

NEWS SNAPS

Two killed in Gazipur road accidents

UNB, Gazipur
Two men were killed under the running bus and truck on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway Saturday.

Residents and police said Abu Taher, 50, was run over by a bus near Maula crossing at about noon. In another accident, an unidentified man died after he was dashed down by truck at Shalna. Another report said police Saturday recovered a decomposed body from a pond near Dacca Dying Factory.

Adamjee contractor wants dues in time

UNB, Lalmonirhat
A labour contractor who worked at the local Adamjee jute procurement centre in Lalmonirhat threatened to commit suicide if his dues are not paid by the authorities in due time.

Nurul Islam, in writing, Sunday said that he would kill himself if his dues amounting to Tk 3.20 lakh is not paid within the next one month. Nurul Islam, only earner of his family, was working at the centre for the last nine years.

Little girl raped in Thakurgaon

UNB, Thakurgaon
A little girl was raped at Chilarang Dangipara village in Sadar upazila on Thursday. Police said when the victim, 11, went to the nearby field to bring her goat, co-villager Manik took her to the sugarcane field forcibly and raped her. The rapist went into hiding. A case was filed with the police.

Cash, valuables worth Tk 2 lakh looted

UNB, Brahmanbaria
Pirates looted cash and valuables worth Tk 2 lakh from the passengers of an engine boat at Panchgachia in Nasiragar upazila Sunday.

Witnesses said a gang of 12 pirates swooped on the boat at the point while it was going to Madhabpur from Tairkuria bazaar. They beat the passengers indiscriminately leaving a number of them injured. Later they looted Tk 1 lakh in cash, gold ornaments and other valuables and decamped with the booty.

Tk 2 lakh valuables gutted

UNB, Gazipur
Valuables worth about Tk 2 lakh were destroyed in a fire at Akkas market in Hydrabad area in Sadar upazila Sunday.

Gazipur Fire Service sources said the fire originated from short circuit in a factory and soon engulfed the adjacent area. The fire fighters with the help of local people extinguished the blaze after about two hours of frantic efforts.

Motivational campaign to realise tax

UNB, Comilla
Dogged by financial crisis, Comilla Municipality has launched a motivational programme to realise its outstanding bills, taxes and rents of shops amounting to Tk 4.33 crore from the town dwellers.

"Financial crisis of the municipality has reached such a stage that the authorities are now unable to disburse salaries of its officials and employees," said an official. Of the outstanding amount, holding tax accounts for Tk 2.39 crore, WASA bills Tk 1.38 crore and rents of its shops Tk 12.43 lakh. The authorities had issued letters to the municipality dwellers on a number of occasions requesting them to clear their outstanding bills and taxes, but their request went unheeded.

LGED implementing 224 uplift schemes

UNB, Nilphamari
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing 224 development schemes in Nilphamari.

Official sources said work of most of the schemes are going on in full swing while a number of schemes came to a halt in midway due to fund shortage. On the other hand, progress of 52 schemes under Rural Development Programme-21 is not satisfactory although adequate fund was sanctioned. Meanwhile, 1,266 mts of wheat was sanctioned in six upazilas to execute rural infrastructure programmes under Food for Works Programme. Nearly 85 per cent works of the schemes have already been completed.

195 development projects completed

BSS, Meherpur
A total of 195 rural infrastructure development projects in three upazilas of Meherpur has been completed in the last fiscal.

The projects undertaken in all three upazilas and Meherpur Municipality under Food for Works Programme. District Relief and Rehabilitation Department sources said a total of 1,105 tons of wheat were allotted to implement the projects. About 80,000 people in three upazilas of the district have been benefited by these projects.

Tele-link suspended in Thakurgaon

UNB, Thakurgaon
Tele-communication with Haripur upazila (UZ) headquarters in Thakurgaon remained suspended for the last few days causing immense sufferings to the local subscribers.

Telegraph and Telephone (T and T) office sources said the telephone exchange at the upazila headquarter is very old. It went out of order due to its dilapidated condition. It will take several days to repair the faults in the exchange, they said.

Allocation for road development

UNB, Bhola
The government has allocated Tk 50.70 lakh for the development of a road in Lalmonirhat upazila of Bhola.

Jute Minister Major (Retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed inaugurated the construction work of the road Thursday. The work on the road is expected to be completed within next two months. Earlier the minister inaugurated the new academic building of Shambhupur High School in Tajmuddin upazila. Facilities Department of the government has constructed four rooms of the school at a cost of Tk 17.50 lakh.

Robbers loot valuables in Jhenidah

UNB, Jhenidah
Armed robbers swooped on Halidham Bazaar in Sadar upazila in Jhenidah Wednesday and looted cash and valuables worth Tk 1.7 lakh leaving six people injured.

