

SNAPS

Mymensingh police distribute warm clothes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh The local police administration distributed warm clothes among the poor in the town yesterday.

Youth held with revolver

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh Members of the Town Defence Party nabbed a young man with a revolver, two bullets and a large knife in Kewathkhal area of the town in the early hours of yesterday.

BNP activist murdered in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna A BNP worker—Qumrul Islam Babu, 25, was hacked to death Saturday night at Aichgati village under Rupsha upazila.

Rice production exceeds target

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria The production of Transplanted aman (T-aman) paddy has exceeded target during this harvesting season.

Netrakona AL, Jubo League dissolved amid in-fighting

Convening committee formed for Jan 22 council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Following years of intra-party conflict, district committees of Netrakona Awami League and its youth front Jubo League have been dissolved.

Ahmed as convener and Bhojon Sarker as joint convener has been formed, according to the letter sent from the central AL.

The convening committee of the district Jubo League has not yet been formed.

The district committees have been dissolved ahead of the district AL council, scheduled for January 22. The council was earlier scheduled for January 9.

Party council was not held since 1997 due to internal conflict.

Letters from the central AL office dissolving the bodies reached the district party offices on Thursday, party sources said here yesterday.

A seven-member AL convening committee headed by Abu Siddiq

Ali Khan Khasru belong to the Samsujjoha-led faction.

The conflict surfaced after the last general election as Shamsujjoha opposed Fazlur Rahman in getting party nomination.

When contacted, Fazlur Rahman Khan claimed that the Samsujjoha faction is backed by BNP.

Samsujjoha refuted the allegation. "I have no link with BNP", he said.

"I am running party activities in the district in an well organised way and I do not like grouping".

The sources said party leader and lawmaker from Netrokona Abdul Momin does not belong to any group and he did not visit Netrakona since the last election.

Intra-party rivalry intensifies over ticket for Kushtia-1 by-polls

3 each from BNP, AL in race for ticket

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A race for party ticket for by-election in Kushtia-1 constituency has given rise to intra-party rivalries in political parties including ruling BNP and opposition Awami League.

Prospective candidates from the parties are meeting party workers here and lobbying with party high-ups, sources in the parties said.

The seat (Daulatpur constituency) fell vacant following the death of BNP lawmaker and former state minister for post and telecommunication Ahasanul Haq Mollah alias Pancha Mollah on December 12 last year.

By-election is to be held within 90 days but the Election Commission is yet to announce the election schedule.

Intending candidates from BNP, AL, Jatiya Party (Ershad), BJP and JSD (Inu) are frequently visiting the area and meeting party activists.

Insiders in BNP said three party leaders are in the race for party ticket, giving rise to intra-party conflict.

They have declared their candidature and are trying to win over party workers. They are Daulatpur upazila BNP President Altaf Hossain, organising secretary Reza Ahmed Bachhu Mollah, son of late state minister Ahasanul Haq Molla and upazila BNP Joint Secretary advocate Ramzan Ali.

The insiders said party workers prefer a senior leader and a "strong" candidate to face AL in the polls.

The AL candidate lost four consecutive elections in the constituency to BNP candidates with small margins.

In the last parliamentary polls, AL candidate Afazuddin lost to BNP's Ahasanul Haq with about 5000 votes though Haq got about 15,000 Jamaat-e-Islami and BJP votes. This time Afazuddin will put up a "very hard contest", BNP insiders and political analysts told

this correspondent.

Meanwhile, the prospective BNP candidates have already started campaigning, often making accusations against rivals in the party.

On the other hand, BJP central vice-president M Korban Ali has launched a campaign to become a 'coalition candidate'. BJP is a component of the ruling four-party alliance.

This has created differing opinions among leaders and workers of the alliance partners in the area.

Korban Ali recently accused Reza Ahmed Bachhu Mollah of being involved in criminal activities.

"I will not campaign for any terrorist or criminal even if the BNP chairperson nominates him", he said.

The joint forces during the Operation Clean Heart caught Reza Ahmed twice on charge of smuggling but released him later,

organisational activities separately. This has caused frustration among workers at grassroots level and is hampering organisational activities, the sources said.

When contacted, Fazlur Rahman Khan claimed that the Samsujjoha faction is backed by BNP.

Samsujjoha refuted the allegation. "I have no link with BNP", he said.

"I am running party activities in the district in an well organised way and I do not like grouping".

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Fulchari, Kamarjani port protection WDB sitting on ECNEC approved project

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Work on the project to protect Fulchari upazila headquarters and Kamarjani river port from erosion by the Brahmaputra has not started this year despite approval by the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council).

"The project has been approved, but I have not received any order", the Executive Engineer of Gaibandha Water Development Board (WDB) told this correspondent when contacted recently.

He however said he is "expecting a positive move shortly".

