

SNAPS

Warm clothes distributed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Kamal Associates, a voluntary organisation, distributed 3,000 warm cloths among 200 poor people in 10 villages in Daulatpur upazila recently. The villages are Khalisakundi, Dangmarka, Ramkrishnapur, Praggur, Kalidaspur, Jagannathpur, Rifyatpur, Braganadia, Omarpur and Jhodia. Asgar Ali, former union parishad chairman and present UP member Belal Hossain were present there.

2 brothers get life for killing brother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two brothers were given life term imprisonment for killing another brother over a land dispute. Abdul Matin, Judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, handed down the punishment recently to Mamun Mallick and Babul Mallick for killing their brother Monir Mallick on April 24, 2000. They are sons of late Azhar Mallick of Chhoilabunia village in Mirzaganj upazila in Patuakhali district. Monir's wife Eliza Begum had filed a murder case with Mirzaganj police. Thirteen witnesses were examined during the trial, court sources said.

# Learning, loan and health tips for women at doorsteps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Once illiterate Mita, 22, can read and write now. She also gets micro credit and health tips. But she is not required to go out

of her house to avail the facilities. She gets those sitting on the courtyard of her house at Panchakori village in Monirampur upazila in Jessore district.

Mita is one of the 28 members of a women's association in the village, styled Shukhi Samity (happy association), federated under the Coordinated Health and Loan Programme, run by Ad-Din,

an NGO.

Mita, Bhaboti, Jamuna, Ayesha, Nazma, Putul, Parvin and other members of the Samity sit on mats on a courtyard on Saturdays. A teacher, a loan official and a health assistant from the NGO come to their doorstep and provide the services.

At the meeting, they also discuss various social problems and superstitions and ways to remove those. They pay back weekly instalments at the meeting.

Like them, several thousand women in 571 villages in Jessore, Magura and Narail districts now get education, loan and health tips from Ad-Din, sitting on their yards.

Talking to this correspondent, Mita and others said they are getting the healthcare facilities through a 'health insurance' done at a cost of Tk 100.

They said they are now aware of common diseases and the care to be taken during pregnancy, childbirth and post-natal period. All have sanitary latrines at homes.

The NGO officials also discuss with them family planning, causes for common diseases, prospects for income generating activities and children's education.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of the Shukhi Samity discussing income generating activities and healthcare at a meeting on the courtyard at Panchakori village in Monirampur upazila.

## Boro farming on 3.20 lakh hectares in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A total of 3,19,844 hectares of land are being brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation in 11 districts under BADC's Barisal Zone this year with a production target of 10,32,708 tonnes of rice.

Of the total, Boro will be cultivated on 2,86,855 hectares and IRRI on 32,989 hectares, according to sources in Agriculture Extension Department's (AED).

The sowing is going on in full swing, they said.

The district wise target is 54,610 hectares in Barisal district, 16,900 in Pirojpur, 8,400 in Jhalakathi, 36,150 in Bhola, 7,540 in Patuakhali, 354 in Barguna, 16,590 in Rajbari, 750 in Faridpur, 16,800 in Gopalgong, 40,200 in Madaripur and 30,350 hectares in Shariatpur district.

BADC has distributed good seeds and ensured availability of fertilizer, they said.

## Fertiliser for free distribution recovered from BNP leader's godown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Hizla police have recovered 47 bags of chemical fertilizer, meant for free distribution among flood affected people, from the godown of Hizla upazila BNP secretary Mezbahuddin Chowdhury Apu. Godown employee Basu Mia has been arrested.

The recovered fertilizer was part of 530 bags allotted for free distribution under government's post flood agriculture rehabilitation program.

Police said, acting on a tip-off, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sanjaya Kumar Banik, Hizla thana OC Mir Fasiar Rahman and the Upazila Agriculture Officer checked the godown and recovered the fertilizers.

When contacted, Apu said Hizla-Gourabdi Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Gaffar Talukder requested him to keep the fertilizer in his godown due to shortage of storage facility. But Gaffar denied this.

## Work on Dapdapia bridge begins Apr 15

BSS, Barisal

Construction of Dapdapia bridge across Kirtonkhola river will begin on April 15.

The bridge will cost Tk 223 crore including a foreign exchange component of Tk 175 crore.

Soil test, site selection and other preliminary engineering work have already been completed at the project site, one-kilometer upstream from the Dapdapia ferry terminal, official sources said here yesterday.

The 1,390-meter long and 10-meter wide bridge will be constructed with an excellent 'Y' shaped architectural design.

Another 270-meter long and 10-meter wide approach bridge will also be constructed over Khairabad canal. The bridges will connect Patuakhali and Bhola districts through road.

The work will be completed within 48 months.

## TENGRATILA BLOWOUT

# Probe extended by 10 days, proper compensation demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The high level body probing the Tengratila gas field blowout has been given a ten-day extension to complete its work.

