

## NEWS SNAPS

## Agri-fair begins in Jhenidah today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A three-day agriculture fair-2002 will begin in Jhenidah today (February 16). According to a source related to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Additional Director (AD) of DAE, Khulna Division MA Sattar is likely to inaugurate the fair. A total of 20 stalls on agriculture and agriculture related products will be displayed in the fair.

## Routine work in UP office disrupted

UNB, Comilla

A member of sadar union parishad (UP) in Debidwar upazila of Comilla locked its office disrupting its routine work for the last one week.

Secretary of the parishad Mustafa Bhuiyan told that UP member Hassan Ahmed locked the office on Feb 5 as UP chairman Alhaj Abdul Kashed went to rejoin the office with a High Court order. The dispute was brought to the notice of the upazila nibabhi officer (UNO) Wednesday but still there is no sign in sight to break the deadlock.

## Villager hands over son to police

UNB, Laxmipur

An old villager in Sadar upazila in Laxmipur has set an example by handing over his son to police Tuesday for raping a girl.

Police said Nurunabi of East Rajapur village handed over his son Raju, 18, as he raped a 7-year-old girl who came to visit his house recently. Family sources Raju took the girl to a nearby bush and raped her. Hearing her screams, villagers rescued the girl and took her to the sadar hospital. Nurunabi forced her son to surrender to police after the victim's father filed a case against him.

## One sentenced to 10-yr RI in arms case

UNB, Rajbari

A special court in Rajbari Thursday sentenced a man to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) in an arms case.

According to prosecution, police arrested Ratan, 28, with an Indian pistol from Daulatdia launch ghat on March 16 last year on his way to Dhaka from Jessore. Later, a case was filed against him with Goalanda ghat police station. After examining the witnesses and records, the tribunal judge handed down the judgement.

## Two caught with fake revenue stamps

UNB, Patuakhali

Two people were caught red-handed while trying to sell fake revenue stamps at Patuakhali post office counter Thursday.

Officials said they informed police when M Shahjahan, 28, came to sell forged venue stamps. Police rushed to the spot and arrested Shahjahan along with 30 fake stamps of Tk 4 denomination. Acting on his statement, police later raided a shop at Puran Bazar in town and arrested Pabitra Kumar, 30, along with six more fake stamps. A case was filed.

## Valuables worth Tk 2 lakh looted

UNB, Laxmipur

In a string of robberies at two villages in Sadar upazila, armed bandits looted valuables worth Tk 2 lakh from seven houses Tuesday night.

Police said the robbers stormed into the houses of Didar, Abdul Halim, Nur Mohammad, Shafullah and Siraj Contractor of Panchpara village and Poresh Doctor and Nana Miah of village Ramkrishnapur one after another. Hearing screams of the house inmates, villagers encircled the armed robbers, but they fled the scene firing shots indiscriminately. Police later arrested four people in connection with the robberies. According to the villagers, 25-30 robberies were committed in the upazila in last one week and they blamed police for their inaction.

## Road piracy on Comilla-Sylhet road

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Road pirates looted cash and valuables worth Tk 2 lakh from the passengers of a bus on Comilla-Sylhet road Wednesday night.

Witnesses said eight robbers in the guise of passengers boarded a Kuti-bound passenger bus from Companyganj bus stand and overpowered the driver when it reached near Mirpur. They got down from the bus at Mirpur and disappeared with the booty, including Tk 1 lakh cash.

## Frauds arrested from Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

Two brothers were arrested Monday for allegedly swindling Tk 1.85 lakh from a villager at Satmeria in Sadar upazila of Panchagarh.

The arrested were identified as Giasuddin and his elder brother Wailur Rahman. Police said Giasuddin of Satmeria village and his wife Zahura Begum took Tk 1.85 lakh in three installments from Mesbahul Haque and his wife Anjuman Nahar selling a pond on 4.49 acres of land a year back. Later, Zahura Begum resold her portion of the land to Giasuddin's nephews and gave registration in favour of them (nephews). When he came to know about it, Mesbahul filed a trickery case against four people and police later arrested the two brothers.

## Pneumonia claims 47 babies in Natore since November

## Hospitals run short of oxygen

ANWAR ALI, Natore

At least 47 children died of pneumonia while 805 others were affected in Natore in three and a half months since November.

About 100 children were hospitalised in six upazillas of the district within a span of 11 days in February. Of them 60 children were treated at Natore Sadar Hospital alone.

Most of the children, affected with 'acute respiratory infection' and 'severe pneumonia', were below 13 months of age.

This was revealed according to statistics received from the concerned hospitals.

Several health workers, while talking to this correspondent told that the number of the affected would be

higher than the official statistics. This is because many reports of death could not reach the concerned offices from remote areas, they informed.

Sometimes parents or guardians of the patients were not aware of the disease or in some cases they could not diagnose the fatal disease at its early stage.

A physician told that a pneumonia patient first of all needs 'artificial oxygen', but the oxygen cylinders were not available adequately in hospitals in comparison to the increasing number of patients.

Natore Sadar Hospital has only three oxygen cylinders at its children ward while the average daily rush of pneumonia patients was more than five children.

When contacted, a senior physician of the civil surgeon's office told The Daily Star that although the disease had taken a serious turn in recent days, but it did not take an epidemic form.

