

## NEWS SNAPS

## Freedom fighter strangled in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

A freedom fighter was strangled by unidentified terrorists at Nasratpur village at Adamdighi upazila in Khulna Thursday.

Police said Muzaffar Hossain, 50, son of late Taslimuddin, went out of his house Thursday night and he was missing until his body was found in a paddy field the following day. Police arrested two women, Shaira Begum, 50, and Baby Khatun, 22, in this connection.

## Alleged drug smuggler shot dead

UNB, Joypurhat

An alleged drug smuggler was shot dead and three of his associates were injured by BDR jawans at Dharanda village at Hakimpur upazila in Joypurhat Monday, according to delayed report.

Being tipped off by locals that a gang of smugglers will pass by the area carrying phensidyl from India, the BDR troops ambushed in a jungle near Hill-Birampur road. When the smugglers reached the spot, the border guards swooped on them, triggering a clash. Later, the BDR troops opened fire on the smugglers, leaving Shahadat Hossain, 41, dead on the spot and three others injured. Some 1161 bottles of phensidyl were recovered from their possession.

## 51 including journalist killed last month

UNB, Magura

Some 51 people, including a journalist, were killed in 10 districts of Khulna division last month.

Of the murders, one each was reported from Magura and Narail, eight from Jessore, six from Jhenidah, nine each from Khulna and Chuadanga, four each from Satkhira, Kushtia and Meherpur, and five from Bagerhat. According to police, 116 people were killed in the division in last three months. Of them, 32 were killed in January, 33 in February and 51 in March. Meanwhile, 13 incidents of rape, 12 of abduction and 87 of armed robbery were committed in the division during the period.

## Plague kills 200 goats in Jhenidah

UNB, Jhenidah

An outbreak of plague in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah killed over 200 goats in last one month.

According to villagers, hundreds of goats were afflicted with the disease at Koila, Balidapara, Bakulia, Shibnagar, Arhpara and Roygram villages, and 200 of them died of it during the period. They alleged that officials at local Livestock Department were taking bribe from them for vaccinating their goats against the disease. Dismissing the allegation, the Upazila Livestock Officer said there is no appropriate treatment of the disease, but a vaccine called PPR is usually used as a preventive method. He said 3000 vaccines were brought from Dhaka and those were distributed among the villagers.

## 'Aman' procurement drive ends in failure

UNB, Manikganj

'Aman' procurement drive in Manikganj ended in failure for fixing the paddy price at a lower rate than that of the market.

The government had decided to procure 445 mts of rice and 345 mts of paddy from Manikganj through its seven purchase centres from November 2001 to February this year. The purchase rate for rice was fixed at Tk 12.50 per kg and Tk 8 for paddy per kg, which were lower than the market prices. Besides, there were 37 paisas of VAT for per kg of rice and all this discouraged the listed mill owners and suppliers to supply paddy and rice to the purchase centres. Under the circumstance, the government had extended the procurement period up to March, but it failed to yield any positive result.

## Demand for Indian electronic goods high

UNB, Jessore

Television sets are illegally being assembled in frontier districts of the country's southern region, including Jessore, with Indian spare parts.

According to villagers, one can get a TV set within three hours of purchase order at a cheaper rate. Local mechanics, who usually repair TV, VCR and radio sets, assemble the TV sets with Indian parts and sell those openly depriving the government of huge revenues. A black-and-white 14" TV set is sold at Tk 2000 while 17" one at Tk 2400 against the market price of Tk 4000 and Tk 5000 respectively. Besides, the demand for various Indian electronic goods, including TV voltage stabilisers and telephone sets, is high in the region.

## Muggers shoot businessman, loot cash

UNB, Feni

Muggers shot a businessman and looted his cash and valuables at Mohipal near Feni town Friday night.

Police said the muggers waylaid Ataur Rahman Babul, 25, of Dhumsadda while he was returning home from his shop and shot him when he refused to give them the money and valuables he was carrying. Babul was rushed to Chittagong in a critical condition.

## Banana production falls in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

Banana production in Narsingdi continues to fall due to natural calamities and lack of government support.

Officials said some 20,000 acres of land were brought under banana cultivation in Narsingdi in the last season, which were 35,000 acres a few years ago. Natural calamities like drought and norwester played havoc with banana plants in the last few years, forcing many growers to switch over to cultivation of other crops. Usually, sagar, sabri, humai, champa and gara-bandar varieties of banana are cultivated in the district.

## Jail term for two in Rajbari

UNB, Rajbari

Two people were sentenced to different jail terms in separate cases by a court in Rajbari last week.

The court sentenced Habibur Rahman to life term in jail while Amzad Hossain to 17 years rigorous imprisonment. The court also fined them Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more RI. According to the prosecution, police arrested Habibur Rahman along with 100 grams of heroin from Daulatdia ghat on April 20, 2001 and Amzad Hossain along with a foreign-made pistol and seven rounds of bullet from the same ghat on July 13, 2001. After examining the records and witnesses, the judge handed down the judgements.

