

NEWS SNAPS

Body of pregnant woman exhumed

UNB, Patuakhali

The body of a pregnant woman, who was allegedly beaten to death, was exhumed from the municipal graveyard in Patuakhali on Tuesday after 18 days of her burial.

The body of Amena Begum, 30, was exhumed as per court order in presence of a first class magistrate following a case filed by her brother Ayub Ali, hailed from South Bighai village. In his complaint Ayub Ali said that he had a longstanding dispute with Abdus Sattar Mridha of the same village. On December 21 last Sattar along with his men stormed the house of Ayub Ali in his absence and beat the inmates including his 9 months pregnant sister Amena. Amena was rushed to Sadar Hospital where she succumbed and the influential attackers somehow managed her family members to complete the burial hurriedly. On his return from Dhaka Ali filed a murder case with the court on December 30 accusing six people.

Body of housewife recovered

UNB, Jhalakati

The body of a housewife was recovered from a paddy field at Darkhi village of Sadar upazila in Jhalakati on Monday.

Police said the body of the woman identified as Rahela Begum, 38, bore some injury marks. Father of Rahela alleged that she was beaten to death. The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately. On the same day a housewife named Hazera committed suicide by taking pesticide at Kathipara village of Nalchhiti upazila. Relatives said Hazera swallowed pesticide as her husband scolded her following a quarrel with his another wife.

Cash looted from Madaripur DC office

UNB, Madaripur

Over Tk one lakh in cash was looted by thieves from the DC office in Madaripur on Sunday night.

Police said the thieves entered into the office breaking the lock and stole the money from four almirahs of nejarat and SA section. Two nightguards had been absconding since daring theft. A case was filed with Sadar thana. A report from Jhalakati says -- gold and silver ornaments worth Tk 60,000 were looted in a daring theft at a jewelry shop in Jhalakati town early Tuesday. Police said the theft occurred at "Adarsha Gini House" near Kamarpatti area at about 2 am.

Paddy procurement drive faces setback

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Foodgrains procurement drive is being hampered in Nilphamari because of price-hike of paddy and rice in the local markets.

It has been decided to procure 7,166 metric tons of paddy and 2,856 metric tons of rice from Nilphamari at the rate of Tk 8 for each kg of paddy and Tk 12 for each kg of rice. The millers did not sign any contract to supply paddy or rice to the Food Department as they have to buy paddy at Tk 7 and rice at Tk 11 per kg from the open market. A very negligible quantity of rice and paddy was procured in Nilphamari Sadar, Jaldhaka and Kishoreganj upazilas. Not a single grain was procured in Syedpur, Dimla and Domar upazilas. Cultivation of transplanted aman was hampered due to drought which is the reason of price-hike of foodgrains.

Clash over land leaves five injured

UNB, Jhalakati

At least five people including two women were injured in a clash between two groups of people at village Ramnagar in Sadar upazila of Jhalakati on Tuesday.

Villagers said the clash occurred following a longstanding dispute between Sobhan Munshi and Berek Howladar of the village over the ownership of a piece of land. The injured, Sobhan Munshi, 55, his wife Aleya Begum, 40, son Al Amin, 20, Mohammad Sohel, 15, and Bhulu Begum, 30, were admitted to local hospital.

Teacher of Juranpur college manhandled

UNB, Comilla

Students and teachers of Juranpur Adarsha College in Daudkandi of Comilla got panicked on Wednesday as a teacher of the college was manhandled by some miscreants.

The teachers said a gang of criminals led by Abul dragged M Shah Alam, lecturer of Computer Science Department, from the teachers' common room at about 11:30 am and beat him up. The miscreants also hurled abuses at other teachers during the incident. No case was filed till Wednesday.

Mustard cultivation on 14,000 hectares

UNB, Madaripur

A total of 14,000 hectares of land has been brought under mustard cultivation in Madaripur this season with an output target of 14,000 tons.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has been supplying seeds, fertiliser and other agricultural inputs to the farmers for successful implementation of the scheme. Different banks have targeted to disburse over Tk 2 crore as loan among the farmers for mustard cultivation.



PHOTO: STAR

Vendors doing a brisk business of old warm clothes at Nichabazar in Natore town. Warm clothes are in great demand as mild cold wave sweeps across the northern region for the last few days.

Eight abducted in Magura for ransom in 3 months

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Eight people were abducted from different parts of Magura since October 30 to December 20 last year while three families of the minority community received anonymous letters from the kidnapers.

Most of the victims were released after payment of the demanded ransom. Some of the victims were tortured and killed for failure to meet the demand of abductors.

A number of organised gangs are involved in the kidnapping incidents. They pick up people at gun-point from different villages and demand ransom.

In most cases, the victim families did not file any case in fear of reprisal by the criminals.

The abducted eight people were identified as Shofiqur-Rahman Shafique of Kajoli, Amol Shikder and Nabab Ali of Sreekol, Golam Kibria of Chowgachchi, Ratan Biswas of Chilgori village in Sreepur upazila and Hasan of Soychar village, Bipul of Arpara and Ismayeel Hossain alias Kala of Ichchakhata village of Magura sadar upazila.

