

NEWS SNAPS

Four unnatural deaths recorded in 3 dists

UNB, Barisal
Four unnatural deaths were recorded in three districts of Barisal division on Saturday. Police said the decomposed body of Suman, 4, son of Kabir Hossain of Kochua village in Kathalia upazila of Jhalakati district was recovered from a canal after four days of his missing. Henoara Begum, 30, wife of Ali Hossain of Magura village in Kaukhali upazila of Pirojpur district was tortured to death allegedly by her husband. On information police rushed to the spot and recovered the body. A case was filed. A television mechanic identified as Alamgir, 30, died on the spot when a TV set was exploded while he was repairing it at Daliuddin hat in Daulakhan upazila of Bhola district.

One killed in Munshiganj road accident

UNB, Munshiganj
A man was killed and 28 were injured in a road accident at Kuchiamora in Sirajdikhan upazila on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Abdul Hamid Mollah, 65, hailed from Jaira of Shariatpur. Police said Abdul Hamid Mollah died on the spot when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus collided with another passenger bus at 11am. Of the injured, five were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the rest to different local hospitals. Police seized the two buses and a case was filed.

Ghagot devours 20 homesteads

UNB, Rangpur
Erosion of the river Ghagot has taken a serious turn and the river devoured some 20 homesteads at Betarpara and Bawaipara in Sadar upazila last week. About 31 families, graveyards, Betarpara Jam-e-mosque, and Eidgah are also facing erosion threat. The homeless families took shelter on the available high lands and were passing their days in great hardships. Local people alleged that no step has yet been taken to check the erosion after repeated appeals to officials concerned. The affected people have urged the government to supply them with necessary relief materials to maintain their living.

BADC yet to pay Tk 1 cr to growers

UNB, Rangpur
Contract growers of Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari districts are facing financial hardships as they are not getting payment of Tk 1 crore for IRR1-boro seeds sold to BADC this year. BADC procured 1,300 mts of seeds of IRR1-boro paddy from the contract growers of the three districts during its May 15 to July 31 procurement drive, but they failed to pay the farmers yet due to shortage of fund. The farmers said they are knocking at the doorsteps of BADC every day, but returning home with empty hands.

Preparations going on for observing puja

BSS, Chuadanga
Preparations are afoot to observe Durga Puja in a befitting manner in all the four upazilas of Chuadanga from October 23 to 26. According to official sources, this year a total of 39 PUJA mandaps are being erected in four upazilas Chuadanga sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar. Of which, 10 Puja mandaps are being erected in Chuadanga Sadar upazila, 15 Puja mandaps in Alamdanga upazila eight puja mandaps in Damurhuda upazila and six Puja mandaps in Jibannagar upazila. The work of the images of the Goddess Durga, throughout the district, are now at the final stage and expected to set up in the mandaps' soon.

Communal harmony prevails in Rajshahi

BSS, Rajshahi
One hundred members of the Hindu community in Durgapur upazila (UZ) expressed satisfaction over communal harmony, peace and tranquility now prevailing in their area. No post-election chaos or attack on Hindu community has taken place. In a joint letter to Deputy Commissioner, Rajshahi, they claimed that there was no violence against the minority population in their area after the election. They stated in their letter that after the eighth Jatiya Sangsad election no breach of peace was created by any political party in Durgapur. "Now we are living in peace and happiness. After winning the election no incident of torture or terrorist act was done by BNP men. We have no complain against any political party. Neither we have any complain against any leader or worker of BNP, they said in the statement.

Woman beaten up by opponents

UNB, Munshiganj
A woman was beaten up mercilessly by her opponents in Mollakandi union of Sadar upazila of Munshiganj on Saturday. The victim was identified as Sazeda Akhter, 40, wife of Mollakandi UP chairman and Awami League leader Mostafa Kamal. She was admitted to the Sadar Hospital. In another incident the miscreants in Shiloi union of the same upazila injured a primary school teacher in an attack of Friday. The injured was identified as Hasina Begum, 35, wife of Shiloi UP member and AL leader Rafiqul Islam. The miscreants looted furniture of her house and a mobile phone. Meanwhile, some terrorists attacked the supporters of Awami League in Barikandi village of Sadar upazila on the same day. It is alleged that the hoodlums beat them up, ransacked their houses and looted valuables.

Three Jubo Dal activists expelled

UNB, Jhenidah
Three activists of pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal of Sadar upazila were expelled for violating the party discipline on Wednesday. Party sources said the expelled Alam, Shimul and Shahidul were involved in the post-election violence in the district. The decision was taken at a meeting of BNP district unit on Tuesday with its vice-president Advocate Fazlullah in the chair.

