, they raided the Bhadurpur area in Sadar upazila and arrested Robi Talukdar and Satish with the heroin. A case was filed in this connection. Meanwhile, police in another raid seized a truck loaded with Indian sugar from Ghatakchar area in Sadar upazila on Wednesday. Acting on a secret information, police raided the truck at the area on Madaripur-Takerhat road and recovered 120 bags of sugar worth Tk 3 lakh. Police arrested the truck driver and a case was filed.

## Gambling protested

**UNB, Jhenidah**

People from all walks of life brought out a big procession protesting naked dance, gambling and drinking wine openly in a fair in Jhenidah town on Friday.

The local elite alleged that the organisers with the connivance of some dishonest officials arranged screening of obscene films, naked dance and gambling to attract people particularly the youths giving rise to anti-social activities in the town. After the Jum'a prayer the procession was brought out from the central Jam-e-Mosque which paraded the main roads of the town chanting various slogans against the anti-social activities in the mela.

## Five get life term

**UNB, Kishoreganj**

A court in Kishoreganj on Wednesday sentenced five people, one in absentia, to life term rigorous imprisonment for committing robbery and killing a house owner.

The convicts, identified as Nurul Islam alias Nuru Mia, Sama alias Shamsu, Renu, Eki and Malek (in absentia), were fined Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more RI. According to prosecution, a gang of armed bandits stormed into the house of Moniruddin at Sholarashi village in Kuliarchar upazila on January 5, 1992 and stabbed him to death when he refused to hand over his cash to them. A case was filed and police after investigation, submitted charge sheet against them. After examining records and witnesses, Additional District Sessions Judge (acting) SM Helaluddin awarded the punishment.



A three-day computer fair for children was jointly organised by Borno Computers and Ananda Multimedia School of Moulvibazar recently. The fair was held at the local Public Library auditorium.



A good number of school children took part in a drawing competition arranged by Rajshahi Healthy City Programme (RHCP), in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO) and Ananya Samaj Kalyan Sangstha (ASKS) in the premises of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC). The competition was part of a massive campaign against Aedes mosquito and Dengu fever in the city. RCC Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu (L) recently inaugurated the campaign.

# Piracy in S districts rise

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Armed piracy in the Bay of Bengal and southern districts has increased alarmingly, causing concern among local people. According to Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna Fishing Trawler Owners' Association, in the first week of the last month at least 11 fishing trawlers in the Bay came under attacks. Pirates looted fish, fishing nets and other fishing inputs worth about Tk six lakh.

A gang of pirates numbering 20 to 25 recently swooped on four fishing trawlers FB Pardeshi, FBMannan, FB Pratyasi and FB Ema-- near Talpatti and abducted two fishermen from each trawler demanding ransom.

Owners of the trawlers went to Patharghata upazila to file case, but the officer-in-charge what the owners said registered the complaints as general diary. However, the hostages were freed later.

It was alleged that due to absence of roving Bangladesh naval ships in the coastal areas pirates based in the Sundarbans area have intensified their operations.

Golam Sarwar Hiru, MP from Betagi-Patharghata constituency, said negligence by the law enforcers has compounded the problem.

Fishermen said each pirate in the Bay or Sundarbans possess at least one firearm. Fishermen also said the armed robbers in the Sundarbans frequently hunt deer and sometimes tigers.

They sell deer meat in Mathbaria area through their men. A fisherman, once abducted later freed, said during his confinement in the dense forest he was forced to take care of six skins of tiger.

Now the woodcutters in the Sundarbans and fishermen in the coastal areas are passing their days under constant threats from the pirates.

Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna Fishing Trawler Owners' Association, said at least 128 fishing trawlers came under pirate attacks in last three months resulting in a loss of over Tk 60 lakh. Piracy in S districts rises

Staff Correspondent, Barisal

Armed piracy in the Bay of Bengal and southern districts has increased alarmingly, causing concern among local people.

According to Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna Fishing Trawler Owners' Association, in the first week of the last month at least 11 fishing trawlers in the Bay came under attacks. Pirates looted fish, fishing nets and other fishing inputs worth about Tk six lakh.

