

NEWS SNAPS

Acid thrown on one by rivals

**UNB, Bogra**  
Aman suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack by his rivals at Chak Kollani village in Sherpur upazila of Bogra Thursday.

The injured was identified as Rafiqul Islam, 30. Relatives said in a sequel to past enmity over a plot of land co-villager Mozammel and his accomplices hurled acid on Rafiqul while he was sleeping in his room. The injured was rushed to Sherpur hospital and later shifted to Bogra Mohammad Ali hospital following deterioration of his condition. A case was filed.

22 dwelling houses, shops gutted

**UNB, Nilphamari**  
Twenty-two dwelling houses and shops were gutted in separate fire incidents in Nilphamari on Saturday-Sunday.

Eleven thatched houses and valuables worth Tk five lakh were burnt to ashes at Kanial Jata village in Sadar upazila Saturday. The fire originated from the house of Hamidul Haque and soon raged through the adjacent houses. In another incident, 11 shops and goods worth Tk 15 lakh were damaged in a fire at Chaderhat Bazar in the upazila Sunday.

UP chairman suspended in Pabna

**UNB, Pabna**  
Chairman of Hemayetpur Union Parishad (UP) in Sadar upazila of Pabna Allaluddin Malitha has been suspended.

Local Government and Rural Development Ministry suspended him, as he has been an accused in a number of cases, including a murder case, official said.

Four youths with revolver arrested

**UNB, Tongi**  
Four youths were arrested at Tongi along with a revolver on Monday. Police said they challenged Shimul Hossain, 24, Ibrahim, 20, Kabir Hossain, 18, and Shawpan, 18, as they came here from Uttara in a rickshaw, and arrested them along with the revolver. Meanwhile, police in their special drive arrested 68 people, including two fugitives, from Joydevpur thana.

Assistance for establishing various farms

**UNB, Chapainawabganj**  
Fisheries and Livestock Department provided assistance in setting up of 118 farms, including five dairy, 52 goat, 47 ram and 14 poultry farms in Chapainawabganj in the current fiscal.

Officials sources said the department also brought 4,971 cattleheads under its artificial breeding programme during the period apart from vaccinating 5,50,900 poultry birds and 46,040 cattleheads. The department imparted training to 3,305 unemployed youths on poultry and dairy farming. It earned over Tk 1.64 lakh by selling vaccines and collecting fees for artificial breeding during the period.

Five-day agri fair begins

**UNB, Sherpur**  
A five-day agricultural fair began at Shahid Darga Ali Municipality park in Sherpur on Sunday.

Whip Al Haj Javed Ali Chowdhury inaugurated the fair organised by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). A total of 21 models are being displayed and 80 stalls of agricultural technology have been set up in the fair.

Killing of Khulna newsman protested

**UNB, Mymensingh**  
Local journalists arranged a meeting at Mymensingh press club on Tuesday protesting the killing of senior staff reporter of Daily Purbanchal Harunur Rashid alias Khokon in Khulna. Mymensingh Press Club, Mymensingh Journalist Union, Bangladesh Shangbadik Samity, Mymensingh branch and Mymensingh Reporters Unity organised the meeting at 11:00 am. Sultanuddin Khan, President of Mymensingh Reporters' Unity presided over the meeting. The meeting has taken up three-day programmes which include wearing black badge for three days, holding rally and submission of memorandum on Thursday. Harun-ar-Rashid was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Khulna on Saturday.

Five arrested in Rajbari

**UNB, Rajbari**  
Police arrested five people in connection with the attack on the house belonging to Kanti Das alias Kana Das at Durgapur village in Pangsha upazila of Rajbari on Thursday night. The arrested were identified as Tuku, Halim, Kamal, Obaidul and Farid. Police said a group of people stormed into the house of Kanti Das at about 11:30 and looted valuables after beating up the inmates of the house over establishing supremacy in the area. On their confessional statements, later police recovered some valuables, including two television sets and one tape-recorder. A case was filed with the police.

50 injured in separate attacks

**UNB, Jhenidah**  
Some 50 villagers were injured in separate terrorist attacks and clashes in Shaikupa upazila of Jhenidah Sunday.

Police and locals said a gang of terrorists swooped on 4-5 houses at Naopara village of the upazila and ransacked and looted valuables. Some 25 people sustained injuries in the attack. Meanwhile, some 10 people were wounded in a clash between two rival groups at Goalbari village while 15 others in another clash at Beledanga village in the upazila. The injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital and Shaikupa Health Complex.

Eye camp concludes in Mymensingh

**UNB, Mymensingh**  
A week long eye camp jointly organised by Lions Club of Dhaka Presidency and Abdul Wahed Memorial Trust concluded at Gouripur upazila in Mymensingh on Sunday.

A team of eye specialists led by Prof AKMA Muqtadir, Head of the Department of Ophthalmology of Dhaka Medical College, conducted the microsurgery eye camp at Gouripur Pilot Girls' High School. Organisers said 4,200 eye patients received free treatment at the 22nd eye camp of the memorial trust. Of them, 207 were cataract patients who had intra-ocular lens placed through microsurgery.

