

NEWS SNAPS

Diarrhoea claims four children

UNB, Rangpur

Diarrhoea that broke out in two villages of Kaunia upazila in Rangpur in the last three days claimed four children and affected 50 people.

The deceased were identified as Anwara Begum, 2, Ashik Babu, (9 months old), Sultan Mohammad, 1, of Mollahari village and Alaudin Mia, (10 months) of Thakurdas village. When contacted Civil Surgeon of Rangpur said that the children died of pneumonia. Admitting the outbreak of diarrhoea he said medical teams have been sent to the affected villages to combat the menace.

Road accidents kill three

UNB, Jessore

Three persons were killed in separate road accidents in Jessore on Saturday.

Witnesses said Moulana Abus Samad, 40, of Jhikargacha upazila was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck in Boardbazaar area while he was returning home from a Waj Mahafiz. A Narail-bound soil laden truck ran over Allal Mollah, 40, of Sadar upazila on Jessore-Narail road. He died on the spot. In yet another incident an unidentified young man, 30, was killed on the spot when a Khulna-bound truck on Jessore-Khulna highway hit his bicycle from behind. Police sent the bodies to local hospitals for autopsy. Separate cases were filed.

Two hurt in Chhatra Dal factional feud

UNB, Kurigram

Two people, including a Chhatra Dal activist, were seriously injured in an attack by their opponents in Kurigram town on Friday.

Police said JCD activist Sanu and his associate Reazul Haq came under attack at night as a sequel to factional feud. They were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition. A case was filed with the police.

Bagerhat newsman manhandled

UNB, Bagerhat

A local newsman was beaten up severely by the terrorists in Shaympara School premises in Chitalmari upazila on Sunday.

Locals said the miscreants numbering 7/8 swooped on Kapil Ghosh Bappi, southern region correspondent of Weekly Aporadchitra, at about 5 pm for publishing series of reports against the criminals. He was admitted to Chitalmari Health Complex. President and general secretary of Bagerhat Reporters' club in a joint statement strongly condemned the terrorists attack on Kapil and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Miscreants loot post office money

UNB, Natore

Miscreants looted Tk 4 lakh from the treasurer of the main post office in Natore at Sonali Bank branch of the district town on Sunday.

Police said some 3-4 terrorists laid siege to the treasurer Afazuddin all on a sudden as soon as he came to the bank to deposit the money and snatched away the money kept in a bag. Afazuddin after a hot chase caught one of them identified as Majib Rahman, 40, haled from Kushtia.

People urged to help curb terrorism

UNB, Laxmipur

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia said the present government is committed to eliminate corruption and terrorism from the society.

"The present government has come to power with a commitment to build a corruption and terrorism-free Bangladesh," he said addressing a meeting of the district development coordination and law and order committee held in Laxmipur on Sunday. Calling upon the officials and employees to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and honesty, the state minister sought cooperation from the people of all walks of life to help curb terrorism and corruption. Expressing satisfaction over the significant improvement of law and order he regretted that police could not arrest the terrorists responsible for torching over 150 houses in his own constituency during the caretaker government. He also directed the officials concerned to nab the terrorists irrespective of party affiliations.

Price of date molasses up

UNB, Narail

Date molasses locally known as 'khejur gur' has flooded the markets across Narail district but it is selling at exorbitant price.

With the intensity of cold, extraction of date juice is going on in full swing. The extractors known as 'gacchi' are busy in trimming date trees to collect juice for making molasses. People living in remote areas of the district, as part of Bangalee tradition, are busy in making different delicious winter cakes with 'khejur gur' and entertain their dear guests. Delicious molasses are being sold at Tk between 30-40 per kg against the earlier rate of Tk 20-30.

Fortnight long Poush Fair begins

UNB, Rajshahi

A fortnight-long Poush Fair began at the premises of Dainik Barta in Rajshahi on Sunday.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Enayet Ullah Dewan PPM, as chief guest, inaugurated the fair jointly organised by Rajshahi Theatre and Friends Ideal Cricket School. Chaired by convenor of the fair Tazul Islam, Deputy Police Commissioner Aminul Islam and member secretary of the fair Kamarullah Sarker, among others, addressed the inaugural ceremony.

Teacher arrested for fake certificate

UNB, Gazipur

Police arrested a teacher from Harinal bazaar in Sadar upazila of Gazipur on Saturday night on the allegation of serving in a madrasah by submitting fake certificates.

Acting on secret information, police raided the bazaar and nabbed Mohammad Ashraf Hossain, haled from Patuakhali. Police said Ashraf has been serving as a lecturer in English in Kalni Senior Madrasah in the upazila by submitting false certificates since long. A case was filed.

New govt prosecutor of Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

The government has appointed 27 new government prosecutor (GP), public prosecutor (PP), special PP, additional PPs and assistant PPs replacing the previous prosecutors in Bagerhat.

The appointments were made through a letter from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs recently.

Anti-drug campaign in Jhenidah

UNB, Jhenidah

With a view to creating a drug-free society and save the youths from further ruination local conscious people have launched a laudable campaign against drug abuse.