42 injured in clash over shoal lands

UNB, Rangpur
At least 42 people were injured, 16 seriously, in a clash between two rival groups at Joyontipur village in Pirganj upazila on Tuesday. Police said the clash ensued between the groups one led by Gani Mondol and another by Nazimuddin over taking possession of shoal lands emerged in the river Karotoa. Both the groups used sharp weapons and bamboo sticks during the skirmishes that lasted for about an hour. The seriously injured were admitted to upazila health complex while the rest were released after first aid. A case was filed.

Two youths hurt by miscreants

UNB, Narsingdi
Two youths were injured in an attack by miscreants at Rangamati area in Narsingdi town Friday night. Witnesses said Zerir, Liton and their accomplices attacked the local people as they tried to resist them from selling heroin in the area leaving Zaved, 18, and Zahirul 20, injured. They were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar hospital and later Zaved was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

1st int'l confce of agri engineers held

UNB, Mymensingh
First international conference under the auspices of Agricultural Engineering Department was held at Engineers' Institute, Bangladesh, Mymensingh chapter on Saturday. While addressing the conference as chief guest former Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Dr Shah Mohammad Faruq said agricultural development was possible through proper combination of Agricultural Science and Agricultural Engineering. Seeds of high yielding variety should be produced in our own country to ensure sufficient production of crops. Presided over by the Secretary of Engineers' Institution, Mymensingh chapter Prof Shahidullah Talukdar, the inaugural function was addressed, among others, by Secretary of the Central Committee Dr Golam Mohiuddin, Dr Md Nurul Huda, Dr KC Roy and Dr M Abul Kashem. In the second session, 15 articles of local and foreign agricultural scientists were present.

Underground extremist leader arrested

UNB, Jessore
Dr Shyamal Mitra, a most wanted underground extremist leader, was arrested from Bagutia village in Abhoynagar upazila recently. According to a delayed report, police caught Shyamal, leader of the outlawed Biplabi Communist Party (M-L), on Oct 10. He was wanted in a number of cases, including five of murder.

Health complex in Gopalganj lacks proper facilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Kotalipara Thana Health Complex in Gopalganj is beset with manifold problems. As a result the patients are being deprived of healthcare service. Every day a large number of patients from far flung areas come to this health complex, but they have to go back disappointed in absence of proper healthcare facilities, it is widely alleged. Insufficient doctors, lack of medicine, unhealthy drainage system, disordered ambulance and polluted environment have completely shattered the healthcare service. Ramshackle doors and windows of the health complex also added to the problems. For carrying patients, rickshaws, vans and pushcarts are being used as the ambulance of the health complex. Due to fund shortage, the ambulance could not be repaired. Shortage of doctors are hampering the treatment facilities. Most of time there is no doctor in the health

complex, it is alleged. The complex has no X-ray machine, blood bank and treatment facilities for dental or ophthalmic and infectious diseases. Patients revealed that only simple ailments like common cold, dysentery, headache are being treated in the 31-bed health complex. It is alleged that most of the doctors of the complex are found busy with their own private practice. On the other hand, scarcity of pure and safe drinking water is prevailing here. Three hand tubewells at the complex are out of order for a long time. Supply of substandard food to the patients is a regular feature. Most of the toilets remains dirty. Local elite and suffering patients have urged the authorities concerned to take steps to mitigate the sufferings of the patients as soon as possible to ensure healthcare facilities in this health complex.

US action in Afghanistan protested at IU

IU CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Thousands of students including a large number of teachers brought out a big procession on the Islamic University (IU) campus on Wednesday protesting US action in Afghanistan. In the morning, they brought out the procession carrying a banner of "Islami Paribesh Songrakkhan Committee" (Committee for Preservation of Islamic Culture). The processionists carried various festoons and posters of Laden chanting slogans against USA. They paraded various streets of the campus. Following the procession, they held a rally in front of the Arts faculty. Speakers threatened tougher action against USA in future. They urged the world Muslims to be united against USA. They also criticized the Bangladesh Government for permitting USA to use air space. In the rally they also burnt the effigy of US president George Bush.



PHOTO: STAR

Protesters burning the effigy of US President George Bush on Wednesday on the Islamic University campus.

