

Upazila roundup

KHAGRACHARI
125 tribal refugees return from India

January 19: About 125 tribal refugees returned here during the last month due to alleged torture and starvation in camps across the border reports UNB.
The returning refugees said Border Security Forces (BSF) stepped up torture in the camps after the killing of their eight men in a pitched battle with the outlawed Shanti Bahini activists on December 7.
The returnees alleged that many of their women inmates were also raped by the insurgents.
Meanwhile, cold wave and other diseases so far claimed many lives including children. The tribals claimed that at least three to four people are dying in the camps.
Besides, short supply of ration to the camps has increased suffering of the inmates.
Local government council has assured refugees of all possible help for their rehabilitation.

NATORE
Dacoity in minibus

January 19: A dacoity was committed in a minibus on Bogra-Natore Highway near Katjuri Village under Singra upazila of the district, police said here today, reports UNB.
A gang of 10 to 15 dacoits boarded the bus bound for Bogra as passengers on Monday. After travelling some miles they forced the driver to stop. At this stage, they looted cash and valuables from the passengers at daggers' point and escaped.
The dacoits also stabbed a passenger identified as Mojibur Rahman as he tried to resist them while some others were beaten up, travellers said.
Mojibur Rahman was admitted to sadar hospital where his condition was stated to be critical.
A case has been lodged in this connection.

RANGAMATI
Plan to increase fish production

January, 19: Over 50 lakh fish fry have been released in the Karnafuli lake of the district during the current season, official sources said, reports UNB.
According to Fisheries Department, fry of ruhi, katla, mrigel, kaliboush were released to boost fish output in the district.
With the implementation of the scheme, protein deficiency of the district will be met to a great extent, officials added.

CHITTAGONG
Homoeopaths demand separate faculty

January 19: The Biennial Conference of Bangladesh Homoeopathic Association (BHMA) Chittagong zila was held here on Thursday, reports BSS.
Divisional Commissioner and Chittagong city Mayor, MR. M.A. Bari attended the conference as chief guest, while BHMA President Dr Alamgir Matti formally opened the conference.
Speakers in the conference stressed for setting up of a homoeopathic charitable dispensary in Chittagong to provide treatment to the poor people of the city. Recognition of HMB doctors with the authority to issue medical certificate, utilisation of homoeo doctors by government to achieve target of health for all by 2000 A.D. and opening of separate faculty for homoeo physicians in Chittagong University.

NETRAKONA
Peace procession

January 19: Several hundred volunteers of Services Civil International (SCI), Netrokona unit, on Thursday brought out a peace procession in this district town in the afternoon calling for an immediate end to the Gulf war, reports BSS.
The processionists raised slogans "we want peace, not war," "stop war" and paraded the main streets of the town.
Earlier a rally was held at the local Shaheed Minar under the auspices of SCI. Presided over by SCI local chief S. Akhand, the rally was addressed by Messrs Al-Azad, Mohammad Ali Siddiqui and Babul Khan Pathan.
The speakers at the rally urged both America and Iraq to solve the crisis through peaceful dialogue.