They are spontaneously holding meetings and rallies to create mass awareness against drug abuse. The campaign that began ahead of the holy month of Ramadan with the participation of a large number of youths and devotees of different mosques is still continuing. Meanwhile they have rounded up a number of drug traders and handed them over to the police.

Food procurement drive in Rangpur faces setback

MOZAMMEL HUQ, Rangpur

Aman paddy and rice procurement drive of the government is being hampered greatly due to rise in paddy and rice prices in the markets in Rangpur.

Only 300 metric tons of paddy have so far been procured while not a single grain of rice has been procured till the end of December.

The Food Department has a target to procure 9,468 metric tons of paddy and 6,261 metric tons of rice in Rangpur during the current season. The department has opened procurement centres in nine LSD godowns of Rangpur. But the millers did not sign the contracts for supplying rice to the Food Department because of alleged imposition of a new levy by the government, which is effective from the current fiscal

year.

The millers will have to pay 2 per cent levy for a bill amounting to Tk 3 lakh and 3 per cent levy for any bill beyond Tk 4 lakh. This has caused repercussion among them.

Meanwhile, the ongoing cold wave has seriously affected the standing crops, especially the vegetable plants causing a drastic fall in its yield, agriculturists said.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) also informed about sharp fall in vegetable production due to cold wave.

As a result prices of different kinds of vegetables have shot up. Winter vegetables are now being sold at much higher rate beyond the purchasing capacity of common consumers.



The 3rd National COMDECA and 8th National Rover Moot concluded at Sirajganj on January 4. During the eight-day long COMDECA and Moot programme, 5283 scouts and rovers from all over the country actively took part in various community development works in the adjacent villages of Gunergati, Sailabari, Khoksabari, Kholakhora, Char Khoksabari and Ziamore. These include 10-kilometre road construction, four-kilometre road reconstruction, installation of 54 sanitary latrines among the poor, tree plantation and afforestation in 40 places, distribution of vegetable seeds and installation of two bio-gas plants. President and Chief Scout of Bangladesh Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurated the moot as the chief guest on December 28. The President is seen surrounded by some scouts.

Hunting of guest birds goes on unabated

UNB, Rangamati

As thousands of guest birds started arriving in the hill region like previous years, hunters are indiscriminately hunting these birds defying the government ban.

The migratory birds coming from the Siberian region to escape from biting cold are taking shelter in various lakes and canals, lakes and other water bodies.

Different species of migratory birds, including Baliahas, Dahuks, Rajhash, Lakha, Sarail, Kalash and Neelgiria are now seen in abundance at various water bodies.

Local people alleged that indiscriminate hunting of birds is continuing in different parts of Sadar, Barkal, Baghaichhari, Naniarchar, Zurachhari of Rangamati and Mohalchhari, Dighinala and Ramgarh of Khagrachhari.

Professional as well as amateur hunters are hunting the guest birds from various lakes and canals, lakes and other water bodies.

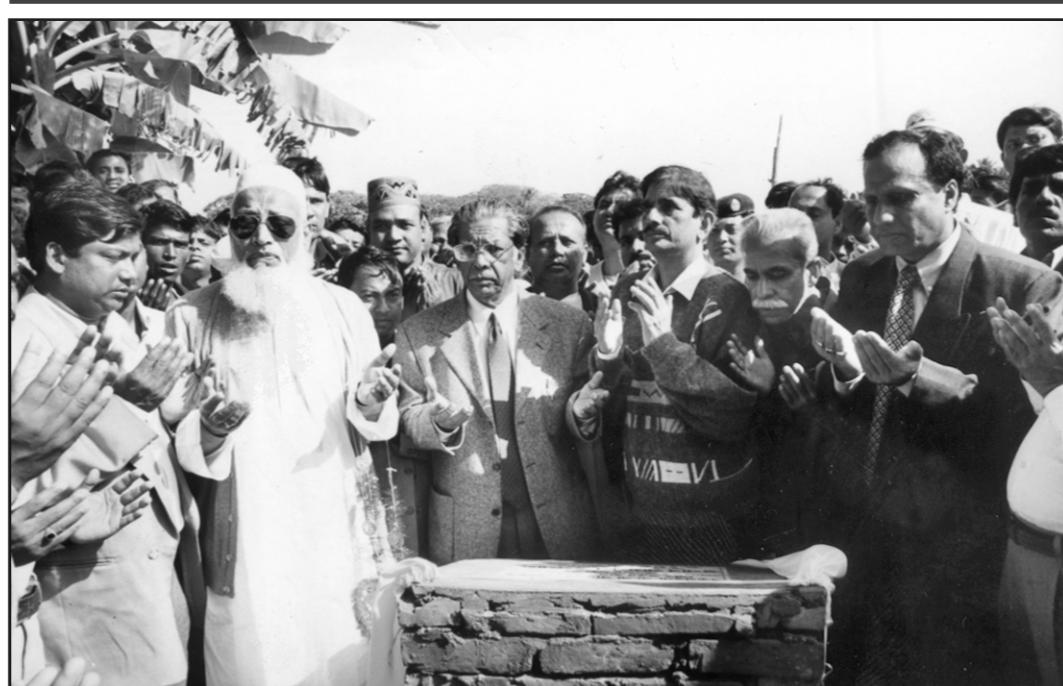
Kalash and Baliahs are being sold in local markets between Tk 50 and 70 each.

