

NEWS SNAPS

Pneumonia claims five children in Narail

UNB, Narail
Pneumonia that has broken out in alarming proportion in Narail claimed lives of five children and affected 778 others till February 7.

Of the dead, three died in Sadar upazila while two in Kalia upazila. Health department sources said all the dead and affected children are under five. They said 66 children were affected in Sadar, 100 in Kalia and 522 in Lohagara upazilas. Officials in different health complexes said that due to lack of necessary medicine at the hospitals they are facing problems in providing treatment to the pneumonia patients.

Interest-free loans distributed

UNB, Khagrachhari
Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) and Social Services Department under micro-credit programme have so far disbursed about Tk 8 lakh among the poor people in Panchhari and Ramgarh upazilas of Khagrachhari.
BRDB disbursed the loans among 50 women in the two upazilas aiming at improving their socioeconomic condition while social services department distributed interest-free loans among 100 people to make them self-reliant.

Seminar on problems in medical service

UNB, Jhalakati
A daylong networking seminar on 'Problems in medical service in Nalcity and its headway' was held at the Upazila Parisad auditorium on Friday.
Local Rangdhanu Library and Club organised the seminar with the overall assistance from Mass-Line Media Centre, an NGO. Some 40 representatives from various professions including teachers, politicians, doctors and administrative officials took part in the seminar.

Valuables worth Tk 6 lakh looted

UNB, Sirajganj
Valuables worth Tk 6 lakh were looted in two robberies at Rayganj upazila in Sirajganj on Friday night.
Police said a gang of muggers numbering 15/20 entered into the Dhagara branch of Sonali Bank by breaking open the grill in absence of night guard and took away Tk 3.83 lakh including 15 prize bonds. On the same night another gang entered into the local BRAC office by breaking the grill and looted valuables worth Tk 2.13 lakh including Tk 14,000 in cash and two motorcycles. Separate cases were filed with the police.

Academic buildings of high school built

UNB, Rajshahi
Facilities Department has built two academic buildings of PN Government Girls' High School in Rajshahi in the current fiscal year costing Tk 31 lakh.
The buildings were constructed under Double Shift Education and Secondary School development project. City Mayor Mizanur Rahman inaugurated the buildings on Saturday. Later, he distributed prizes among the winners of annual sports competition of the school.

Wheat cultivation exceeds target

UNB, Magura
Cultivation of wheat has exceeded the target in 10 districts of Khulna division during the current Rabi season.
Department of Agriculture Extension officials said a total of 89,492 hectares of land have been cultivated in Magura, Narail, Jessore, Jhenidah, Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Kusthia, Chuadanga and Meherpur against the target of 47,400 hectares during the period. It is expected that some 2,06,726 metric tons of wheat would be produced exceeding the target of 2,01,894 mts.

Girl raped in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore
An underaged girl was raped at Mokrapur in Sadar upazila of Natore recently. Police arrested the rapist from his house. The rapist, Saiful Islam, son of Joyen Uddin of Fatengapara of the upazila was sent to jail custody. Saiful allegedly dragged the 14-year-old girl in the kitchen of her house and raped her as she was alone in the house. Hearing her scream, the area-dwellers rushed to the scene, but Saiful managed to flee. Later at night, police arrested him from his house. A case was filed with Sadar thana in this regard.

Crimes up in Panchagarh

Law enforcing agencies inactive

UNB, Panchagarh

Various crimes, including cattle lifting and robbery, are on alarming rise in Panchagarh creating panic among the people.

Locals alleged that law and order situation has deteriorated in different parts of Panchagarh due to inaction of law enforcing agencies and lobbying of some dishonest political leaders, chairmen and members.

Local people, mainly the farmers of the frontier areas, are passing their sleepless nights to protect their cattle from the hands of cow lifters.

Some 70 cows and buffaloes were stolen from the villages of Chheprajhar, Sukhati, Dhaidhaipara, Radhanagar and Toria in Atowari upazila in December and January last.

Besides, in January, some 27 cattle were stolen from the villages of Kurangas, Bamanpara, Bairagigas, Ganagas, Kaurgas and Murkhagas in Tetulia upazila.

Farmers alleged that police refuse to record cow lifting cases due to unknown reason. In addition, many of them do not usually file cases to avoid police harassment, as they allegedly demand money against filing of the case.

Farmers also alleged that cattle-lifters and robbers with the connivance of police and members of smuggling syndicate are committing the crimes with impunity.

The authorities concerned are not taking necessary steps against the syndicate members or thieves and robbers due to unwritten agreements with them, locals alleged.

