

NEWS SNAPS

Housewife strangled

UNB, Kushtia

A housewife was beaten and strangled at village Jalrashi in Kumarkhali upazila Tuesday night. Family sources said the assailants killed Morzina Khatun, 36, when her husband Ansaaruddin went to mosque for saying tarabi prayers.

The killers hanged her body from the ceiling and looted some money before leaving the house. The killing might be linked with a conflict over land, police and locals said. Khairul and Habibor, nephews of Ansaaruddin, were arrested in this connection.

Housewife killed by miscreants

BSS, Satkhira

Hameda Khatun, 45, wife of Nur Ali Sardar of village Agordari in Assasuni upazila of the district was allegedly beaten to death by some unidentified miscreants on Saturday night.

Police and family sources said some unidentified miscreants hit her mercilessly on the head with heavy stone while she was sleeping on the veranda of her house. She died on way to Satkhira Sadar Hospital. The cause behind the killing was not known. A case was filed with Assasuni Thana Police. None was arrested in this connection.

Smuggled goods seized

UNB, Satkhira

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawans in their separate drives at Harikhali and Tangrakhali in the Kolaroa frontier area recovered various goods worth over Tk 73 lakh Wednesday.

They also arrested two men -- Jahangir Hossain and Samir Kumar - for trying to smuggle out the goods to India. The recovered goods included winter clothes, mobile phone sets, spare parts of mobile phone and watches.

Acid attack on woman

UNB, Chandpur

An old woman sustained serious burn injuries in an acid attack at village Santoshpur in Faridganj upazila Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Ayesha Banu, 60, wife of Nurmia Sarker of the village. Locals said miscreants, following a land dispute, threw acid on Ayesha when she was saying prayers in their house. She was admitted to Faridganj Upazila Health Complex. A case was filed.

Eviction drive in Kurigram

UNB, Kurigram

As part of its countrywide eviction drive, the Roads and Highways Department Monday began bulldozing illegal structures here to recover its land.

The team led by a first class magistrate and aided by police, evicted hundreds of establishments from alongside roads from Hingonroy and Nazira in the municipality area to Raoypur in Kathalbaria union.

Winter vegetable farming scheme

BSS, Chuadanga

Cultivation of winter vegetable this year in four upazilas of the district has started in advance on a vast tract of land.

All sorts of winter season vegetable like cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, brinjal, pumpkin, papaya and radish have flooded the markets, hats and bazaars of the district now. Normally cultivation of vegetable in winter season begins from the end of October every year in the district, but this year vegetable cultivation had been started before the normal period. As a result, vegetable growers got their produces so early, according to farmers.

Two arrested with firearms

BSS, Lalmonirhat

The army-led joint forces arrested two persons with firearms from the district town on Saturday night.

The arrested were Abu Bakar Siddique Mantri, 28, son of Sirajul Islam and Babu Rahman, 22, son of Abdul Haque of the town. The joint forces, in a drive, raided the town area and arrested them with Indian made revolver and pistol. Earlier, the army arrested six persons on different charges from villages Namatari, Surki Coloni, Tumol Para, Barbari in the district.

Boro farming on 31,000 hectares

BSS, Chuadanga

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Chuadanga has taken up a massive programme to bring 31,000 hectares under boro cultivation in the current season in four upazilas of the district.

According to official sources, of the total land, 5,500 hectares will be brought under boro cultivation in Chuadanga Sadar upazila, 9,000 hectares in Alamdanga upazila, 9,500 hectares in Damruhuda upazila and 7,000 hectares in Jibannagar upazila. The production target of boro paddy has been fixed at 1,50,000 tons.

Seed crisis to affect onion farming in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Faridpur is one the quality onion producing districts of the country. Every year farmers produce a huge quantity of quality onions and make a lot of profit by selling the produce and thereby lead a bit solvent life in the spring the harvesting season.

But this year the farmers are at a loss owing to acute crisis of onion seeds prevailing across the district now the sowing season of onion. Onion seeds are now selling at Tk 30,000 to Tk 32,000 a maund as against Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 a maund last year.

