

NEWS SNAPS

Old man killed in Bagerhat road mishap

UNB, Bagerhat
An old man was killed in a road accident on Bagerhat-Khulna highway Thursday. Police said Padakabiraz, 60, of Sadar upazila was critically injured when a bus hit his bicycle near Sighar bus stand in the town. He succumbed to his injuries at Bagerhat Sadar Hospital.

26 cell phone sets stolen from shop

UNB, Khulna
Twenty-six cell phone sets were stolen from the shop of a GrameenPhone dealer on Haji Muhsin Road here Wednesday night. Police said burglars broke into Alfa Telecom at the dead of night and looted the phone sets and some prepaid cards worth about Tk 2.60 lakh. A case was filed.

Three drug addicts handed over to police

UNB, Thakurgaon
Three drug addicts were handed over to police in Sadar upazila by their fathers Tuesday. The addicts were identified as Rafiqul Islam of Horimurup village, Aminul Islam Babu of Hazipara and Ansar Ali of Jagannathpur village.

Landless on rise in Shariatpur

BSS, Shariatpur
The number of landless people in Shariatpur is increasing day by day. Now the total landless people of the district are 5,71,802. According to official sources, of the total population, 60 per cent are landless. About six per cent people have no land even to build a hut. The number of landless people is increasing due to many causes including the erosion of the mighty River Padma, shortage of career opportunity and poor socioeconomic condition in this area. The people are becoming landless with the increase in population. The thana-wise landless people are as follow: 54 per cent in Sadar thana, 51 per cent in Naria, 57 per cent in Jaira, 60 per cent in Gosairhat, 45 per cent in Damuda thana, 57 per cent in Bhedargonj thana.

110 uplift projects implemented

UNB, Sirajganj
Some 110 development projects were implemented in Tarash upazila in the last fiscal year at a cost of Tk 47 lakh. The projects, implemented under Annual Development Programme (ADP), include fish farming and renovation of auditoriums and roads.



PHOTO: STAR
Badar Uddin Ahmed, chairman of Sylhet Municipality speaks at the inaugural function of the Service Week arranged by the Merry Stopes Clinic in observance of the World Population Day recently.

RCC implements water supply project

BSS, Rajshahi
The authorities of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) have implemented projects at a cost of about Tk 13.3 cr for supplying pure drinking water for the city dwellers in 10 years, said the officials concerned.

Under the projects, 15 deep tubewells at a cost of Tk 1.40 crore, 180 kilometres of supply lines involving Tk 8.73 cr, 750 stand post costing Tk 22 lakh and 3750 hand driven tubewells involving about Tk 2.5 cr were commissioned. In addition, the officials said, implementation of the first phase of the Water Supply Project in the RCC involving about Tk 19.82 cr have already been completed. The project funded by the government began in 1996 and was implemented by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE). They said, under the project 23 deep tubewells, three water treatment plants and 121 kilometres of pipelines have already been installed. DPHE will soon hand them over to the RCC authorities for operation.

One arrested with eight counterfeit notes

BSS, Jamalpur
A man was arrested along with eight counterfeit notes at Hazrabari Bazaar in Melandah upazila on Sunday. Police said the arrested person was identified as Faruk, 30, son of Iman Ali of village Fulkuha in Melandah upazila. When he paid Tk 500 after buying some bi-cycle parts from a shop, the shopkeeper, Rafiqul Islam suspected its originality and informed the concerned authority. Police recovered six counterfeit notes of denomination Tk 500 each and two notes of Tk 100 each from his possession. A case was registered with the concerned police station in this connection.

Comilla admin collects Tk 1 cr land tax

BSS, Comilla
Comilla district administration collected Tk one crore twenty-two lakh fifty eight thousand as land tax and other rents in the last fiscal year (2001-2002), exceeding the target. Official source said the target of land tax collection was fixed at Tk one crore twenty-one lakh eighty one thousand for the period. Of the 12 upazilas, Daudkandi upazila collected the highest Tk 10 lakh one thousand against the target of Tk eight lakh sixty four thousand. The per cent of the collection was recorded at 116 per cent. Laksam upazila collected the lowest Tk eighteen lakh ninety nine thousand as land tax against the target of Tk twenty one lakh and ten thousand.