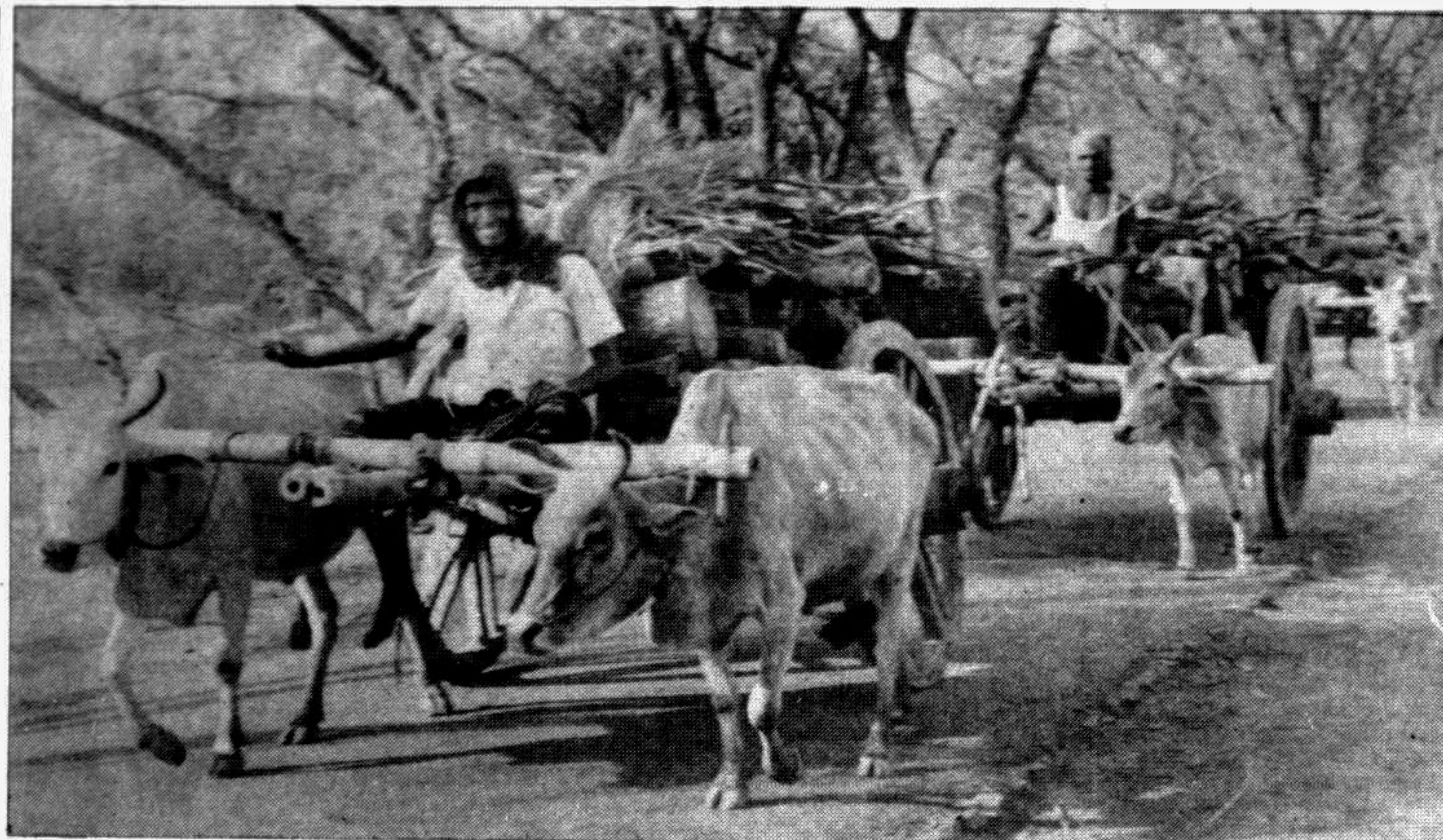
Crossdams inundate farmland

From A Correspondent
ISHURDI, Jan 19: Three crossdams constructed at Chatmohar following devastating flood of 1988, defying public opinion, have created heavy water-logging in five beels covering a vast area of cultivable land.
Consequently, the peasants could not cultivate their land as the area is still under water.
The crossdams were constructed over the river Baral in Chatmohar upazila under the Food for Works and Test Relief Programmes.
The beels affected by the crossdams are Khalishgari, Kural, Checkria, Cherali and Paodhoa. Inundation has affected 2,000 acres of cultivable land.
The cultivation of rabi-crops like mash-rabi pulses, mustard seeds and wheat has become impossible.
Besides river-communication between Chatmohar and different unions has been disrupted causing untold difficulties to the people.
The farmers of the water-logged beel area told me that before the construction of the crossdams, flood water entered the area but it receded and the area became cultivable.
The upazila-wise schemes and wheat allotment are given below:
Pabna Sadar upazila-

106,316 metric tons of wheat against 18 schemes; Ishurdi 43,995 metric tons against nine schemes; Santhia 45,020 metric tons against eleven projects; Sujanaagar upazila 85,868 metric tons against ten projects; Faridpur upazila 14,002 metric tons against two schemes; Bhangoor upazila 27,956 metric tons against three schemes while Bera upazila 49,496 metric tons against eight schemes.
The schemes have already been approved for the reconstruction of flood damaged roads. Another aim of the programme is to engage poor and the helpless rural women who would get 4,665 kilograms of wheat per day, against six-hour labour.
The allegations of largescale corruption are being received.

