

NEWS SNAPS

Youth dies mysteriously in Barisal

UNB, Barisal
A youth died mysteriously in Bhatikhana area in Barisal town Sunday.
The victim identified as Manik, 25, was rushed to sadar hospital at noon with critical injuries and died about an hour after his admission. It is not clear how he sustained injuries and what was the reason behind the death. A UD case was filed in this connection.

Nine dwelling houses gutted in Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur
Nine dwelling houses were gutted in a fire at Char Lorange village in Ramgati upazila Monday.
The fire was originated from an oven of the house of Foyez Ahmed and soon engulfed the adjoining houses. Local people rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The extent of damage has been estimated at Tk 6 lakh.

Terrorists loot 120 maunds of onion

UNB, Pabna
Terrorists looted 120 maunds of onion and Tk 4,000 cash from a farmer at Hatkhali village in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna on Sunday.
Locals said the terrorists led by Afsar Mollah, Bonder Ali, Hatem Ali, Baten Mollah of Majhpara Raipur and Baten Ali of Bonkola village swooped on the house of Ishak Ali Mollah in his absence and looted onion and money from his house. Ishak's mother Momejannessa, wife Jamirunessa and daughters Eliza, Afroza and Feroza were also injured during the attack.

Forged-currency trader released

UNB, Satkhira
A forged-currency trader was allegedly released from police station with a span of few hours after his arrest.
Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of Abdus Sabur at 11pm and caught him along with 200 counterfeit notes of 500-taka from Hizilla village in Ashashuni upazila on Sunday. But, the following morning, he was released from the thana. Locals said Sabur is a member of an international racket and engaged in trading forged notes. They alleged that officer in-charge of the thana released the accused taking bribe. OC Shahin Mondol, however, told that police arrested Sabur on suspicion, but he was not involved with such business.

Boro farming on 200 acres in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban
Some 200 acres of land was brought under boro cultivation irrigating water of newly constructed Kamlong lake in the current season.
Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board excavated the lake involving Tk 50 lakh in the last fiscal year to extend fish farming and bring 12,000 acres of fallow land under irrigation facilities. Pru Thoyai Marma, a farmer, informed that they have cultivated paddy on 150 acres of land and tobacco on 50 acres this season. Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said, a total of 2,181 mts of paddy would be produced here when 12,000 acres land could be brought under cultivation. CHT Development Board said that a canal will be constructed here soon for proper distribution of lake water.

Lack of irrigation facilities on 74,000 acres

UNB, Naogaon
Some 74,000 acres of land in Naogaon could not be brought under current IRRI-boro season due to want of irrigation facilities.
According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources, Naogaon would be deprived of 27.39 lakh maunds of paddy worth Tk 12 crore due to the reason. The lands in Niamatpur, Sapahar and Porsha upazilas could not be irrigated by installing deep tubewells or any other means due to existence of hard rock layer under 65 to 70 feet of the surface. Experts opined that artificial reservoirs should be made in the area to bring the lands under irrigation.

Kidnappers sending anonymous letters to Gobindaganj people

K M REZAUL HAQUE, Gaibandha

People of Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha are now passing their days in fear of anonymous letters containing demands of large amount of ransom and threat of kidnap.

The western part of Gobindaganj upazila is the den of terrorists. Last month three incidents of kidnapping took place in this upazila and five persons were given anonymous letters containing demands of high amount of ransom. They also threatened to kidnap the receivers of the letters in case of their failure to pay the demanded amount.

On February 12, Ashraf Ali, a village doctor of Fulpukuria was kidnapped by terrorists while he was returning home from market. Later the kidnappers demanded three lakh taka as ransom from the family of the victim who was released on payment of Tk 50,000 as ransom from the nearby Shibganj upazila in Bogra.

On February 15, Anisur Rahman, a 12-year-old son of Feroz Madol of village Dharampur was kidnapped and the kidnappers demanded ransom amounting to Tk 50,000. On February 17, another girl Sathi, daughter of Safizid of village Katabari union was kidnapped. The kidnappers demanded ransom amounting to Tk one lakh. Fate of the two victims are still unknown.

