

NEWS SNAPS

Three killed in separate incidents

UNB, Bogra
Three people were killed in separate incidents in Bogra town on Friday. A man was killed in a road accident in Shakpala area of the town. Police said Amzad Ali, 50, of Sadar area died on the spot when a bus hit his bicycle from behind. The body of a trader was recovered from a residential hotel of Jhautala area of the town. The deceased was identified as Sujon Miah, 20, of Sherpur upazila. In another incident, a woman allegedly committed suicide by taking poison in the town. The deceased was identified as Jarina Khatun 30. The reason behind her suicide could not be known. Separate cases were filed.

One injured by unidentified assailants

UNB, Narayanganj
A transport workers' leader was injured when unidentified assailants opened gunshot of him in the rail gate-1 area in Narayanganj town Thursday night. Police said Montu Chouhan, 40, was admitted to Sadar Hospital with bullet wounds in his leg and hand. A case was filed.

Acid attack on peasant leader

UNB, Sirajganj
A leader of Bhumihin Khelmojur Samity in Raiganj upazila of Sirajganj suffered severe acid burn injuries when unidentified assailants hurled the corrosive substance on him Wednesday night. The victim was identified as Abdul Mannan alias Manu, president of Teghori village unit of the organisation. Police quoting family sources said a group of about 10 assailants hurled acid on Manu when he was returning home from a relative's house of the village at about 9 pm. Hearing his screaming, local people rushed to the spot and sent him to Sadar Hospital with critical condition. A case was filed with local police station.

One arrested with counterfeit notes

UNB, Kurigram
A man was arrested along with 14 counterfeit notes of Tk 500 from Kurigram town Thursday. The arrested was identified as Hasu, 35, of Nageshwari upazila of Kurigram. Police said Hasu bought a refrigerator from the Singer agency in the town and gave 22 notes of Tk 500 as payment of first installment. The manager of the shop detected 14 of the notes as fake. A case was filed.

36 posts of headmaster vacant

UNB, Sirajganj
Some 36 posts of headmaster and 113 assistant headmaster in different government primary schools in this northern district remained vacant hampering primary education in Kurigram. Upazila-wise vacant posts are: Sadar four headmasters, three assistant headmasters; Ulipur nine headmaster, 34 assistant headmasters; Nageswari nine headmaster, 25 assistant headmasters; Chilmarí two headmasters, 13 assistant headmasters and Bhurungamari four headmasters, 15 assistant headmasters. Vacant posts in the other upazilas are Fulbari one headmasters, nine headmasters; Razarhat four headmasters, two assistant headmasters; Roumari three headmasters, 11 assistant headmasters and Rabilpur one assistant headmaster. Local people urged the authorities concerned to fill-up the posts immediately for uninterrupted education of the students.

Release of Faridpur newsman demanded

UNB, Faridpur
Bangladesh Journalists' Association (BJA), Faridpur District Unit demanded immediate release of journalist Aminul Islam Chowdhury, former General Secretary of BJA and the northern region correspondent of Ittefaq. Munshi Harun-or-Rashid, president of the unit and secretary Prabir Sikder in a statement termed the arrest of Aimul Islam, also a freedom fighter, as false and fabricated. The arrest of Islam on a flimsy ground does not portray the sincerity of the government about non-harassment of journalists as well as the press, they said.

Valuables worth over Tk one lakh looted

UNB, Kushtia
Armed robbers looted valuables worth over Tk 1 lakh from a house of Bahirmadi village of Doulatpur upazila in Kushtia on Thursday night injuring two people. Locals said a gang of armed bandits swooped on the house of Hobibar Rahman Sardar of the village at dead of night and looted valuables, including cash Tk 60,000, gold ornaments and a colour television. The armed robbers also opened fire on the inmates of the house injuring Hobibar, 57, and Chad, 40. The injured were rushed to hospital. A case was filed.

Severe cold wave in 7 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Severe cold has been prevailing in Chuadanga and greater Barisal for the last few days. Agencies report: In Chuadanga temperature sometime comes down to 12 degree Celsius. Almost every day, in the morning and in the evening, the situation is deteriorating. The movement of the common people and playing of rickshaws and vans are decreasing to a great extent. According to Chuadanga Weather office sources, the situation might continue for the next few days more. There had been some rainfall in Chuadanga before four days and the sky was clouded. Severe cold wave has been prevailing since then. The poor people who have no sufficient warm cloths are the worst sufferers. The greater Barisal region is now gripped by a severe cold wave which claimed two lives in the past several days, officials said in Barisal. Mercury has now dropped below 14 degrees Celsius in Barisal where it is below 12 degrees in neighbouring

Legend of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA)
Two-day Urs concludes today in Sylhet

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The 682nd Urs of great saint Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) began at the shrine in Sylhet town from the early hours of Sunday (February 3). Every year, thousands of devotees, both Muslims and Hindus from across the country join the two-day congregation. The occasion starts with placing of Gilaf (cover) on the grave of the great saint in presence of a large gathering. Other features of the programme includes Qurankhawani, milad mahfil and Jikir Ajker. It will concludes through Akheri Munajat and distribution of alms at 3 am on the second day. A country fair is also organised around the shrine every year. It begins two days ahead of the Urs and ends after two days of the same, attracting a good number of people, from far flung areas. The legend of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) is as follows. It was the year 1303. At that time, Shamsuddin Firoze Shah was the Sultan of Bengal. There were some small states on the foot of Khashia-Jaintia hills ruled by some Hindu kings. Some Muslim people also used to live in those states under the rule of cruel Hindu kings. Borhanuddin, a Muslim citizen slaughtered a bullock as a sacrificial animal on the occasion of his son's Akika. A kite (bird) picked up a piece of meat from the house which the bird fell inside the temple of king Gouragovinda. The king became very angry at it and made a thorough