There are different ways of

hunting the guest birds. Some hunters use guns while some other use cages to catch the birds. They also apply a number of other methods to net the guest birds ignoring the government's ban on hunting the migratory birds.

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

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



Minister for Land M Shamsul Islam offering *munajat* after laying the foundation of the four-kilometre Bakultala-Banglabazar road in Union number 10 of Munshiganj recently.

Efforts on to introduce tech based education

BSS, Keraniganj

Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf recently said the government is working relentlessly to introduce a modern technology-based education in the country.

"We have to build our new generation so that they can cope with the challenges of the 21st century," he said while speaking at a Freshers' Reception Ceremony at Ispahani Degree College at Keraniganj as the chief guest.

Presided over by Omar Faruk, the function was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Amanullah Aman MP, educationists and student leaders.

Calling upon the students to help build a terrorism-free education system in the country, Yusuf said an evil force is conspiring to destroy our education system by unleashing terrorism in different educational institutions.

The minister also called upon the students to help government maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the campuses and supplement their efforts for implementing different development programmes of the government across the country.

Later, the minister inaugurated "Bijoy Mela" (Victory Fair) at the college premises.

Four HYV pulse invented

UNB, Mymensingh

Scientists at Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) have invented four high yielding varieties (HYV) of pulse, brightening the image of the research organisation.

The new varieties are BINA Khesari-1, BINA Chola-3 and BINA Chola-4 and BINA Mashur-1.

National Seed Board has received the seeds to distribute among framers for cultivation across the country.

Inventor of BINA Khesari-1 Dr Ziauddin Ahmed said the average production of the new variety would be 1.6-2.0 tons per hectare and it could be harvested within 110-125 days of sowing. He said the plant leaves are deep green while the seed has deep-black stripes.

The average production of BINA Chola-3 is 1.6 tons per hectare and its life span is 115-120 days and protein rate is 21.5.

Dr AKM Shamsuzzaman, the inventor of BINA Chola-4, claimed that it could be harvested within 120-125 days of sowing and its average production capacity is 1.63 tons per hectare. Its protein rate is 22.34. Customers will be attracted more to it because of its bright colour.

BINA scientists MA Majid and Snigdha Roy, and Prof Kazi Nasiruddin Ahmed of ABU said BINA Mashur-1 could be harvested in 125-130 days with an average production rate of 1.8 tons per hectare. Its protein percentage is 25.9. They said this new variety seed is able to protect Rust and Leaf Blight diseases of lentil.

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Road prates swooped on a night coach near Kaharol upazila textile mills in Dinajpur early Monday and looted valuables worth Tk one lakh.

Witnesses said the robbers halted the Ranisankol-bound bus from Dhaka at the point by blocking the road with logs.

The robbers, numbering about 15, damaged the bus, beat the passengers indiscriminately and decamped with the booty, leaving at least five people injured. A report from Rangpur says: A gang of 8-10 muggers stormed into the house of food inspector Golam Sarwar at Kamal Kasna in Rangpur town early Sunday.

Police said the bandits wearing shorts confined the house inmates in a room at about 4 am at gunpoint and decamped with a revolver, cash, gold ornaments worth Tk one lakh.

Police arrested Majnu from Damdoma area in Mithapukur upazila in this connection.

Fish scarcity in northern region

UNB, Dinajpur

An acute scarcity of fish has been prevailing in the northern region of the country including Dinajpur since long.

According to a study, there is a demand of 36,798 tons in the region every year, but only 19,367 tons are produced in the water bodies, including khas ponds, canals and rivers.

Over 17,000-ton shortage of fish reached gradually over the last 7/8 years.

An investigation found that most of the water bodies in the region either have been beset with the ownership problem or are grabbed by the locally influential people. Besides, many turned unfit for pisciculture.

According to official sources, there are 32,000 ponds the ditches in the northern region fit for use. Of those 20,000 belonging to the government remained under occupation of influential people. There are also 40 rivers flowing over the region.

While visiting through various rivers like Korotoa, Ichhamati, Borai, Atrai, Hursagar, Doidanga, Mohananda, Gumani, human habitations are being built and cultivation is going on the dried up land.

The fish output in the vast Chalan Beel in Pabna, Bogra, Sirajganj, Natore, Rajshahi, and Naogaon also decreased alarmingly.

The fish in the mighty Padma, Jamuna, Brahmaputra, Teesta and Dhara rivers also dropped significantly.

Pistol recovered: 3 tribals held

UNB, Khagrachhari

Police recovered a homemade pistol and arrested three tribal youths from Pashurampara of Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari on Saturday.

Police and armymen launched a joint drive in the area to rescue the truck driver, Kalu Mia, abducted earlier and recovered the arms.