

Upazila roundup

JHENIDAH
Kidnapped school girl rescued

From Our Correspondent
February 4: Jhenidah police rescued a kidnapped school girl Firoja at Beparipara of Jhenidah town after 36 hours. She was kidnapped in the morning of January 27 while going to school. She is a student of local Fazar Ali Girls' High School. A case has been filed with Jhenidah tharia and police arrested a woman, and young boy Rejaul in this connection.

SHARIATPUR
No sub-registrar in Bhederganj

From A Correspondent
February 4: Bhederganj upazila's sub-registry office is running without the Sub-registrar for last six months causing great inconvenience to the people. Official sources said that former Sub-registrar Nurul Islam had been transferred to neighbouring Damudya upazila in the last week of August while one is yet to take over.

Fish disease
Fish disease has broken out in an epidemic form in different upazilas of the district creating panic among the consumers. According to official sources, the affected upazilas are Shariatpur Sadar, Naria, Damudya, Goshairhat, Zantra and Bhederganj. The disease identified as ulcerative syndrome has been spreading in most of the beels, ponds and canals here, affecting fish like koi, shing, magur, puti, shoal and gazar. As a result the fishermen of the areas are hard hit. It is learnt.

JESSORE
Madhushudan's birthday celebrated

From A Correspondent
February 4: The 167th birth anniversary of the late poet Michael Modhu Sudhan Dutta was celebrated at Sagardari with due solemnity. To mark the birthday celebration of the poet a two-day long "Modhu Mela" was arranged at Sagardari, the birth place of the late poet under Keshabpur upazila. The "Modhu Mela" concluded on January 27. A large number of people visited the fair. The drama "Kisukhune Michael" was staged by the Puzia Cultural Council.

COX'S BAZAR
Problems grip Moheshkhal health complex

From Our Correspondent
February 4: The Moheshkhal upazila health complex has been plagued with a host of problems causing much sufferings to the patients. It is alleged that the doctors, specially in outdoor and emergency departments, are not regularly available during office time. The inadequate number of beds and other requisite materials scarcity of drugs and medical 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 Cox's Bazar or Chittagong district towns for this purpose which consumes much time, energy and money. Besides, absence of an ambulance is another problem.

MADARIPUR
Sugarcane farming scheme

From Our Correspondent
February 4: A plan has been taken up for sugarcane cultivation in 11 southern districts under Barisal circle this year. The districts are Barisal, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Rajbari, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna. According to an Agriculture Extension office source, 725,800 metric tons of sugarcane will be produced in these districts this year. The Agriculture Extension Department has set up 108 demonstration plots in these districts to teach farmers the scientific method of sugarcane cultivation. Besides, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADDC) has supplied seeds, fertilizers insecticides

and other necessary inputs to the sugarcane growers.
Saraswati Puja
Saraswati Puja, a religious festival of the Hindu community, was celebrated throughout the Madaripur district as elsewhere in the country. All the educational institutions as well as various clubs and temples committee celebrated the Puja.

MYMENSINGH
3.35 lakh acres to be put under Rabi farming

From Our Correspondent
February 4: About three lakh thirty-five acres of land will be brought under Rabi crop cultivation in 12 upazilas of the district during the current winter season. According to the Mymensingh Agricultural Extension Department, a total of 251,000 acres will be brought under Boro cultivation and the production target is 2,77,800 tons of rice.

Besides, 15,200 acres of land will be brought under Mustard seeds cultivation with a production target of 4080 tons and 8800 acres of land under potato cultivation with a production target of 36,075 tons. The target of wheat cultivation has been fixed at 30,000 acres with a production target of 20,000 tons.

Meanwhile, 6,595 acres of land will be brought under Sugarcane cultivation with a production target of 1,19,900 tons. On the other hand 3,400 acres of land will be brought under Sweet Potato, 4,280 acres under Masur pulses, 2,960 acres under Khesari. An amount of Taka nine crore have been sanctioned as agricultural loan for Rabi crop cultivation in the district.