It was to submit its report by January 20.

Talking to this correspondent, a member of the committee preferring anonymity on Thursday said, "We need more time to probe because the job is highly technical".

The committee members visited the site once and then held a meeting. They will visit it again, he said.

"The technical aspects have to be scanned properly as it is a different kind of investigation. Many things will depend on the report", he added.

"We are trying to complete the work at the earliest, the official said.

The committee headed by Ehsanul Fattah, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, was formed on January 10.

Other members of the committee are Petrobangla Chairman SR Osmani, Moinul Haque from its hydrocarbon unit, Sylhet Gas Fields Company Managing Director Rahman Mushed, representatives from environment ministry and Sunamganj district administration.

The January 7 blowout caused a huge damage to gas as well as natural resources in the area where Canadian company Nico was engaged for exploration.

It had engaged the Chinese Petroleum Training and Development Corporation (CPTDC) for drilling as a sub-contractor.

The committee members while visiting the site on January 14 talked

to engineers, workers and employees of Niko and the Chinese company and local people who had had to leave homes following the blow-out and fire.

Meanwhile, Niko started work on Wednesday for constructing a fresh hydrocarbon unit, Sylhet Gas Fields Company. The relief well where the blowout took place.

The relief well is being drilled to "seal" the main well through "directional drilling", the official added. It may take four to six weeks to complete the preparatory work to start drilling, he said.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent adds: The Sylhet Divisional Development Council (SDDC), a civic body, has demanded compensation for the people affected by the blowout in Tengratila gas field in Sunamganj.

In a statement on Thursday SDDC President Ragib Ali and General Secretary Oysur Rahman Chowdhury said several thousand of people of Tengratila have lost homes and crops on fields due to the blow-out, that also affected the environment in the area.

Both the government and the foreign company engaged in gas exploration there have failed to discharge their duties properly after the blowout, they said.

The SDDC leaders also urged the people to remain vigilant against any "conspiracy" to deprive them.

They said the SDDC will launch agitation if proper compensation is not paid to the affected people and steps not taken to restore the environment in Tengratila.



## A union fully sanitised in 20 days

Joint efforts by UNO, public representatives and a local NGO

RAFIQUE SARKER back from Kurigram

Rangpur: Boravhita, a union in Fulbari upzila in Kurigram district, has been brought under cent percent sanitation coverage in only 20 days.

This has created much enthusiasm among people in adjoining unions.

The unique achievement was attained with joint efforts by the upzila administration and local Union Parishad members.

This correspondent visited several villages in the union on Wednesday and talked to the villagers about the sanitation programme.

They expressed their satisfaction over the initiative and sincere efforts by the upzila administration and UP members.

Habibur Rahman, of Borloi village said, "None in my village defecate in open space. You will not find a single uncovered latrine now."

Mojibor Rahman, of Borovhita village said they were unaware of

the vital need for sanitation, which is necessary for safety against common diseases like diarrhoea.

"We built sanitary latrines at a cost of only Tk 300 to 500".

The union was formally declared fully sanitised on December 30. Deputy Commissioner Azizur Rahman Mollah made the declaration at a meeting on Boravhita Girls High School premises.

Upzila Nirbahi Officer Mahmud Hasan told this correspondent that the credit goes to the Union Parishad, Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Ministry and a local NGO - View - who brought 4,883 families under sanitation coverage within such a short time.

The programme started on December 13. DC Azizur Rahman Mollah said all unions in Rajarhat upzila was brought under cent percent sanitation coverage last year. He hoped that all unions under Fulbari upzila would be brought sanitation coverage this year.

## Modhu Mela begins at Sagardari today

A seven-day Modhu Mela, begins at Sagardari village today, marking the 181st birth anniversary of great poet Michael Modhusudan Dutta.

The Ministry for Cultural Affairs is arranging the fair, like in previous years.

Several makeshift stalls will put on sale books and poems written by the poet and handicrafts. Cultural functions will be added attractions. The authorities have decided that unlike in previous years, gambling and vulgar programmes will not be allowed this year.

Different cultural organisations and admirers of the great poet have welcomed the decision.

## Eid congregation on highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Mill workers protest non-payment of bonus, salary

About 5,000 employees and workers of Jessore Jute Mills and Carpeting Mills near Noapara industrial area offered their Eid-ul-Azha prayers on the Jessore-Khulna highway protesting non-payment of arrears salaries and Eid bonus.

They had taken the decision on Thursday at a meeting at Rajghat. Three months' salary of employees and eight weeks' wages of workers of the two jute mills are outstanding, sources at the mills said.

Leaders of employees' and workers' associations said they had expected that the arrears along with bonus would be paid before the Eid. They could not celebrate the Eid because of the non-payment.

