

## NEWS SNAPS

## Trader slaughtered by unknown terrorists

**UNB, Khulna**  
A young trader has been slaughtered by unknown terrorists in Devipur village of Rupsha upazila in Khulna.

The body of victim Sirajul Islam, 25, a timber trader, was recovered from a bamboo grove on Monday morning. Police and villagers suspect that Siraj was killed as a sequel of financial dispute. Relatives of the victim said Siraj went out of home Sunday evening to see cinema. As he did not return home till late at night his parents got worried. On search his body was found lying in a bamboo grove in the village. A case was filed with Rupsha police, but none was arrested till Monday evening. The body was brought to the general hospital for autopsy.

## Communication experts meet at Rangpur

**UNB, Rangpur**  
Communications experts from around the world on Monday gathered at the North Bengal Institute (NBI) to share understanding in the field as part of their mission to have an equitable world.

The six day meet has brought some 50 media and communications professionals from Switzerland, UK, Denmark, Canada, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, USA, Macedonia, Kenya, India and Ecuador under the umbrella of the Global Communicators Network (GCN). Thomas Ravn-Dersen of Danchurchaid presided over the inaugural session of the meet, also addressed by Kamaluddin Akbar, executive director of host organisation RDRF. Eminent journalist and senior assistant editor of The Daily Star Afsan Chowdhury presented the first keynote on "Media in Bangladesh". GCN is a voluntary association of professionals working with mass media "for a more just and sustainable world order" and sharing experiences and interest with a wider forum.

## Steps to make 10th NID a success

**UNB, Gopalganj**  
The health department in cooperation with local administration has taken all-out measures to make the first round of the 10th National Immunisation Day in Gopalganj on Sunday (Jan 27) a success.

The second round of the Immunisation Day will be held on March 10. Civil Surgeon Mahbul Alam told journalists at a press briefing on Jan 20 that a total of 1,82,539 children of the 0-5 age group would be administered polio vaccines in 1778 centres. Besides, some 1,60,765 children of the 1-5 age group would be given high-power vitamin A capsules, he said. World Health Organisation Representative Dr Morshed said there was a provision of giving Tk 500 to poor parents having polio affected children as conveyance to bring their ailing kids to hospitals for treatment.

## Kushtia now under internet service network

**UNB, Kushtia**  
Kushtia district has been brought under Internet service network. State Minister for Post and Telecommunications Ahsanul Haq Mollah inaugurated the service at local Telephone Bhaban on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the State Minister said the district entered into the global village with the launching of the Internet service and the pace of development would be accelerated.

## Digital telephones up in C'nawabganj

**UNB, Chapainawabganj**  
The total number of digital telephones rose to 3,500 in Chapainawabganj with the inauguration of additional 2000 lines under the district digital telephone exchange. Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister M Aminul Haq inaugurated the lines on Jan 18. Local MPs and high officials of BTB were present at the inaugural function.

## 1,488 commit suicide in Magura in four years

## Improvement of socio-economic condition sought

**HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura**

A total of 1,488 people committed suicide in four years from January 1998 to December 31, 2001, official sources said.

Police sources said 345 people mostly women committed suicide by hanging and taking poison in 2001, while in the previous year 409 committed suicide, in 1999 and in 1998 the number of suicide deaths was 342.

Upazilawise break-up of suicides in 2001 is as follows: 172 in Magura Sadar, 44 in Sreepur, 85 in Mohammadpur and 44 in Shalikhapuzila.

A total of 199 committed suicide in Magura Sadar, 63 in Sreepur, 93 in Mohammadpur and 59 in Shalikhapuzila in 2000 while 199

committed suicide in Magura Sadar, 65 in Sreepur, 80 in Mohammadpur 48 in Shalikhapuzila in 1999.

In 1998, 171 committed suicide in Magura Sadar, 76 in Sreepur, 25 in Mohammadpur and 70 in Shalikhapuzila.

Hospital sources said, in last four years at least 3 thousand people attempted to commit suicide by hanging or taking poison.

Human Rights organisations in Magura reported that Magura is a suicide-prone area. The report also said that economic and social problems, complex reality of life prompted people to commit suicide. Human Rights organisations sought for improvement of socio-economic condition of people.

According to a local journalist

family feud, dowry, rural arbitration, poverty and failure in love are the main causes of increasing suicides. The situation can be improved only through socio-economic development.

## Tank-lorry owners' strike from Feb 1

**UNB, Kushtia**

Tank Lorry Owners' Association in the country's southwestern region will go for a non-stop strike from Feb 1 demanding that their freight charges be raised in line with the fuel price-hike.

Kushtia unit of the association has expressed solidarity with the strike programme.

## Move to create skilled manpower for hotels, restaurants

**RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar**

A Press cum Community Dialogue on Tourism and Hospital Management was held at the Saifur Rahman auditorium in Moulvibazar recently.