Of them, Bipul was killed by the miscreants while police rescued Ismayeel alias Kala after two days of his abduction. The rest were released after payment of demanded ransom.

Amol Shikder was kidnapped at gun-point by a gang of about 16 from his house at village Sreekol on October 30. After payment of Tk 2 lakh as ransom, Amol was released on November 2.

Shafiqur Rahman Shafique of Kajoli village in Sreepur upazila was abducted for ransom on November 8, and freed on the following day in exchange of Tk two lakh, local people said.

Golam Kilria, son of Golams Sarwar of village Chowgachchi in Sreepur upazila was abducted for ransom on the same day. Kibria, however, managed to flee from the grip of the terrorists after two days.

Nabab Ali of village Sreekol in the same upazila was abducted on November 9.

Besides, Hasan, son of Salek Molla, resident of village Soychar in the Sadar upazila was kidnapped for ransom amounting to Tk 1.5 lakh on November 14. He was freed on the following day after payment of the amount, local people said.

Bipul of village Arpara in the same upazila was kidnapped for ransom and he was killed later on. Police recovered his body from a paddy field in the same village on November 27.

Ismayeel Hossain alias Kala was abducted from Ichchakhata village in the Sadar upazila on December 20. Police rescued him from a village in Jhenidah after two days of his abduction.

Moreover, three minority families of Kagozipur in Sreepur upzila received anonymous letters with a demand of Tk 50 thousand. They asked the families for payment of the demanded amount near Preeya cinema hall in Jhenidah town.

This trend is still continuing in Magura. But members of the law enforcing agencies are not active to nab the criminals due to reasons unknown to all.

How an illiterate man has overcome power crisis

UNB, Bandarban

When power crisis has become a paramount concern for the government, an illiterate tribal man shows the path how to overcome the problem.

Aong Thoi Khoy Marma of Mongjaipara village in Sadar upazila of Bandarban is trying to provide electricity to 140 families of his quailed village from his hydroelectricity plant he set up with his own technology.

Thoi, owner of a rice mill, himself repairs his rice mill and thus he has become a well-known technician. One day he started dreaming of producing hydroelectricity with his own technology to help his co-villagers.

To make his dream true, he has constructed a dam on a hilly canal at his village and soon started producing hydroelectricity, though not on a large scale.

He now produces 1,000 watts of electricity a day.

Thoi, in his mid 40s, procured machinery from Bandarban town

and Chittagong and installed those on the dam constructed over Hara canal. He has so far spent Tk 70,000.

Local inhabitants said they have never seen any development activities at their village, except a building for a primary school in 2001, as it is located in a remote area.

"It was my dream to provide electricity to my co-villagers, I kept my efforts on and now I'm on way to success," a beaming Thoi told.

He said although it is a costly project, he will gradually bring the entire village under his power supply network. "Any government assistance will make my efforts easier," he said in response to a query.

Construction of a permanent dam over the canal is urgently needed to steer the project towards its total success. "But I cannot do that without government support as I'm a poor man," he said.

But he said he will continue his efforts until he reaches electricity to 140 families of his village no matter whether he gets government help or not.

Thoi used various machinery of his rice mill in the project. He has installed timber pillars in the canal instead of RCC ones, and has made a wooden turbine by local carpenters for generating power.

The electricity from his project was first supplied to a local Buddhist temple.

Thoi is now wiring the houses of his villagers to connect those to his electricity network at his own cost as most of the villagers cannot afford it.

Most of the villagers are illiterate. Only a few kids of the impoverished village go to its lone primary school.

The village has so far got only three graduates and now they are away from the village because of their government service.

Aongsin, who is a diploma engineer by profession and works at Bandarban district council, constantly inspires his co-villager Thoi to go ahead with his noble project.

"My other fellow villagers are also helping me by extending physical labour ... their cooperation, I'm sure, will lead me towards success," Thoi hopes.

Heroin seized from Benapole

UNB, Benapole

Benapole land port police raided the Ghospatti and seized one kilogram of quality heroin recently.

Acting on a secret information police closely followed a man as he came to the local bazaar in a bicycle with heroin inside a polythene bag. Sensing danger the heroin carrier managed to flee leaving behind the bag.

About a month ago a woman, Fatema Khatun, 30, was arrested with one kg of heroin.

Another report from Kushtia adds: Police arrested four persons with half a kilogram of quality heroin while they were selling the drug in Pearpur village of Sadar upazila.

Acting on a tip police rushed to the place in plain cloth in guise of heroin buyer and arrested them.

They are Rabiul Islam and Ruhul Amin of Kushtia Sadar upazila and Dilip Biswas and Monwar Hossain of Shaikupa upazila of Jhenidah.

Narcotics Control officials said, quality heroin was smuggled from Thailand through India.