Police said the bandits, numbering 15-20, looted Tk 85,000 and other valuables from a corn merchant and five shops, injuring four night guards and two pedestrians. A case was filed.

Tourist spot in Sirajganj still a dream



PHOTO: STAR

Sirajganj town protection embankment along the mighty Jamuna has become a popular promenade for thousands at home and abroad. The area offers a panoramic view and holds the potential to become a bustling tourist spot. But the area still remains neglected.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

The popular demand for establishing a tourist spot on the 2.17-kilometre (km) long and half km wide Sirajganj river protection embankment, built at a cost of Tk 75 crore, is yet to be implemented.

This embankment built three years ago has increased much the beauty of Sirajganj town, situated on the River Jamuna and near the dream bridge-- Jamuna Bridge.

Every day thousands of old and young people from home and abroad come here and pass some time to relax together with their friends and relatives. Usually the rush of tourists increases on the public holidays including Fridays.

The embankment has become a very popular promenade for thousands of locals and outsiders.

The entire area offers a panoramic view and holds the potential to become a bustling tourist spot. A three-hour journey from the capital through the Bangabandhu Bridge on the Jamuna, Sirajganj has many other attractions for tourists round the year.

During winter, thousands of migratory birds flock on the sandy shoals rising from the Jamuna, creating a spectacular scene. The river water during this dry season is clear and many people travel to isolated shoals for picnic and a dip in the water.

During rainy season, the town's early morning fish market on the river bank gets busy with hundreds of fishermen arriving to sell fresh catches on auction. The fresh water fish are much cheaper compared to those in the capital or elsewhere.

Moving about in colourful sail boats on the river also brings joy to visitors. The long and beautifully carved walkway is probably one of the most attractive features of the town. At night the illuminated Bangabandhu Bridge, several miles away gives a breathtaking view.

Despite all these potential the area remains neglected. There has never been any initiative to build a decent hotel or an eatery for the tourists. The existing facilities are grossly inadequate for hundreds of people who come here to relax and pass their time close to the nature.

10,000 marooned in Pirojpur

Rain ruins crops, shrimps in Bhola, Aman in Jhalakati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy rains for the last few days damaged standing *Rabi* crops on several hundred acres of land and shrimp enclosures in Bhola and Aman seedbeds on a vast tract of land in Jhalakati.

A total of 10,000 people became marooned in South Bandar area of Mithbaria in Pirojpur due to heavy downpour for several days.

UNB reports from Bhola: Heavy downpour accompanied by tide water for the last few days caused extensive damage to standing crops and shrimp enclosures in Bhola.

Standing *Rabi* crops on several hundred acres of land in Tazumuddin upazila went under water and large number of shrimps washed away as two old embankments at Sadar and Tazumuddin breached due to pressure of tide water.

Meanwhile, several thousand people have been marooned in Sadar, Tazumuddin and Borhanuddin upazilas.

Local people said the new embankment at Tulatuli, three kilometer off the town, has also been facing

threat due to pressure of tide water. The town may be inundated at any time, they added.

Another report from Pirojpur says, about 10,000 people, including 2,000 destitutes, in South Bandar area of Mathbaria upazila have been marooned due to incessant rain and heavy tide water.

Low-lying areas in South Bandar went under 3-ft deep water disrupting road communication between Mathbaria and Bandar area.

A report from Jhalakati says: Aman seedbeds on a vast tract of land in Jhalakati have been damaged due to incessant downpour for the last three days.

Farmers said Aman cultivation might delay this year, as they have to prepare seedbeds again following the damage of the previous ones.

A lion portion of the commercial centre in the town including Katpotti, Rashpotti, Katcha bazaar, Amtola, Kapupara also went under water due to the heavy rainfall.

Drainage system blockade in the town and overflowing of canals has aggravated the situation causing untold sufferings to the dwellers.

Loadshedding multiplies woes of power consumers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Sufferings of the electricity consumers in Gopalganj town and other parts of the district have been increased due to frequent loadshedding for the last few

months.

Supply of electricity goes off frequently almost everyday affecting daily activities in business centres, clinics, hospitals, banks, insurance companies, factories, rice and flour mills. The teleprinter service is also hampered greatly.

Sufferings of the patients in the hospitals know no bound. Students are the worst sufferers. Usually there is no supply of electricity from six in the evening till about 10 at night. The situation in other parts of the district is not better.

Local traders told this correspondent that the entire business community have been suffering a lot due to lack of electricity from six to 10 every night. Most of the businessmen are compelled to close down their shops after sunset. This has been causing tremendous financial losses, alleged traders.

