

NEWS SNAPS

Man poisoned to death in Jessore

UNB, Jessore

A man was beaten up and poisoned to death at Beneali Christianpara in Jhikgachha upazila of Jessore on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Marko Mondol, son of Geneva Mondol of the village. Locals said Marko Mondol borrowed Tk 4,000 from Shawkat Ali, but when he failed to repay the money in time Shawkat Ali with the help of his accomplice Matiar Rahman picked him up from his house. They beat him mercilessly and poured poison into his mouth at the nearby Haji Super Market. He was rushed to the upazila health complex where he succumbed. Shawkat and Matiar Rahman went into hiding. A case was filed.

Acid attack on housewife by 'husband'

UNB, Jessore

A housewife suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly by her husband at Jafarpur village in Abhoyanagar upazila of Jessore on Thursday.

Victim's family told that Islam Mollah, day labourer of a jute mill hurled acid at his first wife Halima Khaton, aged over 50, over a family feud when she was sleeping at her room at night. She was undergoing treatment at Acid Survivors' Foundation of BRAC in Jessore. Local people rushed to the spot hearing Halima's screaming and handed over Islam Mollah to the police after a mass beating. A case was filed.

BCL leader forced to move stripped

UNB, Comilla

A local BCL leader was stripped and then forced to walk around a bazaar in Moinamati area by terrorists Tuesday.

According to a delayed report. The terrorists picked up Masud Alam, 24, vice president of BCL Moinamati unit, from Ranir Banglar crossing at about 11 am. They took him to nearby Saheber Bazaar and forced him to go around stripped. The criminals also assaulted some local businessmen when they came in aid of the BCL leader. Meanwhile, former Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru and Burchar Upazila unit AL secretary Advocate Abul Hashem strongly condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of the criminals.

Youth rescued in wounded state

UNB, Patuakhali

A youth was rescued in a wounded state Thursday night from Patuakhali town seven hours after his abduction from local Gazipur bus stand.

Locals said a gang of 12 terrorists abducted Liakat Hossain, 22, from a bus at Gazipur Bazaar at about 3 pm. Liakat, son of Muhammad Idris Mia of village Boalia in Galachipa upazila, fell prey to the kidnapers while he was returning his home from Patuakhali. The abductors fled away leaving behind the youth at an abandoned house at Kalikapur in the town at about 9 pm when local people came there hearing his screaming. Later, he was rushed to Sadar Hospital. Liakat's father filed a GD with police, but none was arrested till Friday.

Cruel husband gouges out eye of wife

UNB, Jessore

A cruel husband gouged out one of the eyes of his wife at village Erenda in Sadar upazila of Jessore on Wednesday for refusing to pay dowry money.

The victim, Shukhjan, 25, was admitted to the district general hospital in a critical condition. Family sources said Sarwar Hossain, husband of Shukhjan used to torture his wife for dowry. Later, the poor father of Shukhjan gave him Tk 10,000. On the fateful day, drug addict Sarwar again asked his wife to bring Tk 20,000 from his father. But, Shukhjan expressed her inability to go to her poor father again for money. At this Sarwar became furious and beat Shukhjan severely and at one stage gouged out her eye. A case was filed.

4 including headmaster of school held

UNB, Gazipur

Police arrested four people including the headmaster of a school from Sripur upazila in Gazipur on Friday.

The arrested were identified as headmaster of Bormi Girls' High School Abdur Rouf, Jakir Hossain, Ruhul Amin and Jasimuddin. Locals said their opponents, over the appointment of a member in the school management committee, filed a case against the headmaster and three others. Another report adds: A rented private car was hijacked by some miscreants from Tongi area on Friday. Police said some youths hired the car from Chandana crossing of Gazipur, but when the car reached Tongi area the hijackers forced the driver to get down at gunpoint and fled away with the car. A case was filed.

12 houses gutted in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

Twelve houses were gutted in a devastating fire at Paindupara in Ruma upazila of Bandarban on Wednesday.

Witnesses said the fire originating from an oven soon engulfed the houses at 1 pm. Paddy worth Tk 40,000 was also gutted in the fire. Local people brought the blaze under control after two hours of frantic efforts. The extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately.