## Law and order deteriorates in Bheramara

BSS, Bheramara

Law and order situation has deteriorated in six unions of Bheramara upazila during the month of February and March.

The unions are Dharampur, Bahadurpur, Mokarimpur, Juniadah, Chandgram and Bahirchar. According to police sources, four people were killed and 60 others injured in several incidents during the months signaling further detonation of law and order situation in the upazila. Besides, four armed robberies, six robberies, four burglaries, three kidnapping, five hijacking and three incidents of rape took place in the six unions during the period when police registered 24 cases on various crimes.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers and students of Rajshahi Adarsha (ideal) Teachers' Training College campaign for a polythene-free Bangladesh by bringing out a colourful procession recently in the divisional city.

## Little girl raped allegedly by Juba Dal activists, fighting for life at RMCH

ABDUL WADOOD, Rajshahi

A seven-year-old girl has been fighting for life at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) after being raped and stabbed allegedly by four activists of Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal (JJD), youth wing of the ruling BNP.

The ill-fated girl, daughter of Razab Ali, a resident of Kaudi village at Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi, was sleeping with her elder brother in their house on March 21 night. Suddenly four youths named Ashraful, son of Marzil, Rahim, son of Shamsuddin, Israfil, son of Rahimuddin and Muke, son of Bodla entered into the room. They caught her brother, also a minor boy and forced to shut up his mouth pressing with hands. Ashraful raped the girl and incised the vagina with a knife. Her parents rushed to the spot from the neighbouring room hearing their daughter's heart-rendering cry. Then the culprits fled away.

The parents took her to a village doctor for stopping bleeding, but the doctor failed. She did not improve in four days. Then the parents took their daughter to a private clinic in Rajshahi city. She got almost recovered and returned home.

But suddenly on last Thursday morning bleeding started again from the vaginal injuries of the victim. She became very sick and was taken to RMCH on the same day.

Maternal uncle of the victim, Shaker Ali of Mollapara in the city said that the incident was an act of political

repression.

Razab Ali worked for Awami League (AL) in the last general election ignoring the threats of BNP men. "That is why they took revenge in such a cruel manner," he said.

The mother of the victim, however, said that her neighbours had been giving pressure to them to give labour only to them, not to others. "But we did not follow their orders and that is why they took revenge on us," she said.

A case was registered in this connection with Bagmara thana making Ashraful, Rahim, Israfil and Muke accused.

The accused are wandering before the eyes of the people and threatening the family for repealing the case while police remain inactive to nab them, family sources of the poor victim alleged.

The doctor-on-duty said they suspect it to be a case of rape, but they are yet to be confirm it. No cut injury was found in the vagina of the victim, she said.

Razab Ali, father of the victim alleged that his family along with some other families were kept isolated by some BNP men of the village after the October 1 elections last year for casting votes for 'boat'. "They force us to do only their works. They got angry as I have given labour to others without their prior approval," he said.

Razab Ali is an agro-based day labourer.

However, police arrested Ashraful, one of the rapists on Thursday night.

## Plan to bring uneven barren land under crop farming

UNB, Noagaon

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has taken up a special programme to bring the uneven barren land of Barind tract of Naogaon under crop cultivation.

DAE sources said a total of 32,578 hectares of land in four upazilas of the district will be brought under various crops under the programme.

There are 346,288 hectares of cultivable land in Naogaon, of which 59.96 per cent is Barind land. Of the total Barind land, nearly 20 per cent is uneven.

Of the uneven land, 10,500 hectares are situated in Shapahar upazila, 9,709 hectares in Porsha, 7,050 hectares in Niatmatpur upazila and 3,519 hectares in Potinala upazila.

These lands could not be brought under irrigation, as it is

difficult to sink deep tubewells in the area due to presence of hard rocks in the underground layer.

Locally, the area is called "Thata Barandra" while officially "Hard Barind." Farmers of the area are being deprived of irrigation-based cultivation.

In view of the situation, DAE has undertaken a plan to increase crop intensity from 100 per cent to 300 per cent by changing the crop cycle, and introducing new versions of HYV and local variety of crops.

The other measures of the programme include turning the one cropland into three crops one, cultivation of wheat, maize, tisi, gram, sunflower and other crops, which require less irrigation water.

The plan also included land development, environment protection and changing the cultivation method.

## Statue recovered from night coach

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Police at midnight Saturday recovered a white stone statue worth Tk 5 crore after raiding a Dhaka-bound night coach on the western side of the Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge and arrested a man in this connection.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the Dhaka-bound MP Elegance (Dhaka Metro BA-0696) coming from Chapainawabganj and recovered the 20-kg statue worth about Tk one crore from under a seat and arrested Saiful Islam, 28, son of Abdur Rashid of Putia upazila under Rajshahi district.