Hymaun Mia, a mill owner of Gopalganj natan bazaar in the sadar thana told that production in all the mills and factories have fallen down and the cost of production has gone up. They are compelled to retrench their labourers. They are also closing down their factories.

Consumers alleged that if they can reach an underhand agreement with the meter readers, they face no problem of overbilling including harassment.

When contacted with the Assistant Engineer (AE) of Power Development Board (PDB), Gopalganj, he told The Daily Star that failure in getting adequate power supply from the national grid is the cause of load shedding. He also informed that a sub-station of 13200 kv in required to meet the demand.

Killer gets life-term imprisonment in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Netrakona District and Sessions judge A K M Istiaque Hossain in a judgement sentenced one person to life-term imprisonment for killing.

The convicted person is Motiur Rahaman of village Bawshi in Barhatta upazila.

The case, in brief, is that Motiur Rahaman called Sukumar Saha of the same village to his home and killed him on September 2, 1993.

The judge, after examining the witnesses and evidences, found him guilty and pronounced the judgement.

UP member held on charge of forgery

UNB, Brahmanbaria

A member of Shyamgram Union Parishad (UP) in Nabinagar upazila was arrested on charge of widow allowance forgery on Tuesday.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) office sources said, UP member Nannu Mia, distributed the widow allowance of Rahima Begum, 50, widow of late Almas Mia of Saheb Nagar village for the period of January 2000 to September 2000 to another Rahima Begum, 34, widow of Nawab Ali of the same village intentionally.

Following a complaint the UNO formed an inquiry committee and the committee confirmed the forgery of the member after proper investigation.

Later he was handed over to police.

Three killed by lightning in Thakurgaon

UNB, Thakurgaon

Three people were killed and five others injured by lightning in Sadar upazila Saturday.

Witnesses said thunderbolts struck Dharendra Nath, 34, of Tetulia village and Bhabani Chandra Roy, 35 of Arazi Kristapur village while they were working in the field. Lightning also killed another unidentified man in Titupukur area.

Fazila Begum, 25, Nilufa Begum, 22, Rekha, 20, Rina Begum, 16 and Dulu, 16 of College Para area of the town were injured when thunderbolt struck them. They were rushed to Sadar hospital.

Seminar on income tax laws in Ctg

UNB, Chittagong

A seminar titled 'Changes brought about in Income Tax Laws 1984 through Finance Bill 2002' was held at ICAB's Agrabad office here Thursday.

Commissioner of Tax Zone-1 of Chittagong Ali Ahmed attended as the chief guest at the seminar organised by the Chittagong Regional Committee (CRC) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB).

MA Barea FCA, president of the organisation inaugurated the seminar while M Idris FCA, chairman, CRC-ICAB delivered the welcome address.

Housewife sustains acid burn injuries in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A housewife sustained serious acid burn injury in the Satpai area of Netrakona town on Wednesday morning.

Police and witnesses said, the husband of the victim, Badal Mia threw acid on his wife, Farida Begum, 35, at 6 am on Wednesday in his house.

Local people caught red-handed Badal Mia and handed over to police. A case was filed with Netrakona police station in this connection. Farida Begum was admitted in Netrakona Sadar Hospital for treatment.



Forest and Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj inaugurating the afforestation programme of the British American Tobacco Bangladesh in Kushtia by planting a sapling in the premises of Chechua Leaf Depot of the company on Wednesday.

College teacher manhandled in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A college teacher was physically assaulted by the elder brother and friend of a female Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinee in Kotha Koly Market area in Jamalpur town on June 17 noon following expulsion of the examinee.

The victim was identified as Md Ziaul Islam, Lecturer of Computer Department of Jahanara Latif Mohila College in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur.

College sources said Md Ziaul Islam as an on-duty invigilator expelled Shahina Akhtar (Roll No. 367564, Reg. No-694469, session-2000-2001), a student of Melandah Government College for cheating in Logic first paper examination on May 28. On the same day, the elder

brother of Shahina, identified as 'Jubo' warned the teacher that he did not do well expelling his sister.

When the teacher went to Kotha Koly Market on June 12 noon along with his uncle-in-law, 'Jubo' along with another person charged him for expelling his sister. At one stage, they assaulted him in public.

People rushed to the spot and rescued the victim. Later he was treated locally.

Jubo is a resident of Dewan Para in Jamalpur town.

Meanwhile, a memorandum has been submitted to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jamalpur demanding stern action against the culprits.

A complaint was lodged with the respective police station in this regard.

Kazal's fall stops money lending business

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah.