Urs

The 72nd Urs Mubark of Hazrat Syed Abdun Nur Husainy Chishty (R), a descendant of Syed Nasiruddin (R) was observed at the Darbar Sharif of Sultanah Hably.
Popularly known as "Dinlin" the saint was a close associate of Hazrat Shahjalal(R).
Quran khawari, milad mahfil and zikr were held on the occasion. Thousands of devotees from far flung areas attended the Urs Mubark.



RAJSHAHI: Indiscriminate use of firewood in brickfields causing ecological imbalance. These firewood loaded carts are on way to a nearby brickfield. —Star photo.

Random use in brickfields

Ban on timber extraction goes unheeded

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Jan 19: Large scale use of firewood in brickfields has caused acute shortage of fuel for household consumption in the district. Extraction of timber without plantations over the years has resulted in acute shortage for making furniture and ecological imbalance in the region.
Despite ban on reckless felling of trees huge volume of wood is consumed in drying tobacco in Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur districts.
Price of firewood and timber has shot up abnormally. This has affected nearly 90 per cent of the total population which has no other source of fuel for cooking.
Kushtia and its adjoining districts are now regarded as the quality tobacco growing areas. The tobacco produced here are exported regularly.
Some brickfield owners

Two tobacco re-drying factories have already been set up in Kushtia and some more others are in the offing. Moreover massive development work in other fields are also going on in the newly formed districts of Chuadanga and Meherpur. The development needs construction of more buildings, bridges, culverts and roads. This means consumption of huge volume of bricks and larger use of wood in brickfields.
In order to keep pace with the greater demand, more brickfields are being set up. These are consuming firewood in an alarming scale. The brickfield owners are thus forced to find out new sources of wood in the neighbouring Faridpur district where wood is available in reasonable quantity.
UNB from Patuakhali adds: Extensive use of firewood in brickfields has led to acute scarcity of fuel in six upazilas of the district.
At least 70 brickfields here are using firewood as substitute for coal which, according to brick traders, is meagre in supply.
Some dishonest businessmen in collusion with local people are chopping down trees indiscriminately for use in brickfields causing shortage of firewood and affecting ecological balance.
As a result, prices of firewood has also sharply risen. A mound of firewood is being sold between Taka 60 and Taka 80 in different markets of the district adversely affecting the poor people.
Environmentalists stressed on stringent action against use of firewood in brickfields and rampant felling trees.

Electricity in haor areas to improve farming pattern

From A Correspondent

BHAIRAB, Jan 19: Early steps to ensure power supply for the improvement of irrigation system at a normal cost in the vast haor region of Itna, Mitamoin and Austagram upazilas of Kishoreganj district have been demanded by the farmers of the areas.
Thousands of acres of land are put under the cultivation of high yielding varieties of Boro paddy every year in these upazilas under the mechanised cultivation schemes with the fielding of a large number of diesel operated power pumps. But due to high price of diesel and other fuels required for operating the pumps, the cost of production goes up causing much hardship to the farmers.
This season the farmers in the vast tract of haor areas will have to undergo extreme sufferings in ensuring smooth irrigation to Boro lands following the abnormal rise in the prices of diesel and other inputs, according to reports. Despite the high rate of electricity, the power operated pumps would substantially reduce the cost of irrigation, it is stated.
The power supply apart from easing irrigation system for boosting the production of high yielding varieties of Boro paddy would also help in establishing rice, flour and oil mills, saw mills and engineering workshops which will hasten the development of these upazilas in haor region of Kishoreganj district.