Besides, the kidnappers dispatched anonymous letters demanding one lakh and fifty thousand to Tofazzal Hossan, 40, of village Sreepur and Rocket, 35, of village Naogaon respectively. The kidnappers threatened to kidnap their son or daughter if they fail to pay the demanded amount. Ultimately the kidnappers will kill them within seven days of non-



Activists of Jatiyotabadi Secchhasebak Dal led by the district BNP president and freedom fighter Ashraf Uddin Khan parade the streets of Netrakona in a colourful procession. Secchhasebak Dal arranged it recently to create public awareness against usage of polythene bags and building public opinion in favour of jute bags for maintaining the environmental equilibrium.

Racketeers active in Kushtia in smuggling firearms

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Rampant smuggling of different types of firearms is going on from across the border through various points in Kushtia.

Racketeers are active in smuggling different types of firearms in these points, sources in the bordering areas said.

These gangs are also keeping relationship with some outlawed parties for their safe trading in the area, source close to the racket said.

The numbers of firearms is increasing day by day which is being used in different criminal activities inside the country. These gangs smuggle firearms inside the country. They are also supplying it to other parts of the country according to demand of the buyers, one of the gang members said on condition of not to be quoted.

The rate of the firearms at the border areas are as follows: a sub machinegun is being sold from Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh. Price of a light machinegun is TK 60,000 to TK 1 lakh, foreign made pistol Tk 25,000 - Tk 50,000, but the price of such foreign made pistol in the local market is Tk 80,000. Indian made various arms are being sold within Tk 1,500 to Tk 10,000.

As a result, the illegal firearms are going to the hands of teenagers, which are the main cause of increasing terrorism in the north-western region of the country.

The smuggled firearms which are coming into the country are mostly made in China, USA, Czech Republic and India. Then arms which are being smuggled into Bangladesh through the borders of India include eight-shooter guns,

sawn-off rifle, sub-machineguns, light machineguns, pistol and Indian made arms like pipe guns, muscat rifle, pistol, revolver.

Sources close to the border areas said the groups are well-organised and using at least seven border points adjacent to Kushtia. They are Chilamari, Ramkrishnapur, Mohhamdpur, Thotarpara, Jamalpur, Bilgathua and Vogiot.

The gangs maintain ties with Indian smugglers and continue the trade by managing the members of the security forces of both the countries in the borders.

Terrorists in Khulna division surrendered along with arms during the past Awami League regime in response to the general amnesty. A total of 1,939 illegal firearms were surrendered. According to officials, most of the seized firearms were Indian made and were brought in Bangladesh through illegal smuggling.

One of the district police official told this correspondent that over 5,000 illegal firearms are available in Kushtia and most of those were smuggled into the country through India.

This official seeking anonymity said the terrorists mostly choice Indian made arms because of its easy availability and the normal price rate varies from Tk 1,500 to Tk 10,000.

The gangs usually use consignment of fruits, eggs, rice vegetables and other items to smuggle in the illegal firearms. Even, Border Security Forces (BSF) of India and BDR of Bangladesh ignore to check the smuggled consignments of goods because of underhand deal.

A large number of firearms are

also going to the hands of the outlawed party cadres. As a result they growing more powerful in the area. They have started further the terrorist activities in the areas.

Laxmipur Jubo League leader's house burnt

UNB, Laxmipur

The house of a local Juba League leader was burnt to ashes as terrorists set fire to it at Latifpur village in Sadar upazila of Laxmipur Saturday night.

Family sources said the miscreants swooped on the house of Juba League leader Nazrul Rahman of the village and failing to catch him set fire to his house. Nazrul's father alleged that the hoodlums have been threatening to kill Nazrul for the last few months for which he was compelled to remain in hiding.