The money lending business in Jhenidah has virtually collapsed after the fall of the mastermind of illegal Hundi trade, Faruque Kazal of Kotchandpur Syndicate.

Now most of the money lenders are hiding as they are not in a position to refund the money of innocent depositors, alleged some depositors.

Following the business style of Kazal, about 2000 money lending centers in the guise of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been developed in Jhenidah since 1992. They were involved in only money lending business instead of other development activities what other NGOs are doing.

A section of village leaders, union parishad chairmen, members, village doctors, teachers of schools and colleges, government officers or employees, even some bank officials remained involve in the business.

These entrepreneurs invested their money at the rate of five per cent interest per month.

Whenever someone fails to repay the monthly installments with interest, he had to pay five per cent more as penalty. The rate of interest or penalty was so high that the innocent borrowers had to pay even three times than the principal amount.

Some of these money lenders managed registration from the department of Social Welfare, Cooperative department or Department of Women Affairs for running their trade. But they did not show the figure of transaction on their official books accordingly, rather, they maintained duplicate register.

Royera Bazar, a noted business centre in Saikupa upazila in Jhenidah remained famous for this business. This trade is known as Samity (society) business to the locals.

About 30 Samities had been doing their brisk business. About Tk one crore had been transacted through the centres every month. Each and every centre had sepa-

rate day and time to collect the money from the loanees.

On the other hand, the money traders collected savings from the loanees or depositors at the rate of Tk 110 per month assuring them to return Tk 10 thousand after a period of four years. They show Tk 100 in books, while Tk 10 more are taken against miscellaneous account. But the depositors are deprived of their money now.

Sometimes the money lenders had taken away goats, tins from the shade of houses or other belongings from the defaulters who failed to repay their loan in time. Here most of the money lenders allegedly patronised hoodlums or local influential men who were known as musclemen so that they could create pressure on the innocent loanees.

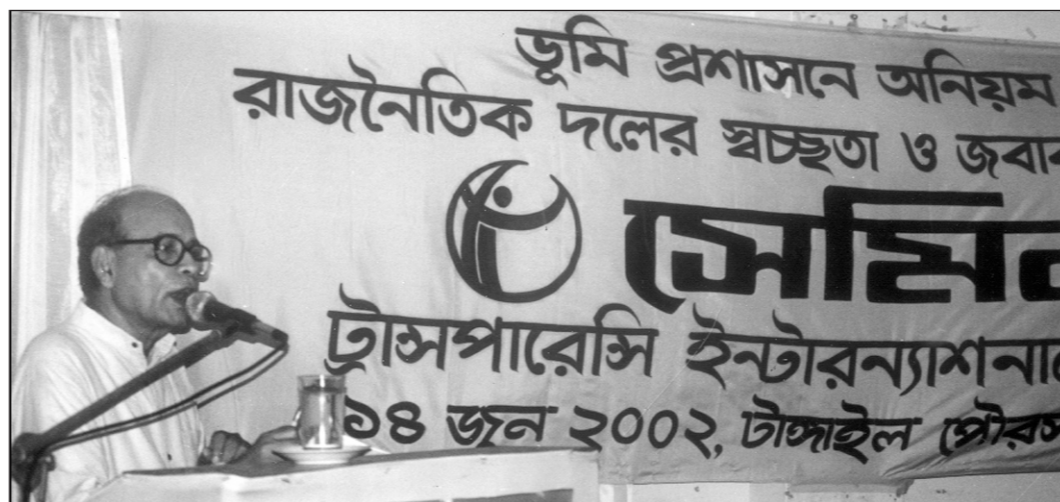
But the golden egg producing trade started collapsing when mastermind of Hundi trade Kazal was arrested for the first time in May, 2000 last.

Most of the money traders have deposited money to Kazal as Kazal provided 10 to 12 per cent interest against deposited amount per month. Money depositors could not get back money from Kazal till date. Although Kazal assured the depositors to pay back their money after his return from the prison.

It has thrown the money lenders in trouble and a good number of them have stopped their business for want of money. On the other hand, some loanees have stopped repayment of loan money to the money lenders.

Now the money lending centers, which once remained crowded with loanees and depositors, remain deserted. The business shops remain closed, the depositors have been searching the entrepreneurs here and there to get their money back.

Most of the money lenders have been hiding after collection of Tk one crore in different places, especially in Royera Bazar, Shekpara, Langabandh, Khulumbaria, Dhaura, Nagirhat, Hatfazipur, Garaganj, Bhatari and some other places of Shaikupa upazila in Jhenidah.



Transparency International Bangladesh recently arranged a seminar titled "Irregularities in Land Administration and Transparency, Accountability of Political Parties" at the Tangail Municipality auditorium.