PHOTO: STAR  
Hindu students and employees of Islamic University (IU), Kushtia on Thursday formed a human chain on the campus protesting the withdrawal of fund for Saraswati Puja scheduled to be held on Sunday.

## Law and order worsens in Sirajganj

## SP allegedly harbouring culprits

AKHTERUZZAMAN BABLU, Sirajganj

The law and order situation has deteriorated in Sirajganj in recent days.

Three murder incidents occurred at Ullapara, Tarash and Shalanga thanas within a fortnight. During this time 15 clashes took place in nine upazila areas. But the culprits are still at large, alleged local people and complainants of different cases.

It is alleged that a six-year-old boy named Al-Amin was murdered last week because of non-payment of ransom amounting to Tk 40,000 in Tarash area.

Chhatri Dal worker Rassel, 19, was also killed on Monday at Bajkandapur ghat in Ullapara thana. Another Abdul Momin, 22, was killed

from Shalanga area about two weeks ago.

However, police failed miserably to nab culprits involved in these killings. A police officer who spoke on condition of not to be named informed that the alleged murderers are seen lobbying with the Superintendent of Police (SP) here.

It is alleged that the SP 'threatens' other officials to sack or of harassment if they try to nab the culprits.

The police official also informed that illegal trade of narcotics, particularly phenylidyl is going on under indulgence of the SP. Besides, smuggling of sugar, saree, lungi and other contrabands have increased alarmingly.

The smugglers defy the orders of police personnel using the name of

the SP who was termed as an 'unskilled police officer' during his tenure as Assistant Police Super of Dinajpur.

Local people also alleged that the SP collected Tk 40,000 as bribe from 300 persons each during the process of recruitment of 56 police constables. The same SP allegedly leaked out question papers of the recruitment test. A scuffle ensued between this SP and the Additional SP of Bogra who is a member of the district police recruitment board.

Local people have demanded cancellation of recruitment of police constables and departmental action against the SP after proper investigation.

## Boro farming goes on in full swing in 8 dists

UNB, Rangpur

Cultivation of boro paddy has been going on in full swing in all the eight districts of greater Rangpur zone during the current season.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said a total of 5,19,600 hectares of land have been brought under high yielding boro farming in the zone with a production target of 16,78,308 metric tons.

The farmers of these districts have already cultivated some 2.50 lakh hectares of land. The cultivation will continue till March 15, DAE

source said.

Of the total land, 92,700 hectares will be cultivated in Rangpur, 89,600 hectares in Gaibandha, 66,300 hectares in Kurigram, 39,600 hectares in Lalmonirhat, 60,500 hectares in Nilphamari, 1,19,300 hectares in Dinajpur, 35,300 hectares in Thakurgaon and 16,300 hectares in Panchagarh.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) has provided hybrid boro seeds among the farmers of these districts at fair price.

Besides, arrangements have been made for irrigation facilities on the boro field. A total of about 68,100 shallow pumps are functioning for providing water for cultivation of boro paddy, officials said.

Of the total, 12,500 shallow pumps are in Rangpur, 9,800 in Gaibandha, 7,300 in Kurigram, 5,100 in Lalmonirhat, 8,300 in Nilphamari, 15,400 in Dinajpur, 5,200 in Thakurgaon and 4,500 in Panchagarh.

Different commercial banks including Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank have already disbursed necessary loans among the farmers to make the programme a success.

## Anti-social activities up in Faridpur town

## Slums turn into dens of terrorists

ABDUL MATIN FAKIR, Faridpur

All the slums in and around Faridpur town have turned into dens of terrorists.

There are as many as 25 slums in the area. Drug business and anti-social activities are rampant in the slum area even in broad day light,

not to speak of carrying out this business under the cover of darkness. Hood the business in defiance of the laws of the land. Law enforcers are apparently inactive to curb these best known to them.

Besides drug business sex trade is reportedly being carried on in these slums. The hoodlums induce the juvenile boys and girls to resort to sex-business. Loin's share of the money, thus earned, goes to the pocket of the hoodlums who are controlling the slums.

Wine, heroin, hemp, phenylidyl and liquor are being sold at random

with none to resist them.

This is highest time to curb these activities without losing a single day to save the town dwellers from the evils the slums have been breeding.

The slums are Lalannagar slum at Goalchamot Bandhup Palli slum, Bihari colony slum, Rail Station slum, East Khabashpur slum, Ambikapur slum, Lakepar slum at Tepakholi, slum near TB Hospital, Bhajandanga slum, C&amp;B Ghat red light area and slum on the town protection embankment in the northern side. Though these slums are widely known as the dens of anti-social activities, no steps either from the district or municipality administrations have been made to abolish these slums reportedly the fostering sanctuary of all kinds of social evils posing threat to peaceful life of the town-dwellers.

## Nat'l Tagore Song Confce in Chandpur on March 8

UNB, Chandpur

A three-day national Tagore Song Conference will begin in Chandpur on March 8.

A preparatory committee, headed by local Press Club president Adv Iqbal-Bin-Bashar, has been formed for successful holding of the conference. Twenty sub-committees will assist the main committee. Some 400 singers from different parts of the country will render Tagore songs in the conference to be joined by literateurs, journalists, teachers and students.

PHOTO: STAR  
The civil surgeon of Faridpur leads a colourful procession in the district town recently on the occasion of World Leprosy Day.