The arrested persons admitted to the police that they supply the dangerous drug to southwestern districts of the country.

BCL leader, 2 Jubo League activists held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Two Jubo League activists and one BCL leader were arrested in Magura town in the early hours on Wednesday.

Police said, Alam and Zahid, activists of Magura district Jubo League and Mitul, president of Chowlia unit of BCL, were arrested on charge of bomb explosion in Bhaina area of the town at around 11 pm on Wednesday.

8 AL, Jubo League leaders, workers arrested

UNB, C'nawabganj

Eight leaders and workers of local Awami League and its front organisations were arrested on charge of barring the motorcade of Textile Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury from entering the town during hartal hours on Wednesday.

Matin Chowdhury's car faced a procession of Awami League workers who chanted anti-government slogans at Udayan crossing in the town at about 11 am.

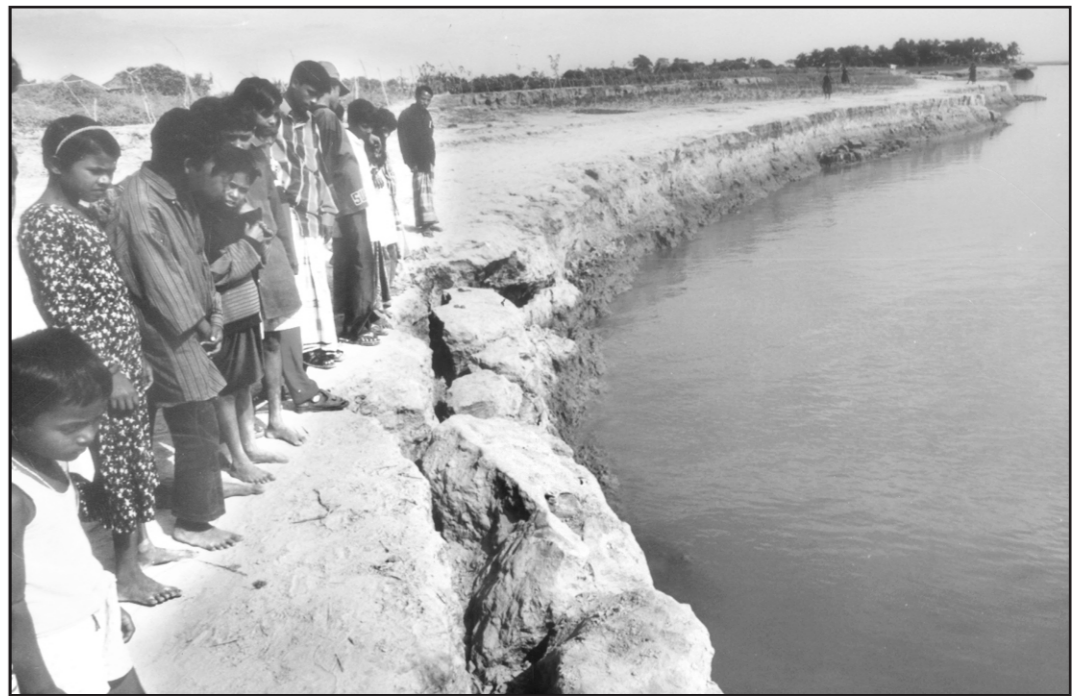


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Villagers observing with awe the erosion of the Padma river in Maheshpur area of Munshiganj. Panic has gripped the local people in the winter when usually the river remains calm. Most often the river bank gets eroded in Maheshpur causing immense suffering to the erosion victims.

Shoals hamper navigation in Jamuna

AKHTERUZZAMAN BABLU, Sirajganj

Because of unabated siltation and dumping of waste and garbage in the Jamuna river, big shoals have emerged on the river bed. As a result navigation in the river is being hampered greatly.

In August-September, water level in the river starts falling. About 1,000 small and big shoals have emerged along Jagannathganj ghat to Aricha ghat hampering navigation in the river routes.

When contacted an engineer working with the local Water Development Board (WDB) said big shoals have been emerged on

the river bed. He said that as most of the rivers in the country flow slowly, these leave silt, resulting in emergence of shoals. Silt is being deposited for years together hampering navigation, he added. Many sewer lines in the town end up in the river, causing slow death of the river. The drains carry garbage including polythene bags.

Dumping of garbage along the bank, apparently to reclaim land, has been going on over the years. In the rainy season, following heavy rainfall, the wastes find home in the river bed. Siltation in the Jamuna has also affected other small rivers.

Transport costs have increased

over the years. Many labourers in different points and boatmen are now out of job.

A WDB engineer, however, said that it is really a mammoth task to dredge the whole river. "A small portion of the river adjacent to Sirajganj town was dredged back in 1976. But now immediate dredging is needed," he added. If the authority fails to dredge the river bed soon, the river route along Jagannathganj ghat to Sirajganj ghat and Bhuapur ghat to Sirajganj ghat may close down. As a result prices of fertiliser, rice, flour and other items will increase. The cultivation will also be hampered.