Police suspect that the statue was smuggled in from India and was being taken to Dhaka for sale.

A case was registered with the local police station.

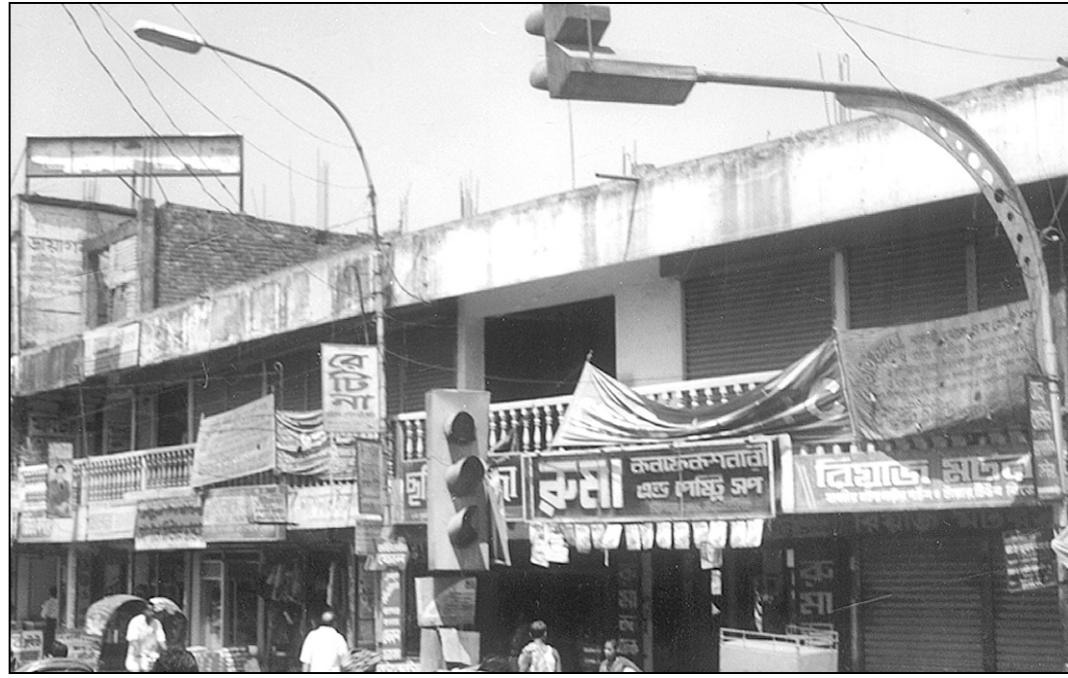


PHOTO: STAR

A faulty automatic traffic signal in Notun Bazaar area of Mymensingh town. Dwellers of the district town suffer a lot due to mess in traffic system, but the authorities concerned are quite indifferent to solve their problems.

## Six automatic traffic signals out of order in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Six automatic traffic signals installed in Mymensingh town at a higher cost are out of order for a long time due to lack of proper maintenance and negligence.

The traffic signals had been installed by Messrs NHS Corporation Ltd in 1998 at the cost of about Tk 50 lakh. After about one year, the traffic signals have gone out of order. Those are lying inoperative for more than two years, but the authorities concerned are not responding positively in this regard till filing of this report.

The signals had been set up at Gangina Par crossing, Notun Bazaar crossing, Station Road crossing and Shambhuganj Bridge crossing to ease the traffic jam in the district town.

But now the traffic signals are inoperative and the authorities concerned could not say when these would be repaired.

A source in Mymensingh Municipality has claimed that due to fund shortage the traffic signals could not be repaired.

Some town dwellers complained that the traffic signals have been damaged partially because of digging of roads and drains and due to the impact of heavy vehicles.

Meanwhile, in 1990, a total of 576 sodium lights had been installed in the Mymensingh municipality area at the cost of Tk 35,33918.

But only seven sodium lights are in order while the rest have been replaced by tube lights. Of 569 tube lights, 250 are in operation keeping many important areas of the town in deep darkness.

A sodium light needs about Tk 1,500 for repairing, but the cost of replacing a tube light is only Tk 300.

An official of the municipality told The Daily Star that Mymensingh Municipality runs short of fund, staffers and vehicles.

A Commissioner of the municipality Md Musa preferring not to be named told this correspondent that the inhabitants of the municipality do not enjoy the facilities of a first class one though it had been upgraded in 1986.

## Shopkeeper beaten to death in Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur

A shopkeeper was beaten to death by miscreants at Khilbaicha Bhuiyarchat in Sadar upazila on Saturday.

Witnesses said a gang of five miscreants attacked the shop of Abdul Matin, 30, at the market at about 10:30 am and beat him mercilessly.

He was admitted to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 5 pm.