

NEWS SNAPS

Body of boy recovered in Sherpur**UNB, Sherpur**

The body of a teenaged boy was recovered from Shalchura village in Sadar upazila in Sherpur Monday. Police said Kalu Miah alias Member, 12, son of Shuruj Ali of Shalchura village, went to a local club for watching TV Sunday night but didn't return home. Local people found his body at a paddy field Monday morning and informed the police. Later, police arrested three youths -- Abdur Rashid, 28, Mahfuzur Rahman, 20, and Shafiqul Islam, 18, -- in this connection. A case was filed.

Two teenagers commit suicide**UNB, Manikganj**

Two teenagers, including a schoolgirl, allegedly committed suicide in Sadar and Satoria upazilas in Manikganj on Monday. Police said Anita Sarker, 15, daughter of Prafulla Sarker at Ghona of Sadar upazila, committed suicide by hanging herself on Monday as her parents rebuked her over a love affair. Besides, cowboy Farhad Khan, 18, of Gopalpur village in Satoria committed suicide by taking poison over a family feud.

Nine injured by rivals in Bhola**UNB, Bhola**

Nine people, including two women, were injured when rivals chopped them by sharp weapons recently.

The rivals chopped Shaheb Ali, Mohammad Kamal, Mahmuda Begum, Abdur Rashid, Bazlur Rahman, Kabir, Ranu, Aminul Islam and Nurul Huq over giving statement in the court as witnesses in a murder case. They were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

Girl allegedly raped by hoodlums**UNB, Bhola**

A girl was allegedly raped by a group of hoodlums at Doulatkhan upazila in Bhola Thursday night.

Police and local sources said, terror Manu and his associates, alleged cadres of ruling BNP, picked up the girl Thursday night. They took her to a nearby area, raped her whole night and left in a critical condition. Local people rescued the victim and sent her to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. A case was filed with local police.

Teen-age girl rescued in Kishoreganj**UNB, Kishoreganj**

A teen-age girl was rescued after six days of her abduction from Rupganj upazila in Narayanganj Thursday.

Police said Selina Akhter, 11, a student of class six was abducted from her house at Kazirgaon in Sadar upazila on March 22. Police arrested Jamaluddin, Mozibur Rahman and Rahman for their alleged involvement in the abduction.

Abducted college girl rescued**UNB, Jessore**

A college girl was rescued 45 days after her abduction from Khalishpur in Khulna on Thursday.

Police said Zohar Ali and his accomplices abducted Hosne Ara, 20, who was sitting for the degree examination from Keshabpur Degree College, on February 14 on way to examination centre. Later, victim's father filed a case with the police in this connection. Acting on a tip-off, police raided a house in the area and recovered the girl. They also caught Zohar Ali and later he has been sent jail.

Alleged rapist arrested**UNB, Jamalpur**

An alleged rapist was arrested from Bahadurabad ghat and he was sent to jail after producing before the court in Jamalpur on Monday.

Police quoting the victim said Chamul and his associates caught the 17-year-old girl from a train at Bahadurabad ghat on March 30. They gang-raped the girl and deserted her in an unconscious state. On the next day (March 31), local people rescued her and brought in the ghat area where she recognised the gang leader Chamul. Local people nabbed the rapist and handed over him to police. Later, the victim girl filed a case with Islampur police.

Rapist gets life term imprisonment**UNB, Pirojpur**

A court in Pirojpur on Sunday convicted a youth and sentenced him to life term imprisonment for raping a girl.

District and Sessions Judge Jafar Ahmed Mina awarded the punishment against Saifullah, 16, of Sarshina village at Nesarabad upazila. According to the case, Saifullah raped the 12-year-old girl when she went to a betel-nut garden to collect leaves on March 15, 1998. A case was filed under Women and Children Repression Control Act.

Cattle vaccination scheme in Pirojpur**UNB, Pirojpur**

Livestock Department has fixed a target to vaccinate 1.25 lakh cattleheads in Pirojpur in the current fiscal year.

Of the total, 22,000 cattleheads will be vaccinated in Sadar, 19,000 in Nazirpur, 19,000 in Nesarabad, 22,000 in Bhandaria, 24,000 in Mathbaria and 19,000 in Kaulkhal upazilas. Livestock Department has already vaccinated 33,000 cattleheads under the programme. The department will also vaccinate 55.75 lakh poultry birds, carry out artificial insemination of 5,140 cattleheads, and impart training to 18,500 people in different sectors in the current fiscal year. The Department distributed Tk 17 lakh as loan among the poor people during the last eight months.