Among others, Islamic University Teachers' Association (UTA) president Prof Musharraf Hossain, Prof Ashraf Ali, Mosharaf Hossain, Dr ABM Siddiqur Rahman, Dr Abdul Hannan Shiekh, Prof Abul Kalam Patwary, Dr Mostafa Kamal, Dr AHM Yahihar Rahman, Dr Abdullah Jahangir, Dr Ruhul Amin, AKM Motinur Rahman and the 'Pesh Imam' of IU central mosque ASM Soaib Ahmed spoke on the occasion. **UNB from Shariatpur reports:** A huge demonstration was held in Shariatpur town last week protesting Anglo-US massive missile and bomb attacks on the innocent people of Afghanistan. Witnesses said a big proces-

sion was brought out from the central mosque. The processionists chanted various slogans against the killing of hundreds of civilians including women and children in Afghanistan violating human rights. The protesters held a rally in front of the DC office with Shariatpur Alia Madrasah Principal Hafez Moulana Siddiqur Rahman in the chair. The angry demonstrators burned the effigy of US President George W Bush in the rally. The rally was addressed, among others, by Ameer of district

Jamaat-e-Islami Moulana Khalilur Rahman, district BNP secretary Alhaj Abdul Aziz Madbar, Manjur Elahi Shamim, Moulana Shahidullah, Sirajul Islam Siron and Syed Motahar Hossain. They submitted a memorandum to the DC for Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia with a call for immediate stoppage of the attack on Afghanistan. They also demanded withdrawal of permission by the Muslim countries for the Americans to use their air bases. Bangladesh should not let its airspace to be used by the US, they said.

Blacksmiths in Kushtia in misery

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A large number of blacksmiths are passing hard days in Kushtia. The blacksmiths find it difficult to stick to their profession due to lack of patronisation, price-hike of raw materials, crisis of fuel and charcoal and also due to new welding workshops at different parts of the district. In addition to this, blacksmiths do not get fair prices of their products. They are forced to sell their goods below the production cost. Blacksmiths of different areas in Kushtia said to this correspondent that there were about 2,500 blacksmith families in all six upazilas in the district only a couple of years back, but now the number has come down to around 1,000. Many of them have already abandoned their profession for mere survival while others are thinking of finding other alternatives. The blacksmiths who left their ancestral profession so far have not found any suitable job as yet and are leading sub-human life with their families. They have no scope of getting bank loans on easy condition to run their business. They are mainly depending on the money lenders who realise high interest rate up to 100 per cent of the borrowed money, they added. The blacksmiths need second hand iron, steel, gas pipes, charcoal and other materials to run their business, but prices of these materials have increased manifold in

comparison with the prices five years back. Now each kilogram of charcoal is being sold at Tk 20 and Tk 25 in different parts of the district. At the same time, the demand for products like spade, axe, hoe, rake, plough-share sickle, knife and other household articles produced by the blacksmiths has fallen down significantly in recent years. In most cases, the selling prices of their products can hardly meet the cost of raw materials in producing the same. The blacksmiths have urged the authorities concerned to provide them short term loan and necessary patronisation to help them carry on their ancestral occupation.

Hindus urged to celebrate Durga Puja without fear

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj



PHOTO: STAR

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood Tuku speaking at a reception at Saidabad High School ground in Sadar thana of Sirajganj on Friday.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku in a meeting with the Hindu leaders called upon them to celebrate the ensuing Durga Puja without fear and in a befitting manner. The State Minister was addressing the meeting at his residence at Hossainpur in Sirajganj town on Thursday night where a large number of four-party activists attended. He instructed the four-party activists to extend all-out help and cooperation to their Hindu brothers to celebrate the ensuing Durga Puja in a peaceful atmosphere. Among others, Vupal Chandra Shaha, Advocate Bimol Kumar Das, Advocate Kallan Shaha spoke on the occasion. Meanwhile, a grand reception was accorded to the State Minister by the people of Saidabad, Bonbaria, Tentulia areas on Friday where he declared that the present government headed by BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia would solve the power problem of the country on priority basis. He also said that electricity would be supplied to agricultural projects to boost production and steps would be taken to meet up the domestic demand. Moulana Abdus Satter Molla presided over the meeting at Saidabad High School playground. Among others, BNP leaders Advocate Mokaddes Ali, Saiful Islam Shishir, Mokbul Hossain Chowdhury, Azizur Rahman Dulal, Nurul Islam Nuru, Juba Dal president Rakibul Hasan Raton, JCD president Nazmul Hasan Rana and Saidur Rahman Bachchu addressed the meeting.