The two limping mills are run by the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation.

## 11 trawlers looted in Bay: 2 fishermen missing, 27 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 27 fishermen were injured and two are missing as armed pirates looted over Tk 20 lakh in cash fish and equipment from 11 trawlers in the Bay of Bengal in two days during Eid-ul-Azha.

Eleven fishermen were thrown into the sea. Nine were rescued by other trawlers but two of them - Shahidul, 30, and Jamal, 35 - are still missing, according to survivors who reached Patharghata coastal in Barguna district on Sunday night.

The trawlers looted are FB Tin Bhai, FB Jasim, FB Erfan, FB Mamun, FB Khalil, FB Barkat, FB Bismillah, FB Ramzan, FB Sekander, FB Mustafa and FB Njami. These were looted in Bishkhali and Baleswar river estuary, and in Katka, Chandreshwar and Kachikhali areas in the Bay near the Sunderbans.

The survivors said terrorists have moved to the sea are committing piracy following deployment of RAB (rapid Action Battalion) in different upzilas in Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalakathi, E Pirojpur and Bhola districts. Many terrorists have also fled to the Sunderbans and adjoining areas, they claimed.

The pirates also collect tolls ranging from Tk 20,00 to Tk 50,000 per trawler, the victims said.

## Outlaw held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An alleged outlawed - Kartik Rishi - was arrested on Wednesday from his village home at Amanullahpur in Tala upzila.

Police claimed that he was Kartik, an activist of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), was a accused in the twin murder of freedom fighter Nur Islam and school teacher Alauddin, committed on October 4, 1995.

Police said Kartik confessed to his involvement in the murders.

## Rotary eye care project opens at Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Rotary Eye Care Project was inaugurated at Gaibandha Karmir Hath Eye Hospital recently.

It was opened by the Rotary Club of Gaibandha and the Trust for Social Development as part of Rotary Club's countrywide programme in Bangladesh to treat poor eye patients free of cost.

The programme is assisted by the Rotary Foundation, Rotary Club of Mil-Point Australia, Rotary Club of Dhaka North West and Rotary District-3280 Bangladesh.

On the inaugural day on Monday, 11 cataract operations were done and the patient were given free medicines.

The inaugural function was attended by Deputy Commissioner Tapon Chandria Majumder, Gaibandha Rotary Club President Abdur Rashid former district governor of Rotary Club KM Jainul Abedin, Rafiqul Islam, Abdul Latif and Shahajada Anowarul Kadir.

## 2 journo's honoured at Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha Press Club on Monday accorded reception to local journalists for their outstanding professional work.

They are Siddique Alam Dayal, Staff Reporter of Manb Jamin and Shahabul Shaheen Total, Gasibandha correspondent of Protham Alo.

On this occasion, a discussion on Journalism as a profession was also held on the Press Club premise with its president Gobinda Lal Das in the chair.

The speakers included Deputy Commissioner Tapan Chandria Majumder, Police Superintendent Hamdul Huq Channa and local political leaders and lawyers.



PHOTO: STAR

Seasonal hide traders were disappointed this year. The picture shows a trader with hides piled up on a road in Chittagong city yesterday, awaiting reasonable price.

## 2 shrimp enclosures 'occupied' in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two shrimp enclosures covering about 123 bighas of land have been forcibly occupied in Kaligonj and Assasuni upazilas.

Quoting local people, police said a group of armed men allegedly led by Dakkhin Sripur Union Parishad Chairman Sheikh Didarul Islam on Monday occupied a 100-bigha shrimp enclosure. Shrimp was being jointly cultivated there for the last 12 years by Anisur Rahman, Nazrul Islam, Shirajul Islam, Azharul Islam and others at Dakkhin Sripur village in Kaligonj upazila.

The armed group beat the staff and occupied it. They also looted shrimps worth Tk two lakh.

When contacted, Anisur Rahman said the UP chairman and his hired goons occupied the enclosure violating a court order. They had been threatening him to withdraw the case or to face dire consequences, he alleged.

The Satkhira Police Superintendent has ordered the Assistant Police Superintendent to investigate the matter and take action, police sources said.

## Journos assaulted in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Four journalists were assaulted by a group of people at Shyamnagar upzila headquarters recently as they protested alleged looting materials kept for construction of a building for Shyamnagar Press Club.

The journalists claimed that local Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker and a BNP leader were behind the incident.

Shyamnagar Upazila Development Co-ordination Committee in an unanimous decision on January 17 gave one decimal land to Shyamnagar Press Club for constructing a building.

Press club authority put up a signboard and piled up construction materials there to construct a building. It had also invited Jamaat lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam to inaugurate the construction work but he did not turn up.

The journalists alleged that a group of people led by local BNP leader Abdul Wahed tore down the signboard and looted the construction materials.

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