

## NEWS SNAPS

## Drive to free Thakurgaon from polybags

UNB, *Thakurgaon*

A drive to free Thakurgaon area from polythene bags has begun with the participation of teachers and students.

Some 200 students of Rahimanpur Primary School in Sadar upazila collected about 60,000 pieces of polythene bags and destroyed those in the school premises on Tuesday. The school authority also organised a meeting to create awareness among the local people on the adverse impact of the polythene bag in environment and agriculture. Teachers, students and guardians attended the meeting. The headmaster of the school earlier announced a prize for a person for collecting highest number of polythene bags.

## Children suffering from respiratory disease

UNB, *Narail*

Children under 5 years of age are falling victims to respiratory and intestinal diseases, including diarrhoea in Narail, hospital sources said.

Such diseases suddenly have increased with the advent of current winter season and an increasing number of victims are getting admitted at Sadar hospital and upazila health complexes every day. Some 95 children attacked with pneumonia have received treatment at the hospital during the last seven days, physicians said. At the moment there are some 22 patients undergoing treatment at the hospital. With the arrival of increasing number of patients, five children had to be shifted to the male ward. A large number of old people and juveniles have been admitted to the health complexes, it was learnt.

## Move to control hunting of guest birds

UNB, *Bagerhat*

In a move to control hunting of guest birds that visit the country during the winter, forest officials here seized over 200 birds from Kartikdia Bazaar on Friday.

The officials in a sudden raid at the bazaar in the morning seized the birds kept in four cages for selling and freed them to the sky. They, however, failed to nab any of the hunters. Official sources said some of the birds could not fly due to their injuries. The birds will be freed soon after their recovery. The bird hunters became active in the region with the advent of the winter as a good number of guest birds from the coldest Siberian region move to this region for their survival. The number of birds, however, decreased with the increase of hunting.

## 40,000 rickshaws plying sans licenses

UNB, *Sylhet*

Nearly 40,000 rickshaws have been plying in Sylhet town without licenses since long before the eyes of law enforcing agencies.

Over 10,000 rickshaws have got genuine license. They said there are a number of rickshaw garages in different areas of town where the three wheelers are being built regularly. Dwellers said the huge number of unlicensed rickshaws were mainly responsible for chronic traffic jam in the town. It was learnt that some dishonest municipality officials, employees and traffic police were responsible for the gradual rise in the number of unlicensed rickshaws. The local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to seize the illegal rickshaws to ease the traffic jam in the town.

## Clash over stealing of betel nut: 20 hurt

UNB, *Noakhali*

A clash between two groups of villagers in Begumganj upazila of Noakhali left 20 people injured on Friday.

Locals said there has been a high tension between the people of Khalishpur and Nayanpur villages for the last several days following stealing of betel nut from the garden of Adv Jogendra. The Friday's clash erupted when some youths of Khalishpur village tried to take away a goat of Parimal Mojumdar of Nayanpur village by force. Of the injured, Abdul Halim, 60, Babul, 35, Selim, 70, Joyнал Abedin, 55, Shakawat Akbar, 25, Rezaul, 18, and Mustafa, 28, were rushed to Noakhali General Hospital in critical condition.

## Fugitive arrested from Pachgachia Bazaar

UNB, *Feni*

A fugitive was arrested from Pachgachia Bazaar of Feni town on Thursday.

The arrested was identified as Abul Kalam Azad Swapan, 28. Police said Swapan, who was awarded 10 years' imprisonment in an arms case, remained absconding since last April. Two cases were filed against him under Explosives Act. Swapan was conducting terrorist activities in the area and police caught him red-handed when he was demanding toll from a teashop owner.

## 3,700 bottles of phensidyl recovered

UNB, *Madaripur*

Some 3,700 bottles of phensidyl were recovered from Kawrakandi ferry ghat in Shibchar upazila in Madaripur recently.

On secret information, police said, they searched a pickup van on December 24 night and recovered the contraband items contained in eight fish-carrying baskets. Driver of the pickup Abdus Salam and another person Siraj Mia were arrested in this connection. Driver of the vehicle confessed to police that the bottles were loaded in his pickup from Noorpur area in Jessore. A case was filed with Shibchar police in this connection.

