

SNAPS

Better late than

never

A CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*
Handbill on Phumonia

The Patuakhali Health Department yesterday launched a campaign in the district to create public awareness about pneumonia and other cold-related diseases.

At least 72 children died from Phumonia in the current winter till December, official sources said earlier.

Health officials and workers are distributing leaflets and advising people on symptoms of the diseases and to report to doctors as early as possible in case of any attack.

This has raised curiosity among people, who often make complaint of lack of facilities at government hospitals.

Journalists' training workshop begins.

A CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*
A 5-day training workshop for journalists began at the LGED auditorium in the town yesterday.

Twenty-one journalists from six districts of Barisal zone are taking part in the workshop, organised by Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) with assistance from UNICEF.

The theme of the training is 'Communication Activities for Development of Children and Women'.

Amanullah, former director general of PIB, inaugurated the workshop. PIB Trainer M Aliur Rahman, ADM Sad Bin Rabu, Barisal Radio center regional director Shah Alom also addressed the inaugural function.

Patuakhali Press Club President Golam Kibria presided over the opening session.

Child crushed by truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*
A three-year-old girl-- Bristy-- was crushed under the wheels of a truck while she along with her mother was crossing the Brahmanbaria-Dhaka highway at Shuhilpur in the Sadar upazila Tuesday afternoon.

On information, police rushed to the spot and seized the killer truck but the driver escaped.

New MCCI committee formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A seven-member executive committee of Moulvibazar Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI) led by Md Abdul Wadud as President was formed at its annual general meeting (AGM) at a community centre here recently.

Outgoing MCCI President Syed Mohsin Ali presided over the meeting.

All directors were elected unopposed while Muhibur Rahman Tarafder became the first Vice-President and Md Samsul Alam became the second Vice President. Elected members are Anker Ahmed, Dr M A Ahsan, Md Tara Miah, Syed Mofassil Ali, Mahmudul Haque Tarafder, Syed Muzammel Ali, Bakshi Misbahur Rahman, Abdul Rakib, Rashid Uddin Ahmed, Syed Liakat Ali, Syed Abdur Rouf, Md Ansar Ahmed, Md Abu Taher, Sajal Kanti Ghose and Abu Sufian.

Disabled rape victim under threat to withdraw case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Magura*

A disabled rape victim and her mother are being threatened by alleged rapist at Bhabonpara village in Mohammadpur upazila to withdraw case or face eviction.

The alleged rapist, Osman Molla, son of Adiluddin Molla of the same village is now moving freely. Police did not arrest him even after about a month of the incident. The incident sparked widespread protest from local people and NGOs. Three hundred disabled formed a human chain in Magura on December 17 protesting the incident. They demanded culprit's immediate arrest. They submitted memorandums to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Magura.

Meanwhile, the victim came to this correspondent's house on Sunday. She informed him about police inaction and rapist's threats who is allegedly protected by an influential quarter.

The 22 years old physically handicapped was returning home from a nearby bazaar at around 7 pm on December 15 when Osman caught her and raped her behind a police firing at Modhupur, Tangail.

The victim filed a case with Mohammadpur thana on the next day.

The correspondent tried many times to contact the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, SI Yakul Hossain for his comments, but failed.

Agitation for Chilahati land port gaining momentum

Rallies, processions tomorrow, tougher programmes to follow

E A M ASADUZZAMAN, *Nilphamari*

The demand for upgrading the Chilahati land customs station to a land port is gaining momentum because of the authorities' 'mysterious backtrack' though the station has better facilities than other spots in the region for trade with India, Nepal and Bhutan.

He demanded immediate steps in this regard and said an all-party body will be formed to realise the demand.

District CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh) President Sreedam Das and former lawmaker from Jatiya Party Ahsan Ahmed also demanded implementation of Chilahati land port.

Alamgir said there had been some progress in the official process for setting up of a land port at Chilahati following suggestions by the then FBCCI (Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries) President Abdul Awal Mintoo in March 200 and Bangladesh Land Port Authority Chairman Sharif Atiquee Rahman in May last year. But these were stalled.

Ne p a l e s e C h a m b e r o f Commerce and Industry President Mr Satial during a visit on August 5, 2000 also favoured Chilahati for a land port because of his country's interest to use Mongla port facilities and its (Chilahati) proximity to

Jonab Ali said former prime minister Sheikh Hasina had given directions for taking 'proper steps' in this regard after he and AL Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor (now a lawmaker) placed the demand before her.

Saidpur airport, only 65 kms away, she said.

Chilahati has more geographical and infrastructural facilities than any other spot in the region to promote trade with India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Chilahati is only 11 kms from Holdibari in West Bengal, a flourishing business centre with a big railway station and having good rail and road links with rest of India.