BARISAL
143 prisoners released

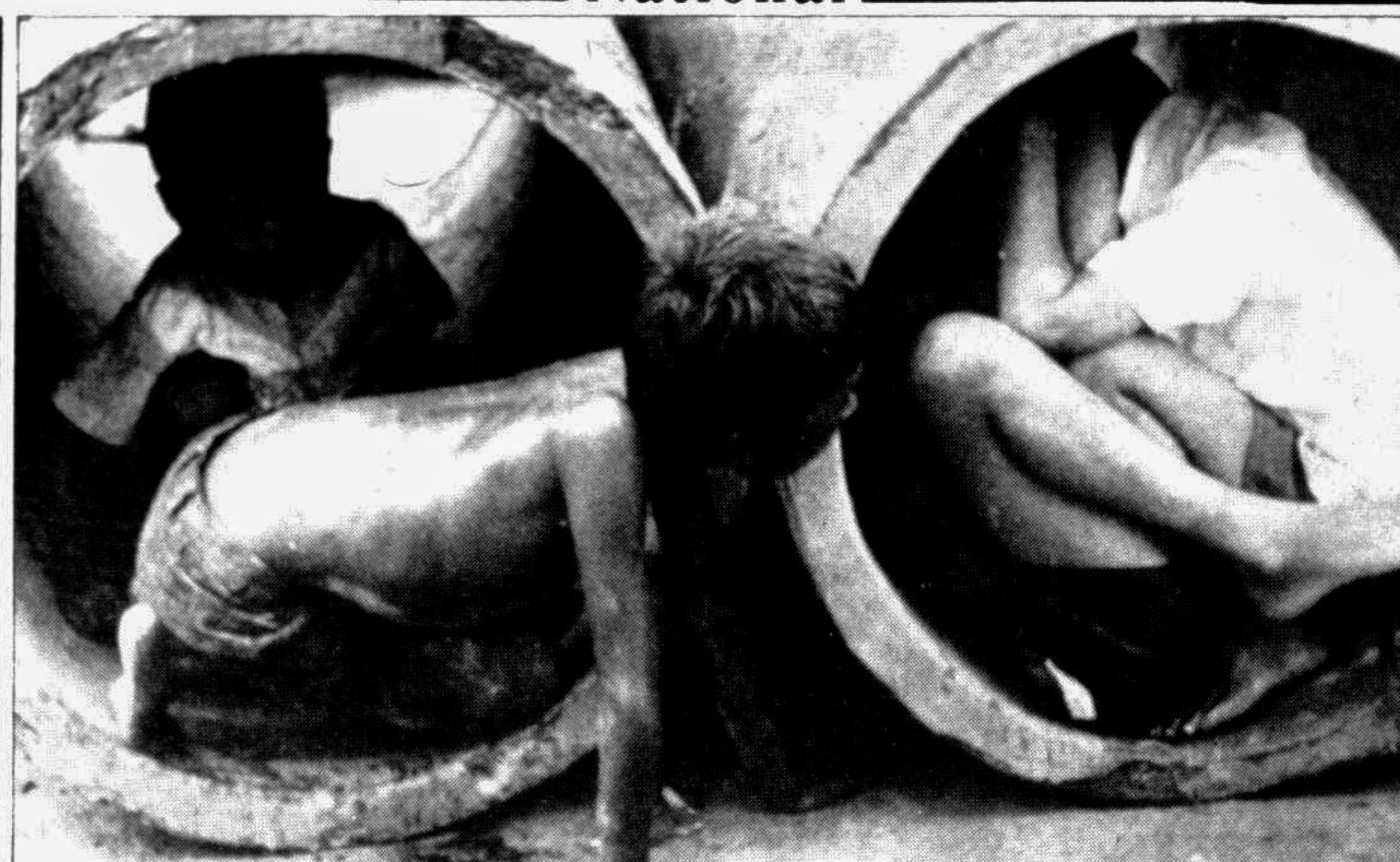
February 4: A total of 143 prisoners convicted on various charges have been freed from Barisal jail recently, reports BSS.

KUSHTIA
Milk production decreases

From Our Correspondent
February 4: Milk production has been decreasing in greater Kushtia district. According to reports, the number of milk cows has rapidly decreased in the district resulting in sharp fall in milk. Fresh grass needed for milk cows is not adequately available now a days. At present grass is not grown as before because of the mechanised system of cultivation. A major portion of grass land has been brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation. Previously khesari, mash kalai and orohar were abundantly grown in these lands. These crops were profusely used as fodder for cows. Failure to prevent cattle diseases has also contributed to the decrease of milk as large number of milk cows lost after being attacked with various fatal diseases. Farmers alleged that the authorities take no step to save their cows which are attacked with various diseases. The number of milk cows has decreased due to cattle epidemic.

