

NEWS SNAPS

Body of high school headmaster found

UNB, Comilla
The body of a high school headmaster was recovered from his office room at Laksham upazila in Comilla Saturday.
Police said Sirajul Islam, 50, headmaster of Nather Patua High School, stayed overnight in its hostel Friday and his body was found hanging in his office room the following day. His wife Nurjahan claimed that he was killed following a conflict with the school management committee.

Young man killed by rivals

UNB, Mymensingh
A young man was killed by his rivals at Shaheednagar village at Gafargaon upazila in Mymensingh Saturday night.
Police said, Nazmul, 32, died on the spot as his rivals hit him with sharp weapons at about 11pm. Previous enmity was said to be the reason behind the killing. A case was filed.

Girl drowns in pond in Jhalakati

UNB, Jhalakati
A little girl drowned in a pond at Krishnakhathi in Jhalakati town on Sunday. Villagers said Brishti, daughter of M Jahangir Hossain, slipped in to the pond while playing on its bank. In another incident on Saturday, police arrested a 45-year-old man, Ibrahim Molla, on charge of terrorists activities. He was sent to jail hajat.

Two killed after inhaling poisonous gas

UNB, Bogra
Two people were killed and four others fell sick after inhaling poisonous gas from a septic tank at Bashunia Chandbaria village at Sadar upazila in Bogra on Friday.
Villagers said M Hossain, 40, a day-labourer, died instantly as he inhaled poisonous gas while he was working on a septic tank of an old toilet at the house of Ahmed Ali. Later, Ahmed's son Shahjahan Ali, 25, fell sick when he went down the tank to save M Hossain. He later died at Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital. Four neighbours of Ahmed Ali -- Ahsan, Abdur Razzak Nannu, 35, Amzad Hossain, 32, and Abu Alam, 30 -- also fell sick one after another when they tried to rescue Shahjahan.

Convicted prisoner dies of heart attack

UNB, Mymensingh
A convicted prisoner of Mymensingh central jail died of heart attack Saturday night. Jail sources said Abdul Mannan, 50, who was sentenced to life term imprisonment in a murder case in 1993, complained of chest pain at about 10pm and died on way to hospital. The postmortem on the body was performed at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCCH).

Housewife beaten to death in Comilla

UNB, Comilla
A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her father-in-law at Paikot village at Chandina upazila in Comilla Sunday.
Police said Josna Akhter Shaheen, 25, wife of Omar Ali of the village, died instantly when her father-in-law Safar Ali beat up her with a stick after a quarrel over purchasing a saree. Local people later caught Safar Ali and handed him over to police. A case was filed.

School teacher's memo to Manikganj DC

UNB, Manikganj
Primary school teachers have submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Manikganj demanding action against the district Primary Education Officer for his alleged involvement in corruption.
About 1,000 teachers gathered in front of the DC office Thursday and submitted the memorandum. They alleged that education officer Mohammad Monibur Rahman had been taking bribes from them since his appointment to the post a year back.

Fund shortage hits radio centre

UNB, Rangamati
Lack of necessary funds and machinery has brought the Rangamati radio centre to its knees.
Official sources said the station was upgraded to a full-fledged centre three years back and it received no funds and machinery since then. Although the centre has enlisted artistes, there is no official to prepare any programme. According to local elite, the programmes are now being made in the radio centre by its artistes and technical staff are not up to the mark.

Barguna newsman files defamation case

UNB, Barguna
A local journalist filed a defamation suit with local cognizance court Sunday against three newsmen of a national daily, including its editor.
Zahirul Hasan Badsha, district correspondent of Ittefaq, filed the case against Aker Kagoj editor Quazi Shahed Ahmed, news editor Abu Bakar Chowdhury and district correspondent Hasanur Rahman Jhantu for publishing a report in the daily against him. The magistrate of the court summoned the accused to appear before it by April 24.

Sylhet Municipality's cleanliness project

UNB, Sylhet
Sylhet municipality in cooperation with a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has launched a pilot project to keep Sylhet town clean.
As part of the project, waste and dirt are being cleaned up from Bandar Bazaar to Airport road via Dorga Mohalla. The project works include collection of waste and garbage from residences, business houses and offices, and carrying out a campaign to raise awareness of the townspeople about waste management. Under the project, a survey has been conducted on waste management of 3700 families and dustbins will be set up at street corners of the town. A proposal has also been put forward to the Deputy Commissioner for land acquisition to set up a plant to make compost fertilizer from waste.