Chilahati and Holdibari had a railway link till 1965 (Indo-Pak war). Darjiling mail used to go to Calcutta using this track since the British period. Only laying of 8 kms railway line in Bangladesh territory and 3.14 kms in India may revive the traditional railway link.

Other sources said Bangladesh government had prepared a four and a half crore taka budget for this purpose, but the project is not implemented for reasons unknown.

Chilahati land port will reduce carrying cost and time, increase Bangladesh Railway's income and provide employment to a large number of people.

On the other hand, import through Burimari and Hili customs takes 5-6 days due to lack of facilities, thereby increasing the cost and often damaging imports.

Moreover, Rangpur is only 64 kms from Chilahati and 160 kms from Burimari. Bogra is 200 kms from Chilahati and 270 kms from Burimari. Nilphamari is 45 kms from Chilahati and 90 kms from Burimari.

Indian exporters also prefer Chilahati to Burimari and Hili as Jalpaiguri district town in India is only 22 kms from Chilahati and 50 kms from Burimari.

Business leaders in Nilphamari claimed that transportation of goods by truck from Delhi, Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar costs Tk 1500-1600 per ton up to Hili and Tk 1300-1400 up to Burimari.

It will be around Tk 1200 up to Chilahati by truck and Tk 700 by train, they claimed.

Being an old business centre, there are big godowns, an automatic telephone exchange, customs office, two commercial banks, a BDR camp, police station, roads towards all districts of Bangladesh, a vast space for loading and unloading there.

Products of Uttara EPZ (export processing zone) in Nilphamari may be exported through

Chilahati land port.

The Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industries (NCCI) had appealed to the then prime minister on March 5, 2000 to set up a land port here.

Considering these facilities and FBCCI suggestion (in a letter to the then communications minister on March 13, 2000), the then communication minister suggested laying of a rail track between Chilahati and Holdibari to anchor it. They then tied the crew.

Another vessel came with some people on board. They took about one thousand bags of salt onto their vessel. The loading and unloading continued for a long

Vessel looted, crew abducted near Barisal port in daylight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Armed miscreants looted about 1,000 bags of salt from a cargo vessel and abducted two crew at Char Abdani on the Kirtokhola Channel near Barisal port during daytime Monday.

MV Darbar Sharif was going to Jhalakati from Chittagong with about 4,000 bags of salt.

As the dacoits left, other crew of the vessel informed local people, who informed police.

Kotwali police said they seized the abandoned vessel with the rest about 3,000 bags of salt at 10 PM Monday.

Police could neither arrest the miscreants nor rescue the abducted crew till filing of the report on Tuesday.

They said they have contacted police in Chittagong and Jhalakati to trace the owners of the cargo and the goods.

Polashbari Test Relief foodgrains scam

19 face case, property attachment ordered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

The authorities in Gaibandha ordered release of the food grains without confirmation from the ministry or any other relevant authorities. The lifted food grains were sold in the black market.

The ministry later denied issuing the 28 orders.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Sirajul Islam Sikder and Palashbari Upazila Project Implementation Officer Shamsul Huq were suspended for 'gross negligence in duty' after a three-member probe committee headed by relief ministry secretary Fazlur Rahman detected the scam.

The matter was referred to the Bureau of Anti-corruption, which submitted a report to higher authorities suggesting filing of case.

But others involved in the scam are yet to be brought to book.

Land dispute with Pourasabha Court showcauses Gaibandha DC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

that as per CS record 1940, the land (02 decimal plot, No. 6044) was donated to the then Gaibandha Pourasabha by its owner Jodhu Nath Chakravarti.

As the municipal office started constructions for raising shops on the land, Assistant Commissioner, Land on December 7 last year issued an order on the municipal chairman to stop the work, saying the plot is a khas land (government land) according to RS record of 1962.

On December 24 last year, the DC opened an office of Gaibandha Diabaties Samity, erected on the land.

Lalmonirhat AL men fleeing homes

48 facing 'false' cases, AL leaders say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Local leaders of Awami League (AL) and its front organisations Chhatra League and Jubo League are fleeing homes in the town to avoid arrest following filing of cases by ruling BNP men for alleged violence during the AL-called countrywide hartal on January 3.

Nineteen others have been accused in another case filed by Chhatra Dal leader Saju.

They alleged that police did not accept any case by AL men against BNP men for creating violence and attacking AL men during the hartal.