Weavers face hard days

**UNB, Kishoreganj**  
The weavers of Bhairab and Kuliarchar upazilas of Kishoreganj have been facing manifold problems like high price of raw materials, cotton yarn, weaving equipment and lack of marketing facility.

Concerned sources said there are 15,000 weavers in Kishoreganj but many of them have left their profession due to lack of working capital. The handloom products, which had a great demand in the locality have lost its pride as the imported clothes and yarns are now available at cheaper prices. Market sources said the weavers' produce lungis, sarees, napkin sheet and towels, but presently Indian clothes have captured the market, which are being sold at cheap price.

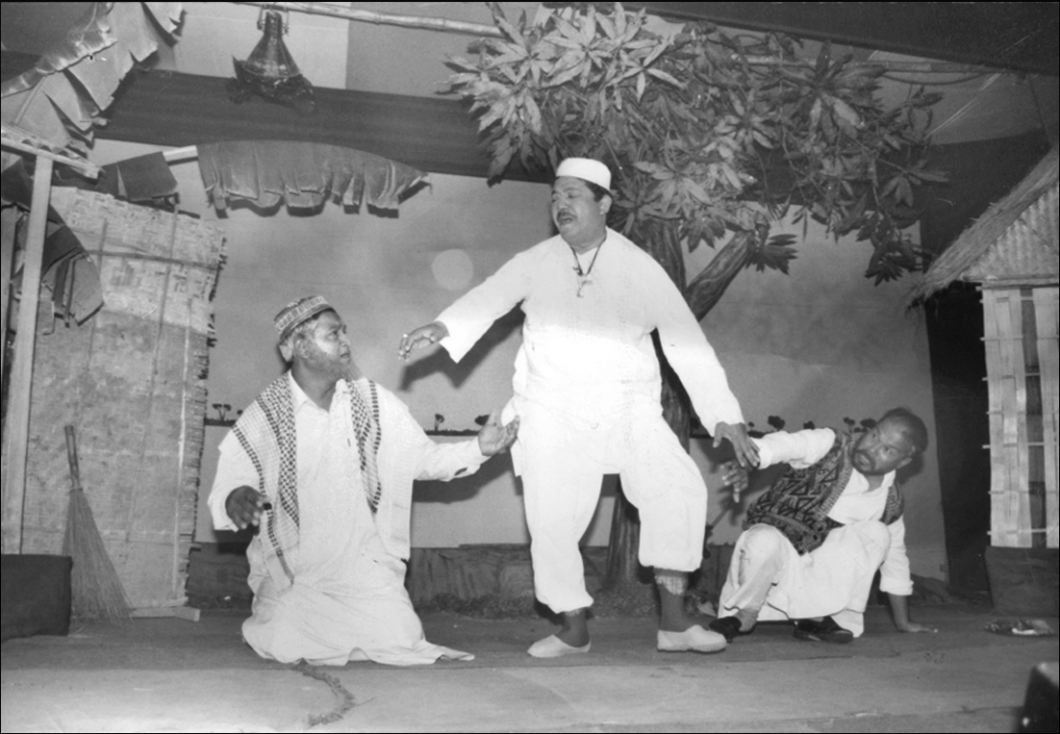


PHOTO: STAR

A scene from national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's 'Allahrakha' which was staged by Bidrohi Natya Goshthi at Mymensingh gymnasium in Mymensingh on February 21. Mymensingh Zila Parisad arranged the drama festival on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day.

Peculiar weather in five districts

**MOZAMMEL HUQ, Rangpur**

About one crore people in five districts of greater Rangpur are suffering much because of peculiar weather.

Their sufferings are due to scorching heat at daytime and biting cold at nighttime. They are compelled to use quilts or blankets from mid-night till morning. Usually dense fog blankets the area at night which continues till morning.

At daytime mercury goes up which varies between 26 degree Celsius and 30 degree Celsius while at night time it drops below 15 degree Celsius to 17 degree Celsius.

Such unpredictable weather is keeping an adverse impact on human beings and also on standing crops in this region. As a result the production targets of various crops have fallen down considerably.

Initially the Department Agriculture Extension (DAE) had a target to bring at least one lakh and 30 thousand hectares of land under wheat cultivation in the region in the current season. But the cultivation target has fallen short of target by 10 per cent to 20 per cent. The expected yield roughly-- two and a half metric tons per hectare of land--

will hardly be achieved, agriculturists believe. According to experts, wheat crop needs a balanced climate which is now absent in the region.

The potato crop is also facing the threat of damage due to outbreak of a kind of 'ledbride' disease in the standing potato field. Potato production will fall considerably, apprehend farmers.

The ongoing boro farming is also progressing at snail's pace while the farming period will expire by the first fortnight of the current month.