## 72 municipality employees dismissed

UNB, *Pabna*

Seventy temporary employees of Pabna Municipality have lost their jobs after serving for long 12 years.

The government dismissal order, dated Dec 31, 2001, reached Pabna recently dealing a severe blow to over 500 family members of the employees. Official sources said the dismissed employees, working on contract, were engaged in cleaning up the town.

## Businessman injured by terrorists

UNB, *Kurigram*

A young businessman was injured in an attack by terrorists at College Crossing in Kurigram town Thursday.

Police said the terrorists stormed into the house of Mizanur Rahman, younger brother of BNP leader Mustafizur Rahman, and chopped him indiscriminately. He was first admitted to Sadar Hospital and then shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

## Outdoor service of hospital opens

UNB, *Dinajpur*

The outdoor service of upgraded Dinajpur Red Crescent Hospital was inaugurated recently.

Eminent philanthropist and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's elderly mother Begum Taiyeba Mujumder inaugurated the service on January 3. Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Major General (retd) ZA Khan and local Civil Surgeon Dr Abul Kalam Azad were, among others, present on the occasion.

## CHTDB stipends distributed

UNB, *Rangamati*

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) distributed Tk 15 lakh as stipend among 450 poor but meritorious students in the three hill districts in 2001.

Officials said the students, who did not get stipend from the district council, were selected from among 1000 applicants. Those came from poor tribal families and impoverished areas were given priority during the selection. The board will distribute stipend amounting to Tk 10 lakh this year for which applications would be invited soon.

## Non-stop irrigation declining land fertility

UNB, *Narail*

Overuse of land in farm purposes contributes to declining land fertility in Narail, experts said.

The said croplands, which remain wet throughout the year due to non-stop irrigation, can hardly offset adverse effects of zinc and sulphur because of successive crop plantation. Besides, farming of the same crop twice or thrice a year affects land fertility badly. The experts suggested crop rotation, use of organic manure as much as possible, recycling of cropping pattern and cultivation at regular intervals to keep up land fertility. Scientists at Soil Research Development Institute conducted a study on land fertility in 1987-88 and found adverse effects of non-stop irrigation in croplands.

## Rice allocated for TR, FW programme

UNB, *Bogra*

The government has allocated 3,973 metric tons of rice and wheat for implementing 1,227 projects under Test Relief and Food for Work programmes in Bogra in the current fiscal year.

Of the total, 1,202 tons has been allocated for 986 projects under Test Relief programme, District Relief and Rehabilitation Office sources said. Under the TR programme, 167 projects will be implemented in Sadar, 131 in Shibganj, 70 in Nandigram, 59 in Adamdighi, 103 in Dhunot, 91 in Sherpur, 76 in Kahalu, 66 in Shaniakandi, 70 in Sonatola, 66 in Dupchachia and 87 in Gabtoli upazila. In the meantime, 2,772 tons of wheat and rice has been allocated for 241 projects under Food for Work programme.

## Arsenic menace

## Faridganj people using pond, well water

UNB, *Chandpur*

Faridganj is among the worst affected area of a massive chemical poisoning of drinking water in the country. People there are reverting to good old days of using pond and well waters to avert being affected with arsenic.

Service-providers, however, are trying to give the villagers hygienic methods of usage of water from these sources alternative to tube-wells.

Despite frantic efforts by the government and non-government organisations, hazards of arsenic contamination of water pumped by shallow tub-wells hardly showed any respite in some districts, as in Chandpur.

Almost 95 per cent shallow tube-wells of Chandpur comprising in six upazilas is reportedly arsenic-contaminated, pushing the people in the area in danger.

The worst affected upazila is Faridganj with 98.20 per cent tube-wells there spewing arsenic with water leaving 437,005 people in its 16 unions in danger of being poisoned with the toxic chemical.

To face this terrible situation, Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project (BAMWSA) is working with the cooperation of the

Department of Public Health Engineering.

Surveying a total of 28,249 tube-wells of Faridganj upazila, BAMWSP found the waters of 25,617 tube-wells contaminated -- the percentage being 98.20, the highest in the country -- which panicked the people.

Mohammad Khorshed, 38, an inhabitant of Balithuba union, told that they were compelled to use contaminated water finding no alternative source of pure water.