The prices of the onion seeds are still soaring as there is heavy rush of traders from Mymensingh, Tangail, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj and Rangpur who are visiting the onion

seeds growing areas of the district and purchasing seeds in bulk at abnormally high prices. As a result the marginal farmers cannot afford to purchase onion seeds which are now selling at Tk 800 to Tk 100 a kg in the retail markets. As a result the marginal farmers abruptly curtailed their seed sowing scheme by 60 per cent causing the proportionate fall in the output.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources, 2000 hectares of land in eight upazilas of the district will be brought under onion cultivation with a production target of 18,000 metric tons.

However, the target will be seriously affected owing to seed crisis and its price-hike persisting in the district.

Postponment of lotteries protested

UNB, Jhenidah

Over a hundred contractors laid a siege to the Executive Engineer's office of Education Engineering Department Wednesday for postponing the lotteries of some tender quotations.

The angry contractors kept the Executive Engineer, Wahidul Alam, confined for nearly an hour. He was later rescued by police.

The contractors alleged that the lotteries for 46 groups of work of the department involving Tk 8.02 crore were scheduled for Wednesday.

But the Education Ministry in a fax message signed by a senior Assistant Secretary asked the executive engineer to hold back the lotteries saying that the work orders would be given to some selected contractors considering the quality of their works.

The aggrieved contractors alleged that the tender quotations of these works were cancelled in the past due to irregularities and there is a chance of corruption again if the authorities distribute these works to the selected contractors.

Malaria killed 1,778 in 11 years in Khagrachhari

UNB, Khagrachhari

Malaria claimed the lives of 1,778 people and affected over 11 lakh people in the hill district in last 11 years.

This was disclosed at a meeting to exchange views between the officials of the civil surgeon office and local journalists Tuesday.

According to official records, over 150 people died of malaria and 85,447 inflicted with the disease this year alone.

Statistics provided to the journalists showed that highest 394 people died of malaria in 1994 while the lowest 43 in 1996.

The government has taken up a new programme with financial assistance from World Health Organisation (WHO) to check the disease, as its previous programmes could not yield satisfactory results.

7 including Sarbahara Party leader arrested

UNB, Jhenidah

Seven people, including a top leader of the outlawed Sarbahara Party and a union parisdad (UP) chairman, were arrested here Monday and Tuesday by the army troops.

The arrested were identified as Sarbahara leader Giasuddin, UP chairman Zahur Haq, Toffazzel, Amir Ali, Noor Muhammad, Nirapada Gosh and his wife Anjana Gosh.

Besides, the army men seized a loaded pipe gun, 302 bottles of phensidyl, one kilogram of hemp, Indian clothes and 20 Indian cows.

Giasuddin was wanted in a number of cases.

Miscreants kill auto-rickshaw driver in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

An auto-rickshaw driver was killed by miscreants on Narsingdi-Madanganj road in Arahazar upazila Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Rabiullah, 26, son of Shamsul Haq of Ramchandradi in the upazila. Police said two miscreants hired Rabiullah's auto-rickshaw at Madhabdi shortly after midnight and chopped him near bridge No-9 in Shantibar area as he kept driving ignoring their order to make a halt.

Local people rescued Rabiullah in a critical condition and he died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A case was filed with Arahazar thana.

Fake captain arrested in Meherpur

UNB, Meherpur

A fake army captain was arrested here Thursday for taking money from a number of people promising to give them jobs.

The arrested was identified as Mahmud Sagar, 31, of village Kesturi in Laxmipur district.

Mahmud arrived here from Laxmipur and married a 20-year-old girl, Kalpana, barely a month back. He later took money from some local people in the name of giving them jobs in the army.

Being tipped off by local residents, police arrested Mahmud.

Meanwhile, local BNP secretary Amjad Hossain arrested by the army was released from jail hajjat Thursday following a court order.

Two get life term in arms case in Kushtia

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Assistant Session Judge's Court, Kushtia, on Wednesday awarded life term imprisonment to two persons in an arms case.

The convicts are Niyamat Ali of village Nitaipara and Sahidul Islam of village Jotepara in Kumarkhali upazila of the district.

According to the prosecution, Kumarkhali police on February 2, 2002 raided the house of one person named Hazera Khatun at village Karatkandi in the upazila and arrested the two. They also recovered a rifle, a light machinegun (LMG) and 15 bullets from their possession.

After examining the records and witnesses, Judge Mohammad Jalaluddin pronounced the verdict.