New health, family welfare centre**UNB, Magura**

A two-storied Health and Family Welfare Centre has been constructed at Nakole union at Sreepur upazila in Magura.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has implemented the project at a cost of Tk 48.23 lakh under Annual Development Programme. Local people are getting first aid, healthcare and family planning facilities after the construction of the health centre.

Free eye camp in Tangail**UNB, Tangail**

A free eye camp was held at Hazrat Madrisullah Orphanage at Ghatail upazila in Tangail on Monday.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Lutfor Rahman Khan inaugurated the camp where 1,100 patients with eye complications were treated. Physicians from Lions Eye Hospital, Dhaka, examined the patients and provided treatment. Some 118 patients were sorted out for operation at the Lions Eye Hospital, Dhaka.

Menace of rabid dogs at Araihaazar**UNB, Narayanganj**

Some 15 people, including seven children, were injured as rabid dogs bit them in different parts of Araihaazar upazila in Narayanganj on Friday-Saturday.

Witnesses said three girls of Araihaazar Primary School -- Nadira, 9, Soma, 5, and Smriti, 7, -- were injured as a violent dog bit them while they were playing at school playground on Saturday. Besides, Billal, 10, and Kamal, 11, of Baghanagar and Farzana, 7, and Shahnaz, 13, of Noapara areas were injured by dogs on Friday. The injured children were first admitted to Araihaazar Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Naogaon Reporters Unity formed**UNB, Naogaon**

A 9-member executive committee of Naogaon Reporters Unity was formed recently with Sadequul Islam and Saidur Rahman as its president and general secretary respectively.

The committee was unanimously formed at a meeting on March 12 with Naogaon Reporters Unity Convenor Saidur Rahman in the chair. The other office-bearers included vice president Adv Sarder Salahuddin Mintu, assistant general secretary Shahid Hasan Siddiqui Swapan, organising secretary Masudur Rahman Ratan, Treasurer Mezbah Saklain and members Sheikh Anwar Hossain and Bishwajit Moni.

Comilla road accident leaves 15 hurt**UNB, Comilla**

At least 15 people were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Cheora area of Choddogram upazila in Comilla Thursday.

Witnesses said a passenger bus collided with a truck coming from the opposite direction at the place. Two of the injured were identified as Assistant Engineer of Bakhrabad Gas System and Liakat Ali, 32, of Sadar upazila. The injured were rushed to Comilla Medical College Hospital, Upazila Health Complex and different clinics of the town. A case was filed.