Some of the villagers drink boiled water collecting from pond as an alternative. Sensing terrible situation, six MPs from Chandpur took an initiative to make alternative sources of water.

Apart from the initiatives, Alamgir Haider Khan, the MP from Faridganj-6 constituency, set up two dug-wells (patkua) in two villages as an alternative source of pure water on January 12 (Thursday).

BNP secretary general and LGRD minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan inaugurated the two wells in the area on Thursday while other MPs were also present.

They are State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon, Nurul Huda, SA Sultan Titu and GM Fazul Haq.

## Nine unnatural deaths in a week in four dists

UNB, *Dhaka*

Nine unnatural deaths were reported in four districts of the country in a week till January 6.

Four of the deaths were reported in Madaripur, two each in Kurigram and Sirajganj and one in Comilla.

Santu Ghosh, 42, of Khanakandi was killed in a traffic mishap on Shibchar-Panchchar road in Madaripur when a tempo hit him from behind on January 5.

Motor cyclists --Atahar Khan, 25, and Moazzem Hossain Dulal, 40, -- were killed in separate traffic mishaps on Madaripur-Shibchar road at Chilarchar and Bhanga-Mawa road at Panchchar on the last day of 2001.

On January 6, police recovered the floating body of an unidentified woman from the river Arialkhan near Madaripur town. The body was sent

to sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Kurigram, Bhale Sheikh, 45, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding microbus at Bhurungamari bus stand on January 2.

On the same day, Meher Ali, 65, son of Pear Box of Polashbari Majhipara was killed in an accident of Kurigram-Rangpur road at Dasherhat in Sadar upazila.

Ali Mohammad, 70, and his grandson Nayan, 7, of Ramna Masterpara of Chilmari were killed in another accident in Sirajganj on January 6.

An octogenarian was allegedly killed by his son at Uloy Char of Sadar upazila of Comilla on January 5. The victim was identified as Araber Rahman.

## Crimes thrive in two dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Crimes are on alarming rise in Chapainawabganj and Pabna in recent days.

UNB from Chapainawabganj says: Various crimes, including killings, robberies, burglaries and snatching, are on the rise in five upazilas of Chapainawabganj deteriorating law and order situation.

At least six people were killed in the five upazilas in last two months. In addition, a number of snatching, burglaries and robberies were committed during this period.

Police recovered the body of a six-year-old boy from Bohral in Nachol upazila on November 16 while the body of a teenage boy from Mohadanga in Sadar upazila on November 18. They also recovered the body of an unidentified youth from Rajarampur area in Sadar upazila on December 12. All the three people were killed by terrorists.

Two housewives -- Mollika Khatun, 20, and Phurkuni Begum, 37 -- were killed in Gomastapur upazila on November 9 and

December 29 respectively. Besides, Kuran Ali, 21, was killed in an explosion at Suryanarayanpur in Sadar upazila on December 21 while he was making bombs.

On December 11, local people foiled an attempt of committing an armed robbers by a gang of bandits at the sub-registrar office and Sonali Bank in Shibganj upazila. But the thieves had stolen Tk 14,000 from the office of Chapainawabganj Bar Association on December 12.

A gang of terrorists numbering 10-12 kidnapped a youth named Abdul Khaleque from Nachol upazila on December 23 and tortured him after they took him to Rohanpur in Gomastapur upazila. As his elder brother, a local journalist, along with police forces, went to the spot to rescue him, the terrorists also beat up the journalist.

The town-dwellers urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to restore law and order in Chapainawabganj.

Another report from Pabna says: Crimes are on alarming rise in Pabna during last few months deteriorating law and order situation.

Police said 59 people were killed in Pabna during the last 11 months since January.

Of the total, four were political murders, 38 were killed over establishing supremacy in their respective areas and 17 were murdered in village clashes.

Besides, 24 abductions, six acid throwing incidents, six-child repression incidents, 42 thefts, 19 rapes and 20 robberies were committed during the period, police said.

## Plying of sea-trucks on Ramgati-Bhola route suspended

UNB, *Laxmipur*

Plying of two sea-trucks on Ramgati-Bhola route remained suspended since December 24 causing serious inconvenience to thousands of coastal people.

Locals said hundreds of commuters move from Alexander of Ramgati to Daulat Khan of Bhola every day by sea trucks.

15x4

10x2