Power line installation project

UNB, Rangamati
Electricity line over 44 km areas of the three hill districts will be installed under Chittagong Hill Tracts Electrification Project-2 to bring remote villagers under power supply network.
Officials said installation of an 11 KV-line over 3 kms at Bethunia, Tarabunia and Naillachhari while 7 kms at Panchhari, Ultachhari, Gourangapara in Rangamati and 5 kms from Choto Marung to Longdun in Khagrachhari has already been completed. Under the project, a grid line will be set up at Belaichari, Borkal, and Juriachhari in Rangamati.

Three godowns, 4 houses, 1 shop gutted

UNB, Pabna
Valuables worth about Tk 14 lakh were gutted in separate fire incidents in two upazilas of Pabna on Monday-Tuesday.
Three godowns, four houses and a shop were burnt to ashes in a fire at Krishnadia village in Sadar upazila, causing a loss of about Tk 6 lakh. The fire originated from an electric short circuit at the house of Taiyab Mondal. In another incident, 22 houses were gutted when a fire broke out at Hadol village in Faridpur upazila, burning down valuables worth Tk 8 lakh.

2,576 uplift projects going on in Bogra

UNB, Bogra
Some 2,576 development projects are being implemented in 11 upazilas of Bogra under food-for-work and test relief programmes utilising 7,472 mts of foodgrains
Of the projects, 482 are being implemented spending 4,872 mts of food under food-for-work (FWP) while 2,094 utilising 2,600 mts under test relief (TR) programmes. According to District Relief and Rehabilitation office, 65 per cent works under FWP (general) and 20 per cent under FWP (special) have already been completed. Besides, 87 per cent works under TR (general) while 50 per cent under TR (special) programmes have been completed. The works include construction and reconstruction of roads, culverts, drains, earth filling, renovation of educational institutions, excavation and re-excavations of ponds and canals.

Wheat cultivation on 21,785 hectares

UNB, Chapainawabganj
A total of 21,785 hectares of land have been brought under wheat cultivation in Chapainawabganj exceeding the target of 20,000 hectares during the current season.
Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said the target was set to bring 6,500 hectares of land under the cultivation in Sadar, 8,900 hectares in Shibganj, 1,600 hectares in Gomostapur, 1,700 hectares in Nachole, 1,300 hectares in Bholahat upazilas. But the cultivation exceeded the target due to favourable weather and sufficient supply of seeds and other inputs at fair prices. DAE sources said the farmers used different types of high yielding variety of seeds like Kanchan, Sourav, Pratiba, Shatabdi etc. Cultivators are expecting bumper production of wheat if favourable weather continues.

Unabated hill cutting threatens ecological balance in Chittagong

BSS, Chittagong

Unabated hill cutting defying ban is threatening the ecological balance of the port city of Chittagong, known for its unique natural combination of hills, sea, rivers and forests.
Officials and environmentalists said organised gangs hired by private real estate developers and others have been razing the hills in and around the city since early eighties causing frequent landslides claiming human lives besides causing other environmental hazards.
Environmental activists said the trend of hill cutting intensified for development of real estates and manufacturing of bricks after the allotment of government khas lands to build residential areas during General Ershad's regime.
Prof Yusuf Sharif Ahmed Khan, a leading environmentalist, said rivers and canals in and around Chittagong city were being rapidly filled and the Karnafuli river was deposited with silts due to cutting of hills threatening normal activities of Chittagong port.
He said that hill cutting and particularly the partly razed hills is also a threat to public safety posing risks of collapse as the city witnessed 60 deaths caused by

landslides in the past one decade.
Hundreds of hills at Khulshi, Nasirabad, Jalalabad, Pahartali and Bayezid Bostami areas were already been destroyed to develop main residential areas while rest of the hills are gradually being destroyed for the same purpose.
The government has enacted several laws and framed different rules to check hill cutting but that could not prevent the vested interest groups.
"Police have been asked to check hill cutting and take stern actions against those involved in razing hills," Police Commissioner of Chittagong Mohammad Sahidullah Khan told journalists.
But, he said, the vested quarters were always active in destroying the environment.
"The natural combination of hills, valleys and wet lands has specific significance for smooth ecosystem in the region" Mohammad Ismail, director of Department of Environment in Chittagong said.
He added that wrecking of the natural structure pose severe threat to the ecosystem, he said.
The official, however, said the situation has improved in the past several months with stern stand of the present government and warnings against the razing of hills.