Leprosy still considered a curse of God

UNB, Sherpur

Faimoni Marak, a 19-year aborigine girl, was about to be buried alive, ostracised by society. For, she has been long suffering from leprosy, a disease that her society considered a curse of God and incurable.

Sheer ignorance and superstition prevail among the aborigines where the poor girl was born and brought up along the Garo Hills of the northern border village of Kharamura, 40 kilometres from Sherpur town.

As decided by the headmen of the village in Sribordi upazila, Faimoni was isolated from the family and left to live alone on a bamboo 'machang' (raised platform) in the jungle far away from home. There she lived for about a year, groaning in pains and crying in mortal fear. Her widowed mother used to reach her food in the jungle.

The poor girl was rescued by a kind hearted man three months ago when she was about to be buried alive in accordance with the decision of village elders. The man brought the girl to Sherpur and got her admitted to Sadar hospital.

Faimoni narrated her tragic story. She said that about two years ago, she received an injury on left leg. Soon it caused inflation and severe pain in the small finger of the leg. A village quack bandaged the wound with medicine laced with lime that led to gangrene with smell so odious that none would come near her.

With assistance of the World Vision, and NGO, she was taken to Mariamnagar leprosy centre and later to Jalachhatra leprosy clinic at Madhupur in Tangil. But treatment there showed no improvement. And she was taken back home and left to live in isolation in the jungle in pain, agony and mortal fear.

Journalists visited her village Kharamura in Sribordi upazila on February 4 where Faimoni's mother, Jarman Shangma, 50, was found planting 'boro' seedlings on a farmer's field. She said her husband died six years ago and the whereabouts of her only son is unknown. The eldest daughter lives away with husband. The widow earns living by selling labour and collecting woods from jungle.

Wiliam Sangma, 60, maternal uncle of Faimoni and a leader of the aborigines, said leprosy is a contagious disease. That is why Faimoni was kept isolated in accordance with their belief. That she was to be buried alive, for being inflicted with incurable disease, was decided upon together by village elders, including him, Ajoy, Naresh and Rajendra of the village housing 50 aborigine families.

About three months ago, Mantu Das, toll collector of Daibhanga Bazaar, happened to visit a relation in Kharamura village and came to know about the tragic story of Faimoni. On return, he informed the chairman of Rani Shimul union parishad. On advice of the UP chairman, Mantu rescued Faimoni from the jungle on December 14 last year and brought her to Viadanga Family Welfare Centre. As treatment there showed no sign of improvement, Mantu made a written appeal to local MP, Mahmuddul Haq Rubel, to arrange better treatment of Faimoni.

The plight of the poor girl came under discussion at a meeting on law and order of Sherpur district on January 27 and arrangement was made for her treatment at the sadar hospital where she was brought on January 29. On examination, physicians at Sherpur Leprosy Clinic on January 30 said she was

not suffering from leprosy, but from some other disease.

Meanwhile, Prof Dr Mrinal Kanti Roy of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) after examining the girl said she lost her legs below the ankle due to gangrene. He prescribed artificial leg and physiotherapy for her.

The doctors at the sadar hospital, however, said Faimoni suffers from 'Buerger's disease' or some unknown disease originated from wound in her legs.

Magura BCL leader hacked by miscreants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Magura was attacked and injured critically on Friday night by the miscreants. They severed tendons of his left hand by hacking him indiscriminately.

Witnesses said, BCL activist Sheikh Jhantu, 22, son of Shamsu Sheikh of Mollapara in Magura town came under attack by a group of miscreants in Bhaina area while he was returning home at around 9:30 pm.

Local people took Jhantu to Sadar hospital in a critical condition.

The cause behind the attack could not be known immediately.

Two get jail term for possessing illegal arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Two persons were convicted and jailed for 10 years each, for possessing illegal arms, at the court of Sub Judge-1 (Natore Sadar).

The convicted, Rafiqul Islam Biddiut and Hanif Ali, were also fined Tk 1,000 or, in default, to suffer six months more in jail.

The prosecution story say, on November 12, 2000, Natore police arrested the two along with a shutter gun and locally made pipe gun from the town's Kapuriapottli area. Police filed a case with Natore Sadar thana in this connection.

After examining the evidences and witnesses, the judge, Sharif Uddin Azad delivered the judgement recently.

Nalchity AL leader, son arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police arrested an Awami League (AL) leader and his son, a degree examinee and BCL leader in connection with a case at Nalchity upazila headquarter of Jhalakati on Friday afternoon.

According to police, Abdul Barek Howlader, 40, member of Siddhakati Union Parishad and AL president and his son Md Al-Mamun, 22, a degree examinee and BCL leader were arrested in connection with a case filed by BNP leaders on Friday.

Barek Howlader alleged that the case has been filed against him by his rival BNP leaders for harassment.