Seminar on diabetic treatment at Jamalpur

BSS, Jamalpur
A daylong seminar on diabetic treatment was held at the conference room of the district council here recently. A total of 52 doctors, consultants and specialists, drawn from different upazilas of Jamalpur took part in the seminar. Split in two sessions, the seminar discussed various issues relating to appropriate treatment of the diabetic patients. The first session was presided over by Dr Hatem Ali, President, of Jamalpur Diabetic Association (JDA) while the second session was presided over by Dr Ansar Ali, Civil Surgeon, Jamalpur General Hospital. Associate Professor of Bardem Hospital, Dhaka, Dr Faruk Pathan, Assistant Professor, Mymensingh Medical College Hospital Nazrul Islam Siddiki, and JDA Secretary Syed Tariqul Islam spoke on the occasion.



(Left) Two submerged houses at village Kumarpara of Sadar upazila in Gaibandha. Inmates of the houses took shelter in safer places due to the worsening flood situation in the northern district. (Right) A van puller passes through a submerged road in front of the local supply depot (LSD) at Kabirpur in Saikupa Municipality. This road gets submerged even in slight rainfall. Waterlogging has become a chronic problem for the people of this municipality in Jhenidah, but the authorities concerned are quite indifferent to mitigate the sufferings of the people.



PHOTOS: IQBAL SIDDIQUE & DELWAR KABIR

Activists of outlawed parties active again 12 abducted in Magura for ransom in 6 months

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

The members of outlawed parties became very much active in four upazilas in Magura. After regrouping themselves they started collecting toll and kidnapping people from different villages for ransom with renewed vigour, local people alleged.

Although the new government directed the members of the law-enforcing agencies to become tough against the activists of outlawed parties, yet 12 people were abducted for ransom in six months and 200 incidents of toll collection reported from January 10 to July 1 this year. Most of the abducted persons were released on payment of ransom while some of them fled away from the clutch of the culprits tactfully. But in most cases, families of the victims did not file any case in fear of reprisal by the criminals.

People who were abducted from January 10 to July 1 are Omar Ali, 40, of village Chowgachchi in Sreepur upazila was abducted from his house. The villagers chased the culprits and rescued the victim. An abductor named Nazmul, 35, was beaten to death. On March 31, the general manager of a life insurance company, Zahir Ahmed was abducted by the armed miscreants from the Majhayel area in Sreepur upazila. At dead of night the victim fled away from the clutch of the miscreants when they remained asleep.

Stalin, 30, of village Titarkhpara in Sadar upazila was abducted by some armed miscreants in the guise of police on the night of April 19. On the following day another young man of the same village Dolai Mia

was abducted. Both of them were released on payment of ransom, locals said. Jhama, a girl of 11 years and a student of class five in Kanutia-Primary School in Mohammadpur upazila was abducted on May 20. Later she saved herself by jumping down from the running vehicle in the Boalmari area in Faridpur. On May 31, Khaled Ferdous Chandan, 20, son of a local journalist was abducted from the Magura bus stand area. He was shifted to the Pagla Kanai area in Jhenidah town. Family sources said the miscreants tortured him and threatened to write to his parents for ransom of Tk 3 lakh. But Chandan refused to do it and after three days of inhuman torture he tactfully fled from there.

On June 8, Yusuf, 15, a class nine student and son of Abul Hossain of village Shamnagar in Mohammadpur upazila was abducted when he was returning home from school. After two days he was released on payment of a handsome amount of ran som, locals said.

On June 9, the villagers of Atharokada in Sadar upazila rescued an abducted person Moniruzzaman who recently returned from Malaysia. The villagers chased the miscreants and caught two of them named Wahid and Shafique. They were handed over to police. They confessed to police they are the activists of an outlawed party.

On June 26 Khokon, 24, son of a retired headmaster of village Kupuria in Sreepur upazila was abducted. On July 1 three students of Mohammadpur Model Primary School Umy, 7, Rahima, 9, and Nasrin were abducted while they were on way to school. They were rescued on payment of a handsome amount as toll, locals said.