Chhatra Dal leader Nabin filed a case against 29 people including

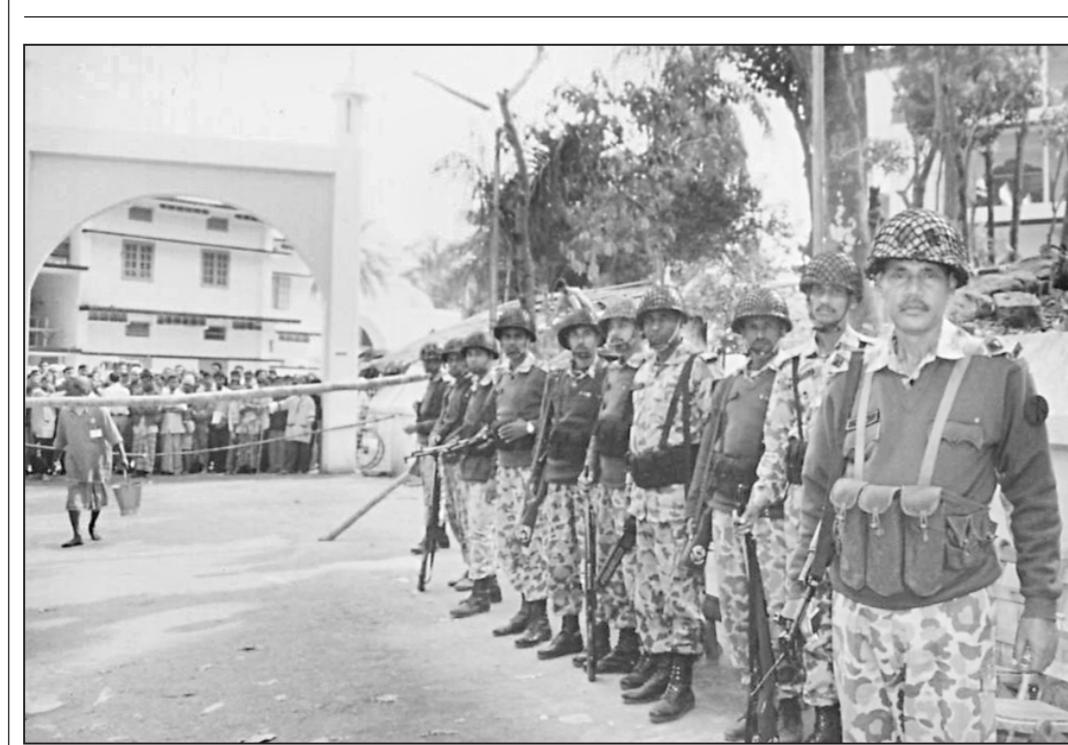


PHOTO: STAR
Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel guarding the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) at Sylhet following a bomb explosion on Monday night.

Eco Park at Modhupur
Punishment to tribal youth's killers demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Okyabuddha Nagarik Andolon, a citizens' movement, has demanded exemplary punishment to culprits involved in killing of tribal youth Peren Snal at Modhupur, Tangail.

Earlier, a big protest procession paraded the streets of Joynagacha.

The Andolon leaders placed floral wreaths at the grave of the deceased and prayed for eternal peace. They also visited Peren's house and expressed sympathy to his family members. They handed over Tk 20,000 to Peren's widow for the family's rehabilitation.

They visited the site of Eco-park where it is being constructed ignoring the aspirations of Garo and Coach people.

The team consisted of Sheikh Sultan Ahmed and Sohrab Hossain, general secretaries of Mymensingh and Tangail units of the movement. Mahbubul Alam, Shahadat Hossain, Foyzur Rahman, Nazirul Islam Moni, eminent journalist Zia Uddin, Tofazzol Hossain, M A Sattar, Shahena Begum, Srimoti Shaha and Kanai Lal Das.

Paramedical instt to be set up in Rangamati
Health minister at CHT DAB council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr. Musharaf Hussain has said a paramedical institute will be set up in Rangamati to improve healthcare services in malaria-prone Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

He was addressing a biennial conference of CHT regional unit of Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), held at local RHDG auditorium on Monday.

The 4-party alliance government has taken a massive programme to improve healthcare services, he said.

He said government doctors will have to begin their career with at least a two-year service in the CHT. After two years, they will be given 'good posting' as a reward.

The minister urged doctors to provide health care service to the poor and backward CHT people with cordiality.

DAB leaders, while speaking,

Corruption: Bogra literacy movement closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogra*

All the activities of Total Literacy Movement (TLM) were suspended here due to massive corruption.

Sources in the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Education and Development office told this correspondent that the government suspended the activities of second phase of TLM due to misappropriation of Tk 7 cr of the project.

The progress report of the first phase of TLM was not satisfactory as 45,000 people failed to attend classes.



PHOTO: STAR
People from all walks of life staged a sit-in on Barisal-Dhaka highway at Gourjani on Tuesday demanding mobile phone facilities in the area.