search. His men detected the matter and caught Borhanuddin. They took him before the king. Ordered by the cruel king, Borhanuddin slaughtered his son. Borhanuddin's right arm was also severed as punishment. Borhan then went to the Sultan and sought justice. The Sultan sent a contingent led by Sikander Gazi to face Gouragovinda. But, he was defeated in a bloody war on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. Sikander had to accept defeat thrice to Gouragovinda. It seriously hurt the Sultan of Bengal. This time, he sent a new warrior leader Syed Nasiruddin who met with Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) on way. Then Shahjalal was at Tribeni of Satgaon on his way from Yemen. Syed Nasiruddin sought help from Hajrat Shahjalal. The Muslim contingent was very afraid of the danger after repeated defeats. Hajrat Shahjalal alongwith 360 companions started their journey with Syed Nasiruddin. Shahjalal and the group reached the bank of the river Surma. There was no boat to cross it. He laid the 'Jainamaj' (a clean sheet of cloth on which Muslims offer prayers) on the river and crossed the river over it. Thus the great saint made his way to the Sylhet region. A coward, Gouragovinda fled away through the back door of his palace. Shahjalal and his men won the war in Sylhet region with slogans like 'Allahu Akbar' and without any blood shed.

Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) was born in the city of Kurnia in Turkey. His forefathers went to Turkey from Yemen and settled there. His father's name is Makhdum Bin Mohammad. Shahjalal lost his parents during childhood. His maternal uncle Syed Ahmed Kabir who used to live near Makkah reared him up. The spirituality of Shahjalal developed there. One day, he gave Shahjalal a handful of soil and asked for going to Hindustan with a mission for preaching Islam. He also told him to choose a place, "soil of which is found similar to that sample." One Chashni peer, a saint and one of the companions of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) was entrusted with the task of comparing the soil. The Chashni peer found the soil of Sylhet similar to the soil they were carrying. Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) then decided to settle in Sylhet permanently. But, he then handed over the power to some of his companions and engaged himself in prayers. Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) breathed his last while was in 'Sejdah' and performing his johr prayers on a day in the year 1340, according to the historians. A number of personal articles used by the great saint himself are still preserved in Dargah area, Sylhet.

Essentials dear in Faridpur

ABDUL MATIN FAKIR, Faridpur

Prices of essentials have shot up in the markets in eight upazilas of Faridpur during the last few days multiplying the misery of the common people. A market survey at Haji Shariatullah market and Titumir market in Faridpur showed that 'Jhingashail' and 'Madhushail' varieties of rice are being sold at Tk 14 per kg as against the previous

rate of Tk 12. The prices of rice -- fine or coarse -- have increased by Tk 2 per kg on average than the previous rates. A grocery shop-keeper in Titumir market unwilling to mention his name said per litre soyabean oil is being sold at Tk 40 whereas the previous price was Tk 36 per litre. Garlic is selling in Faridpur at Tk 70 a kg due to its short supply, traders said adding that green chili is being sold between Tk 20 and Tk

30 per kg. Besides, prices of different kinds of fishes like shoul, gozar, puti, tangra and taki have risen due to their short supply. Beef is being sold in the market at Tk 80 a kg in place of its previous price Tk 70. The price of chicken has also shot up by Tk 10 per kg than its previous price.



Minister for Textiles Abdul Matin Chowdhury exchanges views with weavers at Bholahat in Chapainawabganj. He visited Chapainawabganj recently.

A fair to raise awareness on water, sanitation programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a unique way to show how people could be educated on issues that need urgent attention. A typical village mela or festivity that attracts hundreds or perhaps thousands together for amusement and yet meeting the challenge reaching messages on use of safe water and hygiene practice. A total of 17 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in water and sanitation programmes took part in the village mela aiming to raise awareness on water and sanitation programmes or more popularly known as WATSAN in village Belita of Manikganj, some 50 km from the capital. "We have organised this fair to raise mass awareness about use of safe drinking water and hygiene practice. These are our prime targets but most important of all is to inspire people about the significance of health hazards from unhygienic use of latrines," said Sharif Uddin Ahmad, convenor of the mela organising committee. Like every year since last five years the mela started simultaneously in 11 other places covering all divisions in the second week of November. Grameen Sheba Sangstha (GSS), a local NGO took the lead in masterminding the mela in Manikganj with the support of NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation. According to official figures, less than 37 per cent of the rural population use sanitary latrines against 65 per cent in the urban areas. The coverage of safe drinking water is much better at almost 96 per cent. More than 100,000 children under five years of age die each year from water borne diseases like diarrhoea and the picture has not drastically

improved although many community based organisations and NGOs are working to address the problem, said an environmentalist. "The mission here is to improve coverage on use of sanitary latrines. If you notice, there are thousands of villages where people still don't use proper latrines contributing largely to water-borne diseases. So, our social campaign is to improve use of proper latrines and not make-shift latrines," said Joseph Halder, Senior Information Officer of NGO Forum. Zahiruddin Bayati, a folk singer, kept the three-day mela alive singing songs that contained valuable mes-

sages on health hazards on use of contaminated water and open latrines. "We are so happy that the NGOs are offering latrines at low cost prices enabling hundreds of people to buy them on installments," said Kauser Ahmed, a local leader. Reza Rahman, a fellow farmer said, "I have a make-shift latrine at home but after window shopping I think I am going to buy a proper latrine for my home."