Killing of college student in police firing protested

UNB, Sunamganj

Killing of a college student in police firing in Tahirpur, Sunamganj has created deep resentment among the people who, in a protest meeting, demanded death to the police for the brutality.
Riddled with bullets, Wahiduzzaman Shiplu, died when police were taking him to Sunamganj from Tahirpur health complex. The body was returned to his family.
Following the incident, Sharifuddin, Officer in-Charge (OC) of Tahirpur thana, who is accused of the killing, refused to talk to journalists pleading illness. Police Sub-inspector Maruf admitted that Shiplu died in police firing.
Witnesses and police said that a police team, led by OC Sharifuddin, raided the house of Shafiqul Islam, father of Shiplu and President of thana Krishak League, at 3:15 am on March 21 to arrest him.
Police awoke Shiplu from his sleep and arrested him without any warrant from the court.
Shiplu and other inmates of the house resisted the police. At one

stage of the scuffle, police opened random fire injuring three or four people.
Police dragged badly injured Shiplu out of the house and lodged him in the health complex. Finding his condition serious, police on the following day was shifting him to Sunamganj sadar hospital, but he died on the way.
Demonstration and a rally were held at Tahirpur bazar to protest police action. Speakers at the rally demanded death to OC Sharifuddin.

Ranirhat Growth Centre market changes lot of rural women

UNB, Bogra

At first sight, it looks like a bazaar, but it is more than a bazaar -- it's a growth centre.
It is Ranirhat Growth Centre Market (GCM) in Sherpur upazila of Bogra that has been connected with Mirzapur-Ranirhat road and the national highway.
The Ranirhat GCM is also connected with Ranirhat-Bhabanipur road, Ranirhat-Bamihai road (Natore district) and Ranirhat-Tarash road (Sirajganj district).
What is the difference between Ranirhat GCM and a pucca bazaar? The answer is not simple. There is a women's corner, office building, six multipurpose sheds, one toilet, separate fish, meat, slaughtering shades, garbage pit, tubewell, open space and internal road, and the market is run by a management committee.
Due to a separate woman's corner in the market, women of rural areas are now doing their businesses and becoming self-reliant.
Following conversion of the bazaar into GCM, the number of permanent shops increased by 55 per cent, number of temporary sellers increased by 29 per cent, number of buyers and sellers increased by 23 per cent, and revenue increased by 189 per cent.
Like Ranirhat GCM, there are 142 growth centres in 14 districts of Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions in the country which have brought some transformation in the nerve of rural area bringing significant changes by reducing price of products at the consumer level and ensuring due prices to the growers.
The GCM were constructed under Rural Roads and Market Improvement and Maintenance Project (RRMIMP)-II approved in 1996 involving US \$ 212.36m (Tk 1036 crore). The project will be concluded in June this year.
Of the total cost, the government provided US\$36m while the union parishad contributed US \$7.94m, World Bank provided US \$ 153m and the Swiss Development Cooperation US \$ 15m for the project, implemented in six districts of Dhaka division and eight in Rajshahi division.
The main objectives of the project are to remove physical bottlenecks, improve quality and reduce cost of transportation, create employment among the rural poor, particularly among the women, promote participation of all stakeholders, increase institutional capacity for efficient rural infrastructure management.
Under the RRMIMP-II project, 606 km feeder road was improved,

3,800m structures were constructed, 152 growth centre markets and riverside markets were set up, 35 river jetties were made, flood and rehabilitation works done on 915 km road.
Following implementation of the project, some significant impacts of infrastructural improvement have been noticed.
These are: Traffic volume increased by 120 per cent for passengers and 300 per cent for goods, transport costs decreased by 69 per cent for passengers and 48 per cent for cargoes, wage rate gone up by 12 per cent, agricultural production increased by 5 per cent, crop damage reduced by 2-4 per cent, auction lease value rose by 28 per cent.
Rafiqul Islam, a meat trader told this reporter that he is now selling cow meat at Tk 60 per kg which was much less before. "The road communication is now easier and I feel very safe during rainy season as the meat shed is now a pucca house," he said.
However, he complained about collection of rent from the traders.
There must be a signboard inscribing the prices of various products. But, none saw such list.



A physician examining a patient at a free eye camp arranged recently by Lions Club of Dhaka Oriental in collaboration with Bangladesh Lions Foundation at Nasir Ahmed Bhuiyan Auditorium in Laxmipur. Among others, S M Zahirul Islam, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Laxmipur, Ln Sultana Shahida Islam, Director of the club, Ln Saifun Nahar, Ln Zuber Ahmed Khan, Ln Md Shafiqur Rahman were present there.