Drug control centre to be set up in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

In a move to rehabilitate the drug addicts in Comilla, the government has decided to set up a drug control centre in Comilla.

The decision was taken at a meeting held at the DC's conference room on December 22 chaired by Shipping Minister Lt Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain. To implement the scheme, a committee was formed with the Deputy Commissioner as its convener and SP and Civil Surgeon as joint convenors.



PHOTO: AMINUL ISLAM

A highway bus passes along Bhaluka-Gafargaon road in Mymensingh which is in bad shape. Passengers suffer a lot due to bad condition of the road. The road needs immediate repair.

Cold wave grips five N dists

MOZAMMEL HUG, Rangpur

A severe cold wave has gripped all the five districts of greater Rangpur zone for the last few weeks.

According to Met office, mercury has dropped below 10 degree Celsius. It has been varying between 10 degree to 12 degree Celsius in Rangpur while in Lalmonirhat has mercury abnormally dropped below 7 degree to 8 degree Celsius. In Kurigram, Nilphamari and Gaibandha mercury has been fluctuating between 11 degree to 13 degree Celsius.

At sundown, deep fog covers the sky and at midnight fog falls like rain drops. Foggy weather remains unchanged till 10 am every day. Sometimes, sun light is not visible during the whole day time in Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari which are situated near the Himalayan range. Dense fog covers the sky most of the time of the day to the utter sufferings of people.

Poor people, people of low-income group and deslutes are in untold misery because of chilly weather across the zone. Elderly people and children are the worst sufferers.

There is also information of the outbreak of cold related diseases like asthma, cough, fever and other diseases in the aforementioned districts.

Normal life practically comes to a halt at night which remains so till noon on the following day as none can move normally due to biting cold. Scarcity of warm cloths has been prevailing everywhere.

Thousands of families who reside in thatched houses pass sleepless nights due to lack of warm cloths in the town areas, day labourers come in search of jobs covering bodies with sarees.

Floating people, beggars, shelterless, erosion affected thousands of families are suffering a lot due to the ongoing cold wave. There are innumerable families who pass sleepless nights under the open sky or under the open spaces of govern-

ment offices, railway stations, mosques or educational institutions. The government and non-government agencies are yet to come forward in their aid.

Motor vehicles are plying at day or night time risking accidents due to deep fog. The drivers disclosed that they cannot see things at a close distance, roughly 10/15 yards off. In the morning also till 9 am, sky remains clouded with deep fog

hindering plying of motor vehicles smoothly. River journey by boats, launches and other means also has become risky.

Although there are no reports of deaths due to cold wave as yet, but many ailing persons, particularly old and infants are suffering from cold related diseases across this zone.

Disaster Management and Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Red Crescent Society

and even the district administration are yet to come forward to mitigate the sufferings of the worst affected people all over greater Rangpur.

There are further informations that cold wave will be intensified from early January and is likely to continue upto February next. This forecast has created a panic among the people of the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Poor people warm up around a fire place at winter night. Now a severe cold wave has been sweeping all over the country. Intensity of cold is much higher in five districts of greater Rangpur where the affected people are yet to receive rags and other warm clothes from government and non-governmental organisations.

Six Met offices running with outdated equipment

UNB, Pabna

Despite Bangladesh being a natural calamity prone country there are only six Met offices with outdated equipment in 16 northern districts for providing weather forecast.

No development activities including the installation of modern telecommunication equipment were undertaken in these stations so far.

At present these six stations could not provide any adequate forecast as these are running with outdated and obsolete equipment like teleprinter, wireless and radio sets.

Moreover, shortage of manpower is also hampering the routine activities of the Met offices.

Official sources said, of the six local Met offices at Ishwardi in Pabna, Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Sayedpur and Rajshahi only Bogra office has a specific machine, which can detect the humidity, temperature and velocity of air.

Though there are offices in the northern region there is no residential facilities for the staffs.

Local people demanded renovation of these Met offices to provide smooth weather forecast.

Bandarban by-polls Nine submit nomination papers

UNB, Bandarban

Nine people submitted their nomination papers to contest in the coming by-election of ward commissioner for ward-6 of the municipality.