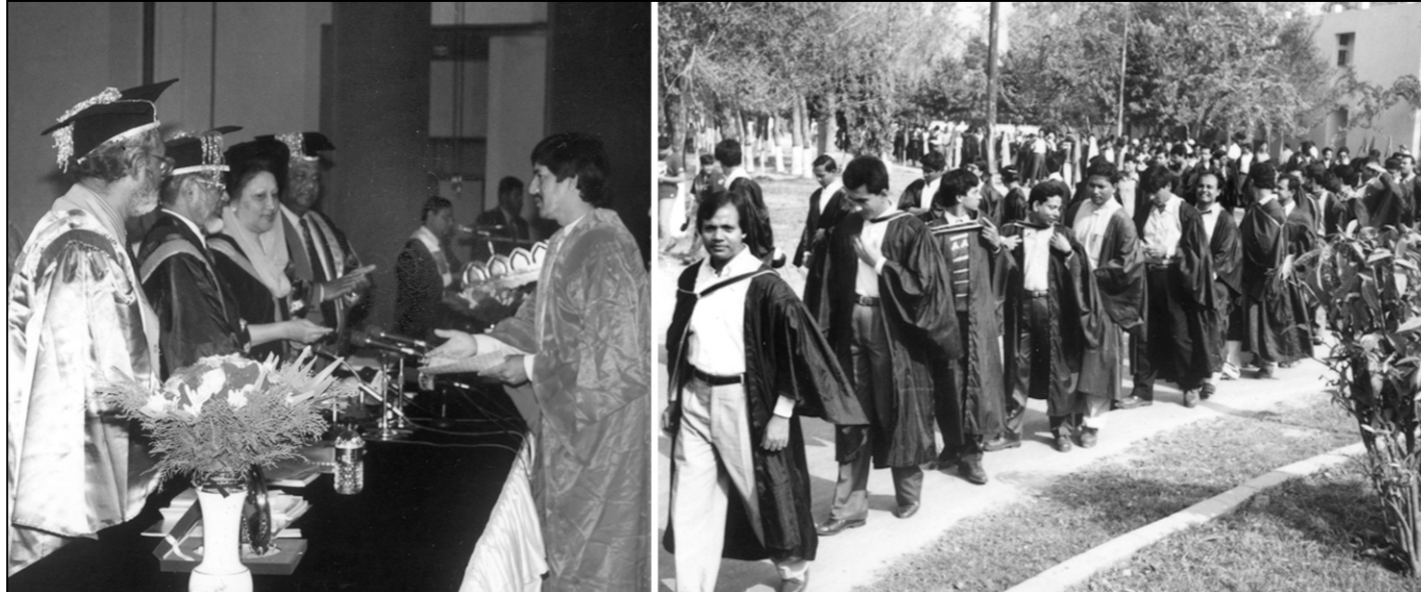
3rd IU Convocation-2002

PHOTO: RAHAT AHMED

(Left-right) Prime Minister and Chancellor of Islamic University (IU) Begum Khaleda Zia distributes certificates among the PhD degree holders while various degree holders and teachers of the university parade the campus during the gala convocation ceremony of the university. The third convocation of the university was held on March 28.

Siltation in three rivers**Dhaka-Khulna launch services closed down****ALIMUZZAMAN MIAH, Gopalganj**

The launch services along the Dhaka-Khulna river route have been closed down because of siltation in some rivers.

Launch services along Gopalganj-Ghagan-Khulna via Mollarhat and Takerhat-Khulna via Gopalganj have also been closed down due to this phenomenon.

As a result the 235-kilometre (km) long river route has been closed down.

The depth of three rivers reduced at some points to such an extent that even the small boats can not ply. The absence of dredging has aggravated the situation further.

Shoals have emerged in many places in the rivers of Modhumati, Kumar, Ghagon and also in the MBR canal due to heavy siltation.

Thousands of people and hundreds of small businessmen move and carry their goods such as rice, rabi crops, milk, fish, green coconut, vegetables and betel leaf from Gazirhat in Khulna, Kalia, Mohijan, Bardia, Jogania, Phandanga and Chapail in Nariyal and Borfa, Tala, Sultanshahi, Sktail, Manikeha, Hariduspur, Ulpm, Baltail, Satpar, Jalhirpar and Shindia ghat in Gopalganj and Tekerhat, Sreenadi, Kabirajpur, Kachirighat, Rajarhat and Lowkhola in Madaripur to various parts of the country.

When contacted an engineer working with the Water Development Board (WDB), Gopalganj said that they already sent an estimate to the higher authorities. According to the estimate an amount of Tk 127500000 is required for keeping the rivers free from siltation. People of the areas urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to dredge the silted rivers immediately to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

As most of these rivers flow slowly, these leave silt,

resulting in emergence of shoals. Silts are being deposited for years together hampering navigation, he added.

An official sources said that the water level has dropped in the Modhumati at old Manikdha, in Kumar at Dignagar, in Ghagon at Chargopalpur and Madaripur Beel route (MBR) canal at South Jalipar.

The WDB sources further informed that 18 to 20 feet layer of silts have been deposited in the Modhamati at old Manikdha ghat and at the southern side of old Hariduspur ghat, 8 to 10 feet layer of silt in the Kumer at Dignagar, 12 to 15 feet layer of silt in the Ghagar river at Chargopalpur and 8 to 10 feet layer of silt along in the MBR canal at South Jalipar.

The people and small businessmen move and carry their goods, to Dhaka and Khulna via Gopalganj, Mollarhat and Shikarpur after stoppage in Dhaka at high cost.

As a result hundreds of small businessmen left their business and turned into day labourers.

Meanwhile, country-made mechanised boats have become the main river transport for carrying passengers and commodities. At present over 100 such engine boats have been plying along different routes in the Modhumati river of the district. But journey by these boats is very risky. Accidents occur frequently. Armed robberies are also being committed along the routes.

Moreover, the connecting canals and beels (water bodies) also dried up. As a result irrigation of the localities is being hampered to a great extent.