Health complex an agony to patients

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Jan 19: The Chunarughat upazila health complex has been plagued with a host of problems causing much sufferings to the patients.
The inadequate number of beds and other requisite materials, scarcity of drugs and modern appliances stand on the way of proper treatment of patients.
The health complex has no X-ray machine. As a result, the patients have to go to the Habiganj or Brahmanbaria district towns for this purpose, which consumes much time, energy and money.
Besides, absence of an ambulance is another problem.
It is alleged that the doctors, specially in outdoor and emergency departments, are not regularly available during office time.
Nilphamari
The family planning department in Nilphamari district has failed to reach the target due to negligence of duty, corruption and misuse of power, it is alleged.
There are 36 family welfare centres in the district. Most of the centres have been working in paper. The family welfare centres remain open two to three days a week. Most of the workers do not reside in the locality. Each family welfare centre gets medicines every year, but the medicines are sold in the markets and maintained for registers. As a result, family planning work have been hampered in the district.



RAJSHAHI: Vladimir Alexievich Minaev, Director, Cultural Centre of the Soviet embassy in Dhaka addressing a seminar on Russian language and literature organised by Rajshahi University at the University recently.

Lawyer dead

Advocate Niren Kumar Bishwas, a promising lawyer and secretary, Habiganj Kalibari Committee died of heart failure recently. He was 43.

Late Niren Kumar Bishwas left behind his mother, widow, 2 minor children and a large number of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.
A full court reference was held in the Habiganj Judge Court recently with Mr. Johurul Islam District and Sessions Judge in the chair to condole his death.

BRTC buses decaying under open sky

From our Correspondent

COMILLA, Jan 19: Eighteen buses worth about Taka two crore belonging to Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) have been lying out of order for quite a long time. These buses could be put into service after repairs, some BRTC men said.
Kept under the open sky the imported vehicles are fast decaying. Soon these may turn unworthy of plying, a BRTC official told this correspondent.
The local BRTC management said that the vehicles, some with minor faults, could not be repaired for want of fund sanction from the Corporation's head office at Dhaka. A BRTC source claimed that out of 18 buses 10 could easily be repaired at the local BRTC workshop if a small number of spares could be made available from the Dhaka office. Repairing of buses at local workshop would involve much less cost than carrying it out from outside.

Football tourney

From A Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Jan 19: The final competition of inter-upazila football tournament-90 arranged by Kurigram District Sports Association, was held recently at the local stadium with much enthusiasm.
In the final competition Kurigram Upazila Eleven won by 3-0 goals defeating Ulipur Upazila Eleven. The competition was conducted by Mr Matur Rahman while Mr Utapur Kanti Roy and Mr Gobinda Bomarjee assisted him. A large number of football fans enjoyed the final competition.

Political scene

Hectic electioneering in districts

Star report

As the parliamentary election date is nearing, people are becoming more enthusiastic with the hope that they would be able this time to exercise their voting right freely.

Our Magura Correspondent writes: With only 37 days to go for February 27 parliamentary elections, hectic campaign has gripped the district.
Wall writing, posters, graffiti and miking are on in upazila towns to draw attention of the voters.

Our Madaripur Correspondent writes: Jatiyatabadi Chhatri Dal zila unit celebrated its 12th founding anniversary recently at Purana Bazar Shaheed Minar with Advocate Abdul Mannan Shikder, former Minister in the chair.
Discussing milad mahfil and cultural function were arranged on the occasion.

Jatiya Party celebrated its 5th founding anniversary recently. A milad mahfil was held in this connection. Different speakers demanded the release of ousted President Ershad, the Chairman of the Party.

They also brought out a procession demanding cancellation of the forthcoming parliamentary polls.

UNB from Jhenidah writes: Police arrested four activists of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-I) on Friday from different areas of the town.

Jakir Hossain, Wahidul Huq, Rafiqul and Khairul were nabbed for their alleged involvement in Wednesday's clash between Awami League and JSD workers in Shailakupa upazila.
Police arrested them after Awami Leaguers filed a case. They were sent to Shailakupa upazila court on Saturday.

A Correspondent from Moulavi Bazar adds: Campaign for the ensuing parliamentary election has started in full swing through Moulavi Bazar district.
Jamaat-e-Islami leader Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee said, when the so called socialism is being driven away from many places of the world at that time some youths of our country have been wasting away their valuable time by running after such a 'non-existent' idealism. He said, Islam does not accept the concept of this 'ism'.