One convicted under Intoxicant Act

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Morad Khan, accused under an intoxicant act case, was sentenced to life term imprisonment by the Additional District Judge recently.

District and Sessions Judge Md Obaidus Sobhan also fined the accused Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six months more rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The convict Morad Khan hails from village Shanna, upazila Dumira of Khulna.

The case history in brief is that a case was filed with Gopalganj Police Station (PS) in this connection on September 9, 1994. Police after investigation and submitted charge sheet against him (Morad Khan).

Advocate Abdul Hai Molla, Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) conducted the case on behalf of the government and Fazlul Haque Khan Khokan conducted the case in favour of the accused.

Paddy loaded trawler looted: Two missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Four people remain still untraced and two others found at a remote shoal land of Sugandhya river when a gang of armed terrorists looted and took away a paddy loaded trawler from the Sugandhya-Kalijira river estuary in Nalchity upazila of Jhalakati recently.

According to police, Ismail Mollah, a businessman of Banaripara was returning Barisal from Charfasion of Bhola with a trawler after purchasing and loading 200 maunds of paddy.

They came under attack by the armed terrorists numbering 10 to 12 when they reached at the estuary at night. Terrorists took over its control after beating up two trawler crews Rahim, 31, and Lokman, 35, and left them on a remote shoal area in the river Sugandhya.

Later they fled with the loaded trawler with four other on board who still remained untraced.

Nalchity police visited the spot after being in formed.

Three-day science fair concludes

UNB, Bagerhat

A three-day science fair to mark the 25th National Science and Technology Week concluded at the local Swadhinata Udyan in Bagerhat on Thursday.

Various science clubs, schools and colleges set up 25 stalls displaying their different innovating materials like arsenic free filter, artificial radio, low cost air coolers and computer software to the visitors. Besides, seminar, essay writing competition, poem reciting, magic show and cultural functions were held during the fair which was inaugurated by Government PC College Principal Prof M Obaidur Rahman Sikdar. Meanwhile in Manikganj, a three-day 'Agriculture Fair' concluded at Government Boys' High School ground.

Mominunnisa College faces shortage of teachers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The classes of Honours and Masters courses are being seriously hampered due to shortage of teachers at Mominunnisa Government Mohila College, the only women's college in Mymensingh.

Honours and Masters courses have been introduced in this college a few years ago. But since then the number of teachers did not increase to conduct the courses smoothly.

Furthermore, some teachers have been transferred following their promotions and other reasons. The vacant posts are yet to be filled up, college sources said.

In this college, Honours in English, Bengali, Economics, Mathematics, Political Science, Social Welfare and Masters in Bengali, Economics and Mathematics are now being studied.

But the teaching staff is very insufficient for those courses.

According to college sources, only two lecturers out of four posts are conducting the classes of English Department, a very important department, three posts out of four are lying vacant in Economic Department, eight posts out of 12 are vacant in Bengali Department, One post out of four is vacant in Social Welfare Department, one post out of two is vacant in Geography Department while one post is vacant in Philosophy Department.

According to sources a department which conducts Honours and Masters courses needs a staff pattern of 12 teachers including one professor, three associate professors, three assistant professors, and five lecturers.

The Department which conducts only Honours course requires a seven member teaching staff which includes one professor, one associate professor, two assistant professors and three lecturers.

But only one teacher is conducting the Economics Department

which has Honours and Masters courses. Four teachers including one associate and one assistant professor are in Bengali Department and four in Mathematics Department. But both the department conduct Honours and Masters courses.

The condition of English Department is very miserable. Two lecturers are conducting the very important department. Before the introduction of Honours course, the number of staff pattern was four. New teachers have been appointed here. But the strength has been reduced to two from four.

When contacted, a second year student of English Department (preferred not to be named) told The Daily Star that their classes are being hampered frequents due to shortage of teachers.

The posts of demonstrator in Geography and Chemistry Departments are lying vacant for long. For this reason, the practical classes of these two departments are being hampered seriously.

The post of physical teacher, librarian, assistant librarian and book sorter are also vacant in this college.

So the students of this college can not take part in sports activities.

Some posts of third class employees including head clerk, cashier, typist are lying vacant for long. Some posts of fourth class employees including sweeper and skilled bearers are also vacant. Established in 1959 the college was nationalized in the 1980. The college has scored good result in HSC level. But after introduction of Honours and Masters courses, the college is facing academic problems due to serious shortage of teachers in every department. There are about 3,000 students in this college.

Principal of the college Dil-Ara Aktar Jahan could not be contacted as she was absent in the college on January 26. It is learnt that she takes her office one or two days a week from Dhaka.