Because of such peculiar climate which is followed by drought and rise in diesel prices, farmers are facing a bleak future. Farmers of this region who are already economically crippled once again got a hard blow due to such weather. They are perplexed how to continue their farming pursuit which involves good amount of money.

They apprehend less boro yield if high prices of diesel and peculiar weather prevails.

Moreover, reports of outbreak of various diseases almost in epidemic form are pouring in from different parts of greater Rangpur. Old people and infants are more and more getting attacked by pneumonia and cold diarrhoea.

Uncertain fate of over 1 lakh SSC candidates in Comilla

**UNB, Comilla**

A 'guardianless situation' has been created in Comilla Board ahead of the Secondary School Certificate examinations due to absence of chairman and controller of examinations leaving the fate of over a lakh SSC candidates uncertain.

The posts remained vacant since the previous Chairman Dr Arun Kumar Bhattacharya was transferred to Edward College of Pabna on last October 24.

But controller of examinations Prof Abdul Hafiz carried the charge of chairman till February 26 when he was transferred to Eden College in Dhaka leaving the two posts vacant.

The Education Ministry later has given the additional charge of both posts to board Secretary Dr Safiullah.

An official on condition of anonymity said carrying the three charges at a time by an official has created bottleneck in the administrative activities.

He said salaries of board officials and employees could not be paid yet, as he has not been given the financial authority

Countrywide SSC examination begins on March 14 with 1.27 lakh SSC candidates under the board.

Last year, there had been much criticism over unprecedented copying in many of the SSC examination centres.

Thakurgaon farmers frustrated

Sugar mill authorities reluctant to raise sugarcane price

**UNB, Thakurgaon**

Sugarcane farmers of Thakurgaon are getting frustrated as they found sugar mill authorities reluctant to raise sugarcane price.

The alleged that the sugar mill authorities did not raise sugarcane price in last six years affecting sugarcane production.

"Sugar production during the period declined by five lakh mts while that of molasses by two lakh mts due to short supply of sugarcane causing a loss of Tk 1000 crore," said Yasin Ali, former Director of Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Centre (BSRC).

He said the country's 15 sugar mills have the capacity to produce 2.10 lakh tons of sugar crushing 25 lakh sugarcanes. But the capacity of the mills remained underutilised for lack of adequate sugarcane supply.

Yasin Ali said in 1996 BSRC had placed some recommendations to introduce transplant sugarcane technology at the growers-level, but the recommendations could not be implemented yet.

He said 58 lakh tons of sugarcane and 2.25 lakh tons

of sugar were produced during 1989-90 to 1993-94 and this had been possible as the authorities paid the farmers higher price in addition to other incentives.

During the period, the growers got Tk 27-37 for per maund of sugarcane.

Later, sugarcane cultivation fell drastically due to its weaker price and lack of incentives to the growers. The average production of sugar was 1.43 lakh mts during 1995-96 to 2001.

Production cost of sugar rose to Tk 45 per kg from Tk 29 in last five years knocking down its output.

During 1999-2000 period, Thakurgaon Sugar Mill produced 5,500 tons of sugar and production cost of per kg sugar stood at Tk 51 while the mill produced 20,000 tons of sugar during 1994-95 period and the output cost was Tk 26 per kg

Experts said sugar production cost could be lowered significantly by introducing the transplant sugar production technology in all mill zones as it could give a remarkable boost to sugarcane output.

Modhumati, Navaganga rivers in Narail dying

**BSS, Narail**

Once the mighty 'Modhumati' and 'Navaganga' rivers are dying as siltation, dumping of waste and garbage in the river go unabated.

The rivers Chitra, Abhra and Kazla have lost depth. The cannot hold much water during the rainy season, causing flood. Riversides are gathering silt every year because of disappointing fall in the river current. At some paces the rivers can be crossed on foot and at some other places paddy and other crops are being cultivated.

When contacted an engineer working with local Water Development Board (WDB) said

huge quantities of silt are being deposited in the riverbeds because of geological characteristic of the country. As most of the rivers in the country flow slowly, these leave silt, resulting in emergence of shoals. Silt has been depositing for years hampering navigation, he added.

Siltation in the Modhumati and the Navaganga has also affected other small rivers. Navigation is being hampered seriously due to abnormal fall in water level in the rivers.

As navigation in different routes has been hampering, river transport system in the areas has been facing closure threat. Transport costs have increased over the years. Many

labourers in ferry points and boatmen are now out of job. Thousands of acres of cropland go under floodwater every year in Narail, causing huge losses.

Besides, the nearly dried up rivers fail to provide irrigation facilities to arable lands. Moreover, they have edged towards a desert-like barrenness, threatening cultivation.

According to experts, the dredging of these rivers on regular basis is needed for keeping their flow normal and also for increasing the capacity to preserve more water during flood.



Advocate Manzur-ur-Rahman, director of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) speaks as special guest at the text books and sanitary latrines distribution and prize giving ceremony arranged on Friday at Kushumpur in Sirajdi Khan of Munshiganj by the Kushumpur branch of Chander Hat, a children's organisation.