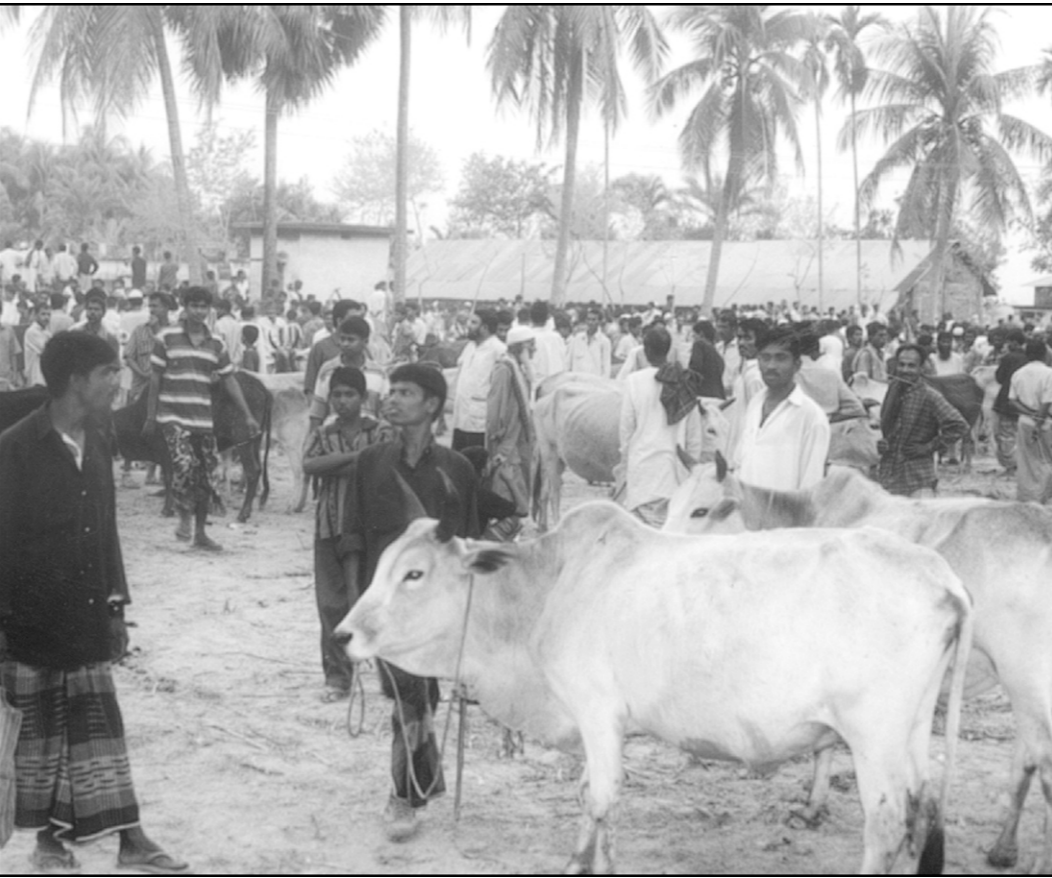
A gang of pirates numbering 20 to 25 recently swooped on four fishing trawlers FB Pardeshi, FBMannan, FB Pratyasi and FB Ema-- near Talpatti and abducted two fishermen from each trawler demanding ransom.

Owners of the trawlers went to Patharghata upazila to file case, but the officer-in-charge what the owners said registered the complaints as general diary. However, the hostages were freed later.

It was alleged that due to absence of roving Bangladesh naval ships in the coastal areas pirates based in the Sundarbans area have intensified their operations.

Golam Sarwar Hiru, MP from Betagi-Patharghata constituency, said negligence by the law enforcers has compounded the problem.

Fishermen said each pirate in the Bay or Sundarbans possess at least one firearm. Fishermen also said



A large number of sacrificial animals have arrived in different Eid cattle markets in Magura town this time. However, prices of cattle are high in comparison with those of the previous years. A partial view of Katakali cattle market where buyers and sellers are seen busy in trading.

## Kishoreganj Bar Assoc polls

**UNB, Kishoreganj**

Election of District Bar Association was held here on Thursday.

Adv Muhammad Ali Bhuiyan and Adv MA Afzal were elected president and general secretary respectively.

Other office-bearers are: Vice-presidents AKM Nurunnabi and Abdur Rahman, assistant general secretaries Shafiuzzaman and Jiban Kumar Roy, library secretary Muhammad Ali, treasurer Raisuddin, cultural secretary Abdul Khaleq. The members are Lutfor Rashid, Asaduzzaman, Bazle Quader, Propip Chandra Dey and ANM Hilali.



A daylong dental camp was jointly organised by Crystal Open Scout and University Dental College of Dhaka in Taltali High School of Amtali upazila under Barguna district recently. More than 500 poor patients received free treatment and medicine from the camp.

## 158 posts of primary teachers vacant in Feni

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni**

At least 158 posts of teachers in primary schools have been lying vacates for a long time in five upazilas in Feni district.

According to district Primary Education Office sources, 18 posts are vacant in Sadar upazila, 20 in Daganbhuiyan upazila, 37 in Sonagazi upazila, 32 in Chhagalniya upazila and 51 in Poursuram upazila.

## Eye camp held

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni**

A five-day free eye camp was held at Feni Diabetic Hospital in Feni town recently.

Feni Rotary Club organised the eye camp. In camp, 1000 patients were attended and 15 of them were operated upon.

Devasheesh Nag, deputy commissioner of Feni, was present at the concluding function of the camp.

## 20 shops gutted in Feni

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni**

At least 20 shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Mirja Bazaar under Chhagalniya upazila recently.

According to local people, the fire originated from a short circuit at a medicine shop in the bazaar soon engulfed other shops, destroying property worth about Tk 70 lakh.

Fire men brought the fire under control after an hour.

## Obituary

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**

Renowned Sanskrit language scholar and theologian Mahesh Chandra Smriti-tirtha-siddhan-tashastri-bachaspaty died of old age ailments at his village home at Tengra under Rajnagar upazila on January 14. He was 90.

His funeral ceremony was held at his village home where hundreds of people from all walks of life attended.