Indian goods worth Tk 1.37 crore seized

UNB, Joypurhat

BDR jawans seized Indian goods worth Tk 1.37 crore from Joypurhat-Naogaon border in Dhamoirhat upazila of Joypurhat on Sunday.

BDR sources said members of battalion 5 seized a truck loaded with the smuggled goods, including high-quality sarees, cloths and rice, from Aranagar village, but could not nab the driver and helper of the vehicle. The same battalion also seized 33 packets of Indian sarees and cloths from two empty houses of the same village.

Fund needed for works on 13 fire service stations in Sylhet

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

A project for establishing 13 fire service and civil defence stations in Sylhet division faces setback due to shortage of fund.

The government decided to establish 13 fire service and civil defence stations at upazila level of Sylhet, Hobiganj, Sunanganj and Moulvibazar in Sylhet division. Fund was also sanctioned for these fire stations at the initial stage. These stations are at South Surma, Zakiganj, Golappanj, Bianibazar, Fenchuganj, Jaintapur and Balaganj of Sylhet, Madhobpur and Nabiganj of Hobiganj, Chhatak and Jagannathpur of Sunamganj and Baralekha and Kamalganj of Moulvibazar.

In the 1995-96 fiscal year fund was sanctioned for each of these stations. Land requisition was completed and in some cases construction work was started with this money. But within a few month the construction works were closed

due to want of further sanction by the government.

An engineer at the Public Works Department (PWD), Sylhet told this correspondent over telephone that if they get further sanction, they will be able to complete the construction work of the fire service and civil defence stations as early as possible.

However, at the very initial stage an amount of Tk one crore 9 lakh was sanctioned for Chhatak station in Sunamganj and Tk one crore was sanctioned for Madhabpur station of Hobiganj and construction works of the infrastructure were completed in these two station. But construction work of staff quarters in these two stations was not started due to want of fund.

Besides this, an amount of Tk 10 lakh was sanctioned for South Surma, Tk 5 lakh for Zakiganj, Tk 8 lakh for Bianibazar, Tk 6 lakh for Balaganj, Tk 23 lakh for Baralekha and Tk 20 lakh was sanctioned for Nabiganj station.

As fund was sanctioned for Golappanj, Jaintapur, Fenchuganj, Jagannathpur and Kamalganj stations which were also proposed and included in the project. Though initial fund was sanctioned in favour of Golappanj, Bianibazar, Nabiganj and Balaganj, fire stations, yet the construction work was not started due to same legal reasons.

If the government sanctions fund for completion of the construction work of these fire service stations, large number of people of Sylhet region will be benefitted. Not only fund, but also more manpower will be needed for construction of these stations. In each of these stations at least 25 posts of different posts should be created. These posts in each station are: One Station officer, 3 leaders, 4 drivers, 16 firemen, one cook and one masachi.

People of Sylhet division are demanding implementation of the project of 13 proposed Fire Service and Civil Defence Station.

Traders want extortion-free atmosphere in Natore

ANWAR ALI, Natore

Several thousand businessmen of Natore laid siege in front of the office of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Natore in support of their 4-point demands.

All the business activities of the town came to a halt for five hours as the businessmen with bamboo-sticks and whistles (identical to their organisation) went to the DC office in a huge procession closing shutters of their trade houses recently.

The Terrorist Extortionist

Resistance Action Committee of Natore (TERAC) organised the programme following alarming rise in extortion and terrorism throughout the district.

TERAC president Md Abdus Salam submitted a memorandum to Sadar Uddin Ahmed, DC of Natore.

The business leaders, in the memorandum, threatened the administration of tougher movement if their demands were not met within 27 days.

The four-point demands include immediate recovery of all illegal arms

and arrest of extortionists, building a narcotics-free Natore and closure of all type of narcotics businesses, immediate action of the law enforcing agencies against the armed cadres and extortionists, and dredging the historic river of Narod.

Later leaders of 26 units of TERAC addressed a rally with its president Abdus Salam in the chair.