Although, abduction for ransom and forcibly toll collection are going on in full swing in Magura yet police are not so active to curb the trend. Talking to this correspondent a police official in Magura on condition of anonymity said they learnt about some incidents of kidnapping for ransom and silent toll collection. But nobody lodged any specific complaint with police. He sought people's active cooperation to help nab culprits.

The outlawed parties active in Magura were Gono Mukti Fouz, Biplobi Communist Party, (BCP), Sarbahara and Gono Bahini of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD). Besides, two private forces 'bahinis' were very active in Raghobdaye and Hazipur upazila. A housewife was chopped to death by unidentified assailants at Shaziali village in Sadar upazila on Friday. The deceased was identified as Ashura Begum, 40, wife of Abdus Sattar Akand. Family sources said the miscreants swooped on her at dead of night when she was asleep at the veranda of her house. The reason behind the killing could not be known. Police recovered the body the following morning and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy. Another report adds: A college student was killed and two other people were injured by lightning at Arabpur in the town on Thursday. Fazlur Rahman, a student of Jessore Cantonment College, fell dead while paying fare to the rickshaw puller during the thunder-shower. The rickshaw puller and another passerby were also injured in the incident. The injured were admitted to Jessore Combined Military Hospital.

Housewife chopped to death in Jessore

UNB, Jessore

3 schoolboys arrested for teasing girls

UNB, Sirajganj

Three schoolboys were arrested for disturbing girl students at Saleha Ishaq Government Girls' School in the town Wednesday. The arrested were identified as Rezaul, 14, son of Shamim, Masud Rana, 15, son of Rafiq Chowdhury and Shamim, 15, son of Nasiruddin. Meanwhile, police seized 607 bottles of phenistyl from a Dhaka-bound night coach from Hatikumul crossing in Shalanga upazila on Dhaka-Bogra highway Wednesday night.

In another drive, police seized 240 packets of cumin from another night coach on the same night.

84 illegal fishing nets seized

UNB, Barguna

A mobile court seized 84 illegal nets from the river Paira an Amtali upazila in Barguna on Thursday. Later, the fishing nets worth about Tk 1.34 lakh were burnt down in presence of a magistrate. Fishermen were catching fries and egg-carrying fishes from the river with these nets.

Flood victims in Netrakona need adequate relief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

With fall in water level in four major rivers in Netrakona, the flood situation has improved slightly in the district. But insufficient relief for the flood victims has caused their sufferings. They need badly food, drinking water, medicine and other necessities.

Relief materials supplied by the government are very insufficient. Government supplied only 207 metric tons of rice (GR), Tk 4,75,000 in cash, Tk 1,95,000 in cash for

house building, 850 bundle corrugated iron sheet, 840 pieces of saree, 840 pieces of lungi, 288 tins of biscuits to the affected people in 10 upazilas till filing of this report. World Vision Bangladesh, Durgapur ADP (Area Development Project) has distributed a negligible amount of relief materials. Caritas and some other Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) also distributed relief goods among the flood victims. But the relief materials are very insufficient in comparison with the needs of the flood affected people.

Separate incidents claim two lives in Joypurhat

UNB, Joypurhat

Two people were killed by miscreants in separate incidents here on Tuesday and Sunday. Police said they recovered the body of a 67-year-old tribal man, Bhuta Singh, of Tajpur village in Sadar upazila from a field at Kashpur in Panchbili upazila on Wednesday morning. Family sources said Bhuta Singh went to local market on Tuesday and he was missing since then. He is believed to have been killed following a land dispute. In another incident, Mozammel Huq, 52, of Sundarpur village in Sadar upazila was killed by miscreants on Sunday night while he was returning home from nearby Boroibari Bazaar. The reason behind the murder could not be known. Separate cases were filed.