Schoolgirl raped in Pabna: 3 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A schoolgirl was allegedly raped by a gang of miscreants on Tuesday evening in Gourigram under Sathiya upazila in Pabna district.

A gang of five men kidnapped the girl, a student of class eight, when she went to get water from a tube-well of the upazila health complex, and took her to a nearby college hostel where they gangraped her.

The gang was led by Delowar Hossain, 23, nephew of Mohammad Amir Ali, the district ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh. The other members of the gang are Gautom Kumar, Shakil, Babu and Iqbal, the sources added.

The joint armed forces in the

area raided the college hostel and arrested Delowar and Gautam, and rescued the rape victim from there.

Of the three other miscreants, Babu and Iqbal managed to flee while Shakil was arrested later.

The victim's medical test was performed under the supervision of Civil Surgeon of Pabna Dr Rafiqul Islam Mia, following which she was taken into safe custody. Medical sources said the young girl has been traumatised by the incident.

Meanwhile, news of the rape incident angered local people who brought out protest processions chanting slogans and demanding exemplary punishment to the rapists.

The victim herself filed a case with Sathiya Police Station in connection with the incident.

BNP men take control of Red Crescent office at Kushtia

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least seven persons were injured, one of them seriously, when a section of armed BNP activists allegedly assisted by the police took control of the Kushtia unit office of the Red Crescent after ousting all elected officials from the building on November 26.

According to eyewitnesses, some 30 BNP activists led by Towhidul Islam Bachchu, secretary of town BNP, stormed into the Red Crescent office, about 500 yards from the sadar police station at about 11:30am.

The BNP men assaulted the office bearers who were working inside the office and ransacked the office.

Police, who rushed to the spot about 30 minutes later, helped the BNP men to seize the office, witnesses said.

'Rus' festival in pictures

PHOTOS: RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI

The Monipuri community living at Adampur and its adjacent areas in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar district celebrated their main religious festival 'Rus Utsab' recently at the Adampur mondap. The festival lasted for three days which concluded on November 21. Thousands of people irrespective of caste and creed from Moulvibazar and other districts came to Kamalganj to enjoy the attractive programme. The theme of the festival is about 'Leela' (play) of Lord Sri Krishna. A dance-drama and 'Leela Kirtan' on Lord Sri Krishna were the main features of the festival. A little Monipuri girl plays the role of Radha Rani (top left), while another child shows the childhood play of Lord Krishna (top right). Tiny performers display the love affair of Radha and Krishna (bottom left) while some other girls play the role of 'Sakhis' (friends) of Radha Rani (bottom right).

1,500 bidi factory workers exposed to chest diseases

UNB, Kishoreganj

Some 1,500 people, mostly women and children, working in bidi factories in Kishoreganj are exposed to various chest diseases, including TB.

Three to four people come to local health complex with symptoms of TB on average everyday and they are subsequently sent to local TB Clinic for better treatment, said a non-governmental organisation (NGO) official who recently conducted a survey on bidi factory workers.

He said most of the people working in these bidi factories are from erosion-hit areas of the district. A large section of these workers live on flood protection embankments.

The bidi factory owners employ mainly women and children because they hardly complain of

low wage.

Doctors said bidi factory workers get affected with various chest diseases because of tobacco dust.

BDR personnel caught while trying to rape girl

UNB, Satkhira

Local people caught a Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) man Wednesday in the Kolaroa frontier area while trying to rape a young girl.

They gave Nayek Siraj of Kakkanga BDR camp a good beating and held him overnight. On information, senior BDR officials rescued him the following morning and closed him to the BDR headquarters.

Agri-loan for Pabna farmers

UNB, Pabna

Four banks, including Rajshahi Krishi Unnyan Bank (RAKUB) and Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), will disburse Tk 24.26 crore in nine upazilas of Pabna, aiming at boosting further the farm output.

Of the total amount, RAKUB will disburse Tk 17 crore, Janata Bank Tk 1.82 crore, Sonali Bank 3.19 crore, Agrani Bank Tk 1.13 crore and BRDB Tk 1.10 crore.

The banks and BRDB have already distributed Tk 2.18 crore among the farmers for aman and rabi crop cultivation, and the remaining amount would be disbursed in phases in the current rabi season.

Apart from the crop loan, the banks disbursed Tk 5.10 crore for other agricultural activities like sugarcane cultivation, dairy and poultry farming.