PHOTO: STAR

The lawyers in Chittagong parade the streets of Chittagong in a silent procession protesting the recent attack on the motorcade of the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and the countryside anarchy.

CPB president for alternative political force

CUCORRESPONDENT

Monzurul Ahsan Khan, president of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) said that the people of country have fallen into fire from the frying pan.
He said the people of the country had been oppressed for five years during the last Awami League (AL) regime while at present they are being tortured by the ruling BNP's terrorists.
He called upon the people to get united to build an alternative political force vis-a-vis the two major political parties. He told this at a meeting at Laidighi maidan (ground) at the port city of Chittagong on Sunday. The meeting was organised by CPB, Chittagong district chapter.
Presided over by Comrade Mrinal Sen, president of the CPB, Chittagong district unit, the meeting was addressed by Zasim Uddin Mondal, presidium member. Syed Abu Jafar, central leader An Rashedha and Mohammad Shah Alam. The meeting was conducted by Biplob Chowdhury.

The leaders further said that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been obeying the advices of World Bank (WB) and IMF faithfully. The former PM also obeyed the advices of WB and IMF. Both of them are ready to sell out our national resources including gas and oil.
They told that 80 per cent ownership of oil and gas resources of our country are the foreign companies including. They also called upon the people to get united to protect such anti-people activities.

Minority family evicted from village home in Jessore

Staff Correspondent

A minority family was evicted from their village home at Jagonandan Kathi in Sharsha upzila in Jessore recently.
The attackers also manhandled housewife Suchitra Mandal causing her hand fractured and severe injuries in different parts of her body. The victim housewife was admitted to Jessore Sadar Hospital.
A gang of attackers led Madrassa Superintendent Abul Bashar attacked the inmates of Suvash Mondal. She was taken to Jessore Sadar Hospital for treatment. In absence of the family members the attackers further went to the house and occupied it.
Mandal filed a petition case against Abul Bashar and four of his accomplices in this connection.

Three PBCP men arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Dumuria thana police On saturday arrested three members of Purb Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) from Senpara area and recovered a shutter gun from their possession.
The arrested outlaws are Nurul Islam, 30, Saiful Islam, 24, and Abdul Huq, 28.
According to police, the PBCP men were hired by a BNP leader for capturing a fish farm at Dumuria.
A case was lodged with Dumuria thana in this connection.
According to police, Nurul Islam surrendered to police in 1999 with four illegal firearms.
Later he was employed in the Ansar Department and posted in Chittagong. From Chittagong he used to maintain link with some leaders of Rupsha upazilla unit of PBCP, police said.
He came to Khulna on leave, police added.

IRRI-boro farming faces setback in 8 dists

UNB, Rangpur

IRRI-boro cultivation has been facing setback in greater Rangpur and Dinajpur districts due to shortage of irrigation facilities in the current season.
Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) sources said some 271 deep tubewells were stolen from the greater Rangpur zone hampering irrigation in the IRRI-boro fields adversely during the season.
Of the total, 148 tubewells were stolen from Rangpur, 53 each from Lalmonirhat and Kurigram and 27 from Nilphamari.
Besides, of the total 1,217 deep tubewells, 857 could not be given electric connection while 64 went out of order in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.
Farmers said about 90 per cent of the IRRI-Boro land in these areas is dependent on mechanical irrigation system, drawing water from under ground sources. The rest 10 per cent is managed somehow with the water of canals and beels (water bodies) by traditional methods of irrigation.
The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has taken up an extensive scheme to bring 5,19,600 hectares of land under IRRI-boro cultivation in these eight districts during the current season.
Of the total 92,700 hectares have been brought in Rangpur, 89,600 hectares in Gaibandha, 66,300 hectares in Kurigram, 60,500 hectares in Nilphamari, 1,19,300 hectares in Thakurgaon and 16,300 hectares in Panchagarh and 39,600 hectares in Lalmonirhat.
Some 16,78,300 metric tons of paddy are expected to be produced in these districts during the season.
Moreover, sharp fall in ground water level has posed a serious threat for the cultivation of IRRI-boro paddy in these districts in the season.
The farmers are apprehending a major setback in irrigation during the peak time of the IRRI-boro crops as most of the ponds, beels and other water bodies have been dried up.