Life-term for 3 killers in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Three people were sentenced to life-term imprisonment in a murder case by a court in Netrakona on Sunday. The court also fined convicts Ali Akbar Fakir, his accomplices Shamsuzzaman and Farid Tk 50,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more rigorous imprisonment (RI). The case history in brief is that Ali Akbar with the help of his accompi-

ces killed his wife Aleya Begum, member of Roaibari Union Parishad (UP) in Kendua upazila on December 19 in 1999 as she refused to pay him toll from a government project. After investigation, police submitted chargesheet against the accused. District and Sessions Judge Alhaj Ishtiaq Hossain handed down the judgement after examining the witnesses and records.



PHOTO: STAR
Jute bales are loaded in a big country boat at Kamarjani port in Gaibandha. The boat will sail for Narayanganj with the golden fibre. Despite unabated erosion by the River Brahmaputra this port is still used by the traders to carry jute elsewhere. A master plan is needed and adequate fund should be allocated to combat river erosion in this old river

Gaibandha port faces extinction

K M REZAUL HAQUE, Gaibandha

Kamarjani river port in Gaibandha Sadar upazila is on the verge of extinction following widespread erosion by the River Brahmaputra. A project to stop erosion here has been proposed with a fund of Tk 96 lakh which is yet to be approved by the concerned authority. Since the British regime Kamarjani was an important river port along the waterway starting from Dhupri in Assam to Kolkata in West Bengal. Large cargo ships used to sail to and from Kamarjani port elsewhere. There was one well furnished 'duk bungalow' on eight bighas of lands for the visiting high officials. Besides, there were many arrangements for their entertainment. As such this port was an important one. Jute, rice, paddy, pulse, mustard seeds were the main export items. Besides, kerosine oil, cloth, spices and other essential items were being carried from Kolkata to Dhupri. Still jute and paddy are being

despatched from this port to the capital city and Narayanganj despite frequent river erosion. Transportation of jute through waterway cost much lower than transportation by road. According to present rate it needs Tk 10 per maund of jute for transportation to Narayanganj whereas by road the transportation cost stands at Tk. 50 per maund. For the last three decades erosion of River Brahmaputra were going on unabated along the one and a half kilometre area on the western bank of the river at Kamarjani. The location of Kamarjani port was three kilometre eastward two decades ago. For the last five years erosion took serious turn and engulfed one and a half square kilometre area here. Many dignitaries visited Kamarjani on different occasions, but no master plan was taken to combat the widespread erosion of the Kamarjani port as yet other than minor steps during the rainy season.

Till date nearly 30,000 families lost their immovable property including homesteads, trees and plants. Many victims migrated to different districts while some of them still fight to survive on the abandoned embankment or on the roadside space. No major step was taken by any quarter to protect the area from the devastating erosion other than dumping few sand. Many ministers, the Water Development Board (WDB) high officials observed the erosion at Kamarjani, but the situation remained unchanged. Local political leader ATM Shamsuzzoha Bablu also echoed in a similar way. Water Development Board (WDB) undertook a project of Tk 20 cr for construction of a counter dam and two spurs at the up-stream of Kamarjani to divert current eastward, but due to fund constraint the plan could not be implemented.

Saifur opens bridge on Monu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman sought people's active cooperation for the implementation of uplift projects in Moulvibazar. The minister was speaking at a public meeting at Trapasa in Rajnagar upazila on July 12. Rajnagar thana BNP organised the meeting on the occasion of the inauguration of Trapasa Bridge on the River Monu on Rajnagar-Shamsernagar Airport Road in Moulvibazar. Saifur revealed in the meeting that there was not a single project for Moulvibazar during the five-year long Awami League (AL) rule. Not only this, he further said, they (AL) stopped the projects which were earlier taken up by the previous BNP government. He stressed the need for proper planning during implementation of any project. Earlier, Rahman inaugurated a week-long tree fair on the premises of Moulvibazar district Collectorate building as the chief guest. He said that the present government wants to make Bangladesh like Moulvibazar district for the preservation of environment where exists many fruit gardens and natural forests. He urged the people to get involved in the afforestation programme. He distributed saplings to the students of different schools free of cost. State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and M Naser Ahman, MP, were present on the occasion. However, it is alleged that a number of local journalists of some national dailies were not invited by the district administration to cover the inaugural function of the free fair.