Maulana Saidee said this in his speech as chief guest delivered recently at a mass-attended Strat-un-Nabi mahfil held at Muroli Haji Mohsin High School ground.

Presided over by Maulana Mafzur Rahman the mahfil was also addressed by Advocate Khodadat Khan, Nur Hussain, Maulana Abu Sayeed, Hafez Ataur Rahman and Mafzur Rahman.

Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee further said, Islam is the religion of peace and there is no scope of communalism here. Each and every Muslim would have to be unitedly committed to wipe out the vague word "secularism" from the country. What happened in India in the name of secularism always remain as a black spot in the history of the world, he added.

Maulana Saidee said, in his country of 11 crore Muslims every minority community is our sacred 'amanat' and it is our religious duty to safeguard them.
He called upon all to cast their votes in favour of the Jamaat candidates in the ensuing parliamentary polls.

Facilities inadequate in Jahangirnagar Varsity

From Our Correspondent

JAHANGIRNAGAR, Jan 19: Jahangirnagar University at the Savar is yet to achieve its objective of providing proper facilities for higher education.
With a Provision for at least five thousand students, the university was set up on an area of about 700 acres of land in 1970. The university was opened with 150 students and 22 teachers under four teaching departments-economics, geography, statistics and mathematics. The number of students rose to 1418 in 1981 and about 2800 in 1990 under 17 departments of three faculties and one institute.
The past government at a meeting of the executive committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) decided that government would take necessary steps for enrolling 25 per cent non-residential students in the university as a good number of students are deprived of higher education each year. The government sent a letter to the University authority in this regard. A similar letter was also sent to university authority on January 10, 1991.

In the letter it has been said that the transport communication between Dhaka and Jahangirnagar has been improved during the last 20 years and it is now possible to admit non-residential students in the university. But without changing the University act it is not possible, a University source said.
Owing to its residential character, the university can not enroll more than five hundred students in each academic year. It can accommodate a total of 2625 students including 590 females in halls. At least 70 male students have been accommodated in several rooms of the old Social Science Building where the authority has also made room for two departments - geology and archaeology as well as an office for the proctor. The students of M.phil and Ph.d classes are not accommodated on the campus.
Out of about 295 teachers and officers, only 137 have been accommodated on the campus till 1990.
During the last Third Five Year Plan, government allocated Taka 8.85 crores for development programmes, but the government failed to provide the total allocation during the period. So it affects the on going Fourth Five Year Plan, from July 1990 to July 1995.

Recovery of illegal arms discouraging

From Our Correspondent

PATUAKHALI, Jan 19: The deadline for surrendering illegal arms by December 26 has expired. But in Patuakhali, there is no sign of surrendering illegally possessed arms as yet. Present caretaker Government in a press notification issued stern note of warning against the mercenaries holding illegal arms which will be followed by rigorous punishment.
In the district co-ordination meeting while discussing on the overall law and order situation of the district, representatives of local people have expressed their grave concern over failure of local administration recovering arms. Many believed that there was huge stockpile of illegal arms among hoodlums and miscreants in the district and if these arms are not recovered soon, there will be bloodshed and hooliganism in the forthcoming election. This vested group will try their best to foil the people's verdict, they felt.

A few days before in a tender opening by the Power Development Board, the people have seen the free exercise of pistols, revolvers, pipeguns and bombs. In this incident, two young men were grievously injured and taken to hospital.
The police arrested one person with pipegun from the spot. A case has been registered in upazila magistrate court in this connection.
As the day of the general elections was drawing nearer, the demand for arresting illegal arms holder is increasing more and more.

Khelaghar Asor executives

From Our Correspondent

MANIKGANJ, Jan 19: The fifth yearly conference of Tomal Khelaghar Asor was held at the field of Mohadevpur Girls' High School recently.
The conference elected a new working committee of 31 members. Mr. Montuzzaman, Principal of Borongal Degree College and Mr. Rejaul Karim were elected President and General Secretary respectively.