The ECNEC recently approved a Tk 40 crore project for protecting the upazila headquarters and the river port. Of the amount, Tk 22 crore will be spent for Fulchari upazila headquarter and Tk 18 crore for the river port, other WDB sources said.

Discontent is growing among local people as large portions of the upazila headquarters and the river port have disappeared into the

river over the years because the WDB did not implement the protection project timely, some people's representatives claimed.

"It is high time to start the protection work, but so far no order has been received from higher authorities", said Solaiman Sarker Kachu, Chairman, Kamarjani Union Parishad.

Dry season is the appropriate time. But WDB will initiate the project work at the end of the season. The work will be affected with advent of monsoon, he regretted.

Last year, people of the upazila staged demonstrations, observed hunger strike and submitted memorandums to the local administration for protecting the upazila headquarters and the old river port.

Every year, during the rainy season, erosion by Brahmaputra turns serious and devours lands and properties, rendering hundreds of people homeless.

Solaiman said several thousand

people have become destitute in the last five years.

The then water resources minister Abdur Razzak during Awami League rule at a public meeting at Kamarjani on November 29, 2000 committed to protect the upazila headquarters and the river port.

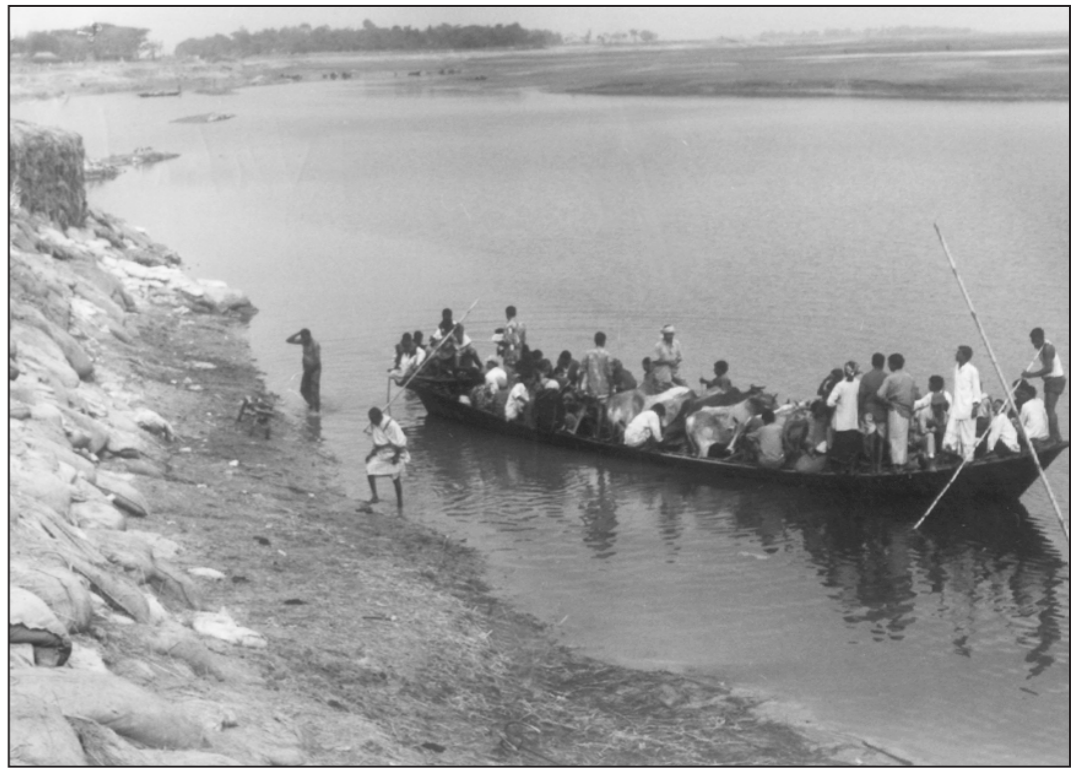
Accordingly, WDB prepared a Tk 45 crore plan and initiate work without approval of ECNEC and the Planning Commission.

The project included dumping of concrete blocks, construction of spurs and riverbank protection work.

The WDB spent nearly Tk two crore.

But after the BNP government came to power, no project work was done last year, reportedly due to lack of budgetary allocation and ECNEC approval, WDB sources said.

In the last rainy season, WDB dumped sandbags with its own funds as the erosion turned serious at Kamarjani.



Sandbags dumped last year at Kamarjani Ghat may be washed away in the coming monsoon, but who cares.

Bio-gas changes lifestyle in rural Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Bio-gas has changed the lifestyle of rural people in Gopalganj district.

The rural people are using bio-gas in household work in increasing number. Consumers can also save their hard earned money by using bio-gas.