They are Nurul Alam, Mohammad Osman Rana, Bodiul Alam, Milon Pal, Mohammad Nazim Uddin, Mohammad Aiyub Khan, Mohammad Didarul Alam, Faridul Alam and Dipok Kanti. The post fell vacant after the death of ward commissioner Bodiul Alam recently. The election will be held on January 13.

Dharala bridge project faces fund shortage

UNB, Kurigram

Completion of the Dharala bridge in Kurigram has become uncertain in the scheduled time due to withdrawal of fund from the project.

Concerned sources said, the construction work of the 648-metre long bridge started in February, 2000 involving Tk 97.85 crore.

At present 65 per cent of the construction work, including land acquisition, soil work of the approach road, construction of pavement of the approach road, approach slope protection, guide dam and bank protection, has been completed.

But recently Tk 15 crore, out of Tk 30 crore allocated for the current year, has been withdrawn as per instruction the Ministry of Communication.

When completed the bridge will establish direct link of the district headquarters with 953 square kilometer areas of Bhurangamari, Nagashari and Fulbari upazilas.

Moulvibazar will be turned into 'A' grade district, says Saifur

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman declared that Moulvibazar district would be upgraded into 'A' grade district soon.

Two more upazilas would also be established for this purpose, he said.

Saifur Rahman announced this while addressing a meeting of Eid reunion at the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar on December 21.

The meeting was attended by leaders of political parties, repre-

sentatives of different professional organisations, government officers and elite of the town. State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and M M Shahan MP, were also present in the meeting.

According to the existing system of government 'A' grade district needs minimum eight upazilas and Moulvibazar district has six upazilas which were established during the British rule.

The minister also announced that a town by-pass road would be constructed to link Rajnagar-Fenchuganj-Sylhet road with Sylhet-Dhaka high way through the Monu barrage.



PHOTO: STAR

A cattleboy grazing domestic animals at a field at village Sastibar in Jhenidah where grazing grounds are shrinking very fast. Cattle resources are decreasing due to this phenomenon.

Indiscriminate hunting of guest birds going on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying government ban indiscriminate killing of guest birds is going on in Panchagarh and Kishoreganj.

UNB from Panchagarh reports: This year a section of people instead of protecting the guest birds started hunting them before the eyes of the law enforcers. The birds are thronging in different beels, haors and marshy lands from Siberian region to escape biting cold there.

A section of amateur hunters also joined the killing spree of baihas, chaka, manikjora, gang kabutor, narundi, chima, groadar, karali, pankouri, sarail, kora, mouhas, perhas, bonbok and other unknown birds.

The migratory birds, which come here flying thousands of miles, enhance our natural beauty but the brutalities of the bird hunters and traders are going unabated.

Early in the morning and sundown the bird hunters including government and non-government officials with guns and various traps start hunting the local and guest

birds indiscriminately, the local people said.

Local elite said that if the killing spree were not stopped in five upazilas of Panchagarh, no guest birds would come in the country in future endangering our ecological balance.

Another report from Kishoreganj says: Like previous years thousands of guest birds have started arriving in 13 upazilas of Kishoreganj since the beginning of winter season.

These migratory birds coming from the Siberian region due to severe cold are taking shelter in different rivers, canals, beels, haors and other water bodies.

The different species of migratory birds like baihas, dahuk, rajhash, lakha, sarail, laldhura, pankouri, bolbok, kalash, pathas, ghughu, masranga, kirali nulgria, jolkabutar, flycatcher, lenja and gangchil are found in abundance.

But professional as well as amateur hunters are catching the guest birds with impunity and selling those in different markets and office

areas before the eyes of the law enforcers.

There are different ways of hunting the birds. Some hunters use guns and some use cages to catch the birds. They also apply a number of other methods to net the guest birds and they do not bother the government's ban on hunting the migratory birds.

Hunting of birds is banned in the country, but hoodwinking the law the hunting spree is going on across the district, as there is none to implement the ban.

If this ominous trend continues the migratory birds would stop coming into the country, which would harm the ecological balance, feared experts.

Local people alleged that indiscriminate hunting of birds is continuing in Itna, Mitamoin, Austagram, Nikli, Tarail, Karimganj and Bhairab upazilas despite the government ban.

Local leaders have urged the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take immediate steps against the bird-hunters.