A large number of fishermen became unemployed due to large scale siltation in the rivers.

People of the areas urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to dredge the silted rivers immediately to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

Farmers change lot cultivating HYV vegetables in Narsingdi**UNB, Narsingdi**

The cultivation of high yielding variety (HYV) of vegetables has been gaining ground in six upazilas of Narsingdi for the last one decade.

It is learnt that successful production of vegetables like tomato, cabbage, bean, cauliflower, lady's finger, cucumber, pumpkin, pepper, radish, potato, turnip, anima and carrot has changed the economic condition of many farmers.

A large number of farmers here have engaged themselves in vegetable cultivation on commercial basis side by side cultivation of

other crops considering its economic prospect.

Asmat and Amir Hossain, poor cultivators of Biraninagar village in Shibpur upazila, have proved themselves as successful vegetable cultivators.

Asmat has only one bigha of land and Amir one and a bighas of land for cultivation. Some five years ago they used to work as labourers on the land of other farmers of the village to maintain their livelihood.

But cultivation of vegetables has changed their lot enormously. By using high yielding variety of seeds, they are now earning substantial

amount of money and maintaining their families without working on others field.

Humayun Kabir and Giasuddin, students of Joymongol village in the same upazila, are also successful vegetable cultivators. They started cultivation of vegetables in their respective three and four bighas of land three years ago.

They also took lease two and three bighas of land respectively next year and in the ongoing season they have taken lease of three more bighas each for the same purpose and earning a lot.

Fall in production**Potato growers in eight districts in quandary****UNB, Rangpur**

Potato growers are in quandary due to fall in production this year in Rangpur and Dinajpur zones.

Growers said the yield of potato has come down about 50 per cent than the previous year, as climate was not favorable.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said a total of 91,500 hectares of land were earmarked for potato cultivation in eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur this year.

But 81,853 hectares of land were cultivated and the production target was fixed at 16,37,000 metric tons of potato this year in these districts.

Of the total land, 27,176 hectares were cultivated in Rangpur, 5,410 hectares in Gaibandha, 4,150 hectares in Kurigram, 4,300 hectares in Lalmonirhat, 12,800 hectares in Nilphamari, 19,040 hectares in Dinajpur, 5,590 hectares in Thakurgaon and 3,387 hectares in Panchagarh.

The harvesting of potato is now going on in full swing all over the eight districts.

Abdus Sattar, a grower of village Kukrul in Sadar upazila of Rangpur said he produced 90 bags (each bag containing 85 kilogram) of potato on an acre of land this year against 150 bags last year.

An officials of DAE, however, said the fall in production was caused due to low quality of potato seeds.

Besides, the growers are facing problem in absence of marketing facilities of their produce. Taking advantage, the traders and cold storage owners are purchasing potato from the growers at throw-away prices.

There are about 24 cold storage

in greater Rangpur having capacity of about 14 lakh bags of potato.

Growers sources said an 85-kg bag of potato is being sold between Tk 250 and Tk 300 according to quality.

The potato growers demanded of the authority concerned to set up separate hats in these districts to ensure fair price of their produce.

Storm lashes four UZs in**Gaibandha: 19 injured, 500 houses damaged****UNB, Gaibandha**

At least 19 people were injured and over 500 houses damaged as a nor'wester lashed 12 unions of four upazilas in the early hours of Saturday.

The storm accompanied by hailstorm also damaged school buildings and standing crops on about 7,000 acres of land in Palashbari, Gobindaganj, Saghata and Sadar upazilas.

Power supply remained suspended in the district for about 12 hours as some uprooted trees fell on Palashbari-Gaibandha 33kv electric line during the storm that started at about 1 am.

The worst affected areas are Dakerpara, Narayanpur, Nayanpur, Nandishahar, Maliandah, Kumargachhi, Ghorabanda, Halimnagar, Harinabari and Harinathpur of Palashbari upazila.

Yakub Ali Hawlader, a four-party backed candidate, was unofficially elected chairman in the Shariatpur Municipality election which was held peacefully on Tuesday. Hawlader bagged 13,042 votes while his nearest rival Noor Mohammad Kotwal, backed by Awami League, got 5,099 votes. A total of 18,141 voters out of 24,000 cast their votes in 14 polling centres amidst tight security under the supervision one magistrate in each centre.

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