Fifty bio-gas plants have been set up in different upazilas till now. Cooking fuel and organic fertiliser are produced in these plants.

According to the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) office sources, the bio-gas project started functioning during 2000-2001. Ten bio-gas plants have already been installed in three upazilas.

A project engineer told this correspondent that they had installed four bio-gas plants last year (2001-2002) and six plants this year. Six plants are community bio-gas plants while four are household bio-gas plants.

About 150 to 200 members may utilise the community bio-gas plant. Its cost varies from Tk 95,000 to 1,00,000 while the cost of household bio-gas plants varies from Tk 14,000 to 15,000.

A community bio-gas plant has been installed at Sheikh Ruhul Amin Muslim Mission at Ghosherchar adjacent to Gopalganj town. The production capacity of this plant is above 15 cubic metres of bio-gas.

The Mission also uses the organic fertiliser produced as by-product in the plant. This organic fertiliser is being used as fodder of fish of a fisheries project in the Mission area.

The Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Gopalganj had set-up 40 bio-gas plants in five upazilas during the last five years.

Md Jahid Hossain, In-Charge of the bio-gas project told this correspondent that villagers had been encouraged to use bio-gas because of simple mechanism in setting up of plants.

About seven or eight cows are

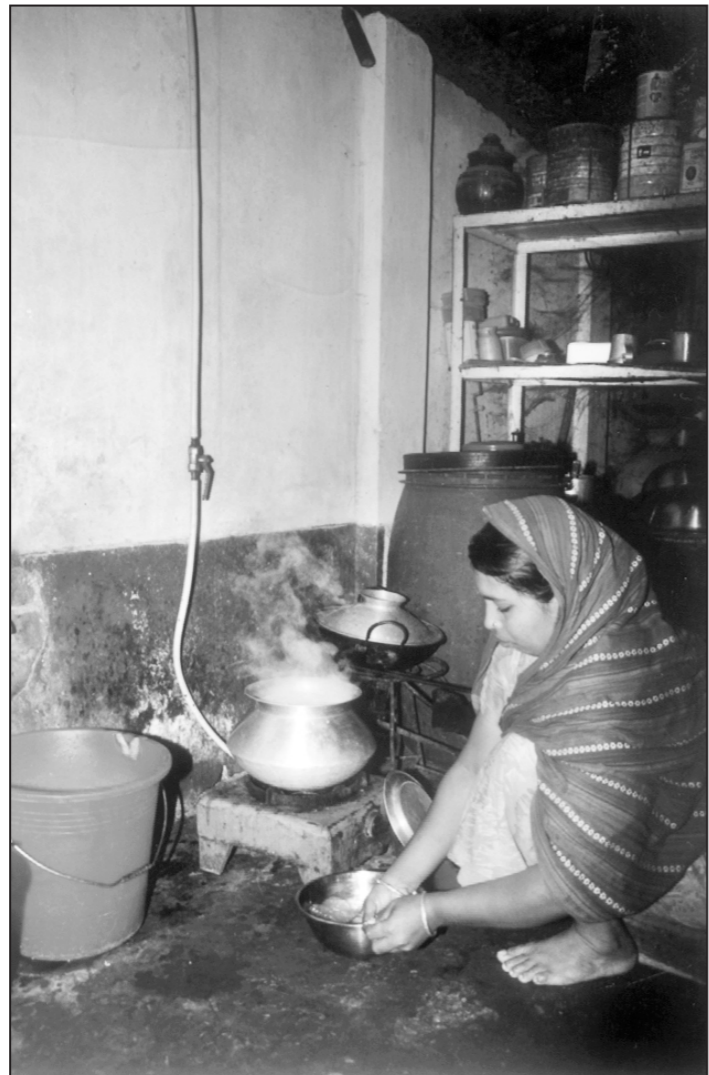
required. Their cow-dung are mixed with water in equal ratio and stored in a tank. After about 10 to 12 days bio-gas is produced which is supplied to kitchens through plastic pipes. Five to six families can easily cook their food, light their house, operate the water pump and an incubator with the gas.

A sub-assistant engineer of the project said 65 to 70 per cent of the gas is methane which is a better fuel than firewood. The rest 30 to 35 per cent gas is car-

bon-dioxide. People use this gas like natural gas which is also good for the environment.

About three cubic metres of gas is produced in one such plant at a cost of Tk 14,000 to 15,000. The government gives Tk 7,500 as subsidy per plant. A plant can run for 30 years.

Hamidul Hoq Dulal, of Khatra in Gopalganj Sadar thana is a bio-gas user. He told this correspondent during his visit to his plant that bio-gas had changed the lifestyle of his family.



A housewife at Kharta under Gopalganj Sadar upazila cooking with biogas produced in the plant installed in the backyard of the house. The gas flows into the kitchen through a pipe seen in the picture.