Organised jointly by the College of Tourism and Hospital Management of the International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka and the Nahin Association for Integrated Development (NAID), UK, the dialogue was attended by Ebadur Rahman Chwochury, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief as the chief guest. It was presided over by Harunur Raahid, member of the NAID, UK the dialogue was also attended by Vice Chancellor of IUBAT Prof Dr Alim Ullah Mian, Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar Md Mukhlesur Rahman, Advisor of NAID, UK Julian Philips, Nazrul Islam Bazan, Professor of IUBAT Mitul Mahmud Khan and founder of the NAID, UK Anwar Ali.

Prof Dr Alim Ullah Mian, Vice-Chancellor of IUBAT said that the International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) introduced a new course which is first of its kind in Bangladesh on Tourism and Hospitality Management. It is a four years long degree course. The new course will cater to the need of the hour of the students, he mentioned.

Prof Alim Ulla also stated that a large number of

people of Moulvibazar and Sylhet have been living in Great Britain and most of them are operating hotels and restaurants at their own in Great Britain. But these Bangladeshi people have been suffering much due to lack of skilled managers. The degree holders in Tourism and Hospitality Management will get a good opportunity of employment in this sector in Great Britain. Not only this, the British government is now issuing work permits to the owners of Bangladeshi hotels and restaurants to employ skilled managers from Sylhet to solve the problem of skilled managers in hotels and restaurants in Great Britain. The VC of IUBAT also opined that it is an excellent opportunity for the students of Moulvibazar and Sylhet to get admission in the degree course on Tourism and Hospitality Management of IUBAT.

He also informed that to complete this course Tk 3 lakh 70 thousands will be needed at IUBAT for each and every student as admission and tuition fees including all other expenditure for four years. But NAID, United Kingdom offers a grand opportunity for the poor students of the region. Poor students of Moulvibazar and Sylhet region will be able to study at much reduced fees.

Chief guest of the dialogue State Minister Ebadur Rahman Chwochury thanked the authorities of IUBAT, Dhaka and NAID, UK for introducing this course.

## A village fair in Magura

PHOTO FEATURE: HOSSAIN SERAJ



Winter brings joy for rural people in Magura. Because this is the season of paddy harvesting. So, farmers remain more or less solvent. Village fairs are arranged in this season where villagers enjoy a lot. (1) Some children are seen enjoying a joy ride at a village fair named 'Boroliar Mela' in Mohammadpur upazila of Magura, (2) some others thronged a stall, (3) a vendor attracts children with his balloons and (4) a mock fight in progress at the fair.

## Natore Sugar Mills employee suspended

**ANWAR ALI, Natore**

The Natore Sugar Mills authorities have suspended an employee and served show cause notice on two of its officials for alleged irregularity in payment of money.

The officials had been 'involved' in an incident of overpayment of Tk 1.93 lakh.

Moslem Uddin, an Electrician of Natore Sugar Mills Limited was suspended as he allegedly drew Tk 1.93 lakh from the mills showing 'false' vouchers of electrical accessories.

Shahabuddin, Manager (electricity) and Shafiqul Islam, the Bill

preparing officer of the mills were asked to show cause how the incident happened.

When contacted, Mia Md Golam Kibria, Managing Director of the mills told this correspondent that a two-member committee had been formed to investigate into the matter. The committee was asked to submit report within seven days.

A senior official, however, unwilling to be named, informed that a number of officials of the mill have been engaged in such type of illegal activity.

"If properly investigated, some major crimes will be revealed," he claimed.

## Extraction of date juice going on in full swing in Jhenidah

**UNB, Jhenidah**

Extraction of date juice is going on in full swing in Jhenidah opening up an extra avenue for the poor to earn additional money during the winter.

Centering the extraction of date juice, a festive mood prevails in rural areas as one group (gachis) became busy with collecting juice, another for producing molasses (Gur) and women for preparing various food items.

Delicious pitha (cake), payes (a kind of sweet) are the attractions of the season as these are prepared with date juice molasses and fine new rice which is also harvested during the season.

Old and children all are fond of cakes made of date juice.

This year, each pitcher of date juice is being sold at Tk 20, per kg Pathali molasses at Tk 30, per kg date molasses between Tk 20 and 24. Besides, hot cakes are also being sold at different hotels and

restaurants and street side shops.

A date juice extractor Abul Hossain of Lakhmikole of Sadar upazila in Jhenidah said he earns Tk 100 to 130 per day by selling date juice.

He said the winter season keeps a lot of people involved in the business. But due to lack of proper maintenance and planning, the date juice and its produced materials are not used properly.

When contacted Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said they do not have any estimation of date trees and the total quantity of juice production.

An agriculturist opined that a proper planning of creating date gardens and its maintenance can be a source of more income.

It would also help people of the area earn more by selling molasses at home and abroad throughout the year after preserving those fulfilling the local demand.