They are voters but have no social right

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

They are Bangladeshi citizens and are voters but have no right have a cup of tea at a stall or sell their products in the market.

Over fifty Hindu families of Baisho Samproday (a Hindu caste) at Mahish Khocha village under Aditmari upazila are virtually leaving an isolated life. Atul Chandro Roy, a member of the community told this correspondent during a recent visit. The village is a Muslim majority area.

All these are because they raise boars at their homesteads and take its meat, he said.

A member of the community went to a village for a cup of tea. After persuasion, the tea stall owner stealthily allowed him to take a cup of

tea. But when some people came, Atul had to pay a five of Tk 2, the amount equal to the price of a cup of tea.

The poor peasant families are mainly dependent on producing and selling bamboo-made products. But they are not allowed to sell their products at Mahish Khocha bazaar due to a verbal order a village elder belonging to the Muslim community.

Atul said they are living an inhuman life.

He said they made a complaint to the local administration, but it to no effect.

He said there may be social unrest if the problem is not resolved.

8,662 bottles of Phensidyl seized from truck at Kafura in Faridpur

BSS, Faridpur

Trafficking of Phensidyl through Faridpur district has increased alarmingly in recent days, Faridpur Police Super (SP) S M Hafizur Rahman told newsmen.

Police seized 8,662 bottles of Indian Phensidyl syrup from a Barisal-bound truck on Faridpur-Barisal highway at Kafura in the small hours of Saturday.

A police team led by the Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali thana, C A Halim followed a truck while it was

crossing the town. Police challenged the truck at Munshir Bazaar filling station and found 57 sacks containing Phensidyl bottles.

Police also arrested Anwar, 25, Monsur Ali, 38 and Sohag, 25.

The SP also told newsmen that the arrested were carrying contraband syrup by truck from Jibannagar area of Chuadanga district. This is the biggest ever haul of Phensidyl in the district, he disclosed.

A case was registered with Kotwali police.

380 MT VGF rice doled out in Laxmipur

BSS, KAXMIPUR, Noakhali

The government has distributed 380 metric tons (MTs) of rice among the poor and destitute in four upazilas of the district.

Official sources said the rice was distributed among 38,000 families under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme.

Each family got 10 KGs of rice. Of the total, 155 tonnes were distributed in the Sadar upazila, 105 in Raipur, 55 in Ramganj and 65 tonnes in Ramgati upazila through VGF cards.

Loan for the retarded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Social Service Department of Sundarganj upazila disbursed interest-free loans among 28 retarded persons under a rehabilitation programme for acid burnt and physical handicapped on Thursday.

A discussion meeting was also held at Sundarganj Upazila Auditorium on Sunday. Presided over by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Tapan Kumar Ghosh the meeting was by local Member of Parliament (MP) Mowla Abdul Aziz as chief guest.

An amount of Tk 2, 82,000 was disbursed among 28 retarded persons for petty business and goat or poultry birds rearing.

Pneumonia kills 5 more in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Five more persons including three child died from pneumonia and other cold-related diseases in Dupchanchan upazila in the last two days.

This raised the death toll from these diseases to 26 in 19 days in the district, sources at Bogra Civil Surgeon's office said yesterday.

Those who died in the last two days include two-month-old Asikur Rahman, Roman Younes, 8, one-year old Mohoshina and house wife Sondori Das, 70.

Other sources claimed that at least 27 people are now suffering with the diseases in the upazila. Fifty children were attacked least week in Dupchanchan.

20 hurt as 'smugglers' clash in Lalmonirhat

5000 phensidyl bottles, 20 kg hemp smuggled in daily

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least 20 people were injured as alleged smugglers clashed over sharing Tk 20,000 earned from sale of smuggled phensidyl at Mogolhat border in the Sadar upazila in the early hours of Friday.

Three of the injured - Faruk, Dalu and Vuulu - have been admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in critical conditions, police and hospital sources said. The rest were treated at the local health complex.

The injured include Malek, Soharab, Dinesh, Hares, Hanif, Mamun, Munshi, Halim, Faysal, Gani, Waris, Rishad, Habu, Sumon and Chhatku, all from Karnapur and Kumarjani villages under

Mogolhat union.

Police and local people said the groups also smuggle hemp, wine, spices, cloth, vehicle spares and by-cycle from India.

Police said a case was yet to be filed.

There are several godfathers of smugglers who control and guide organised gangs of smugglers, they alleged.

At least 5,000 bottles of phensidyl and 20 kilograms of hemp and other drugs are smuggled into the country through Mogolhat and Durgapur border every day, they claimed.

Contacted over telephone, the BDR command at Lalmonirhat denied the allegation.



Even the floor at Children's Ward at Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital is packed with pneumonia patients. The photo was taken yesterday.