MANIKGANJ
20,000 certificate cases filed

February 4: At least 20,000 certificate cases have been filed against defaulting farmers in 7 upazilas of the district for realisation of outstanding loans amounting to Tk 10.05 crore, reports UNB. According to official sources, price-hike of essentials and abrupt fall of agricultural production were the main causes of their non-repayment of the loans in due time. The indebtedness has increased manifold due to the abnormally low prices of jute, mustard, tobacco and cash crops, they added. Brokers and corrupt practices in disbursing loans, fuel seeds, pesticides are also adversely affecting the rural economy. The farmers demanded exemption of all interests on outstanding loans, which they took from the banks earlier



NARAYANGANJ: Concrete pipes kept stacked for use in irrigation facilities at a rural area have provided means for their play. —Photo Shafiuddin Bitu

Water bodies lying unutilised
Planned cultivation can double fish production

From Our Correspondent
CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 4: The haors, ponds and other water bodies in the district can produce enough fish for the area if proper care is taken, a recent survey report reveals. With planned cultivation, over 20 thousand metric tons of fish can be yielded. The quantity is twice the requirement of the district. Presently, 3,900 metric tons of fish is yielded. At present most of the water bodies are either silted or lying uncared for. Due to conventional fishing practice and negligence of the Fishery Department, a huge scope of natural resource exploration is being left unutilised. District Fishery Office said there are 7659 ponds, 56 beels totalling 10,600 acres and 80 miles long river. The fish cultivation is further hindered as some fishermen are using plastic fishing nets defying the government ban. Such practice kills fish fry. Hilsa fish catch has also dropped in the river Mohananda and Padma due to sluggish current in the river caused by the Farakka Barrage. Drop in fish production has also affected the number of fishermen in Chapainawabganj. It is learnt that 15 years back there were about eight thousand fishermen in the area. The number has reduced to only three thousand today. The few remaining are facing problems for lack of loans, fishing materials and proper marketing system. UNB adds: The protein output in the district inadequate to meet the requirement of its people, says a survey report from the district Animal Husbandry Department here. Of the animal protein, meat, fish, egg and milk are the principal items. An adult person requires 120 grams of meat, 40 grams of fish, one egg and 200 grams of milk daily. To cope with this standard, the district inhabitated by over 10 lakh people requires at least 43,200 tons of meat, 14,400 tons of fish, 36 crore eggs and 72,000 tons of milk every year. The district produces only 4,000 tons of meat, 4,000 tons of fish, 3 crore eggs and 36,000 tons of milk which is quite inadequate, the report adds. It has been estimated that about six lakh people of the district can hardly get the four animal protein due to which they have been suffering from protein deficiency. The production of fish has been hampered to a great extent owing to indiscriminate catching of fish fries in the district. It is learnt that the District Fishery Department has taken up a programme to release fish fries in the ponds and open water bodies of the district. More than three lakh fish fries have been released in the ponds and open water bodies of the district. The production of fish has declared following disease and price of fish has gone up abnormally.



PABNA: A big char in the Padma has developed at the Hardinge Bridge point. This is a result of withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka. —Star photo

Farakka effects hit irrigation
Paksey-Bheramara ferry service faces closure

From Our Correspondent
PABNA, Feb 4: Ferry service on Paksey-Bheramara route is facing closure as water level at Hardinge Bridge point is falling fast. Due to decrease in under ground water level, irrigation system is being hampered. Due to lack of necessary water flow about 2000 fishermen is left jobless. They are now facing starvation. A few months ago ferry service at this point was closed due to decrease in water level. After dredging ferry service was restored. But it is now again threatened with closure as with the advent of dry season water level is going down fast. Due to withdrawal of water of the Ganges through the Bhagirathi a vast area of the northern part of the country is facing desertification. Depth of the river Padma at Hardinge Bridge point which was nine metre last year have come down to one metre this year. Knowledgeable sources and experts apprehend that if the withdrawal of water through Farakka at present rate continues the area might turn into a vast desert in future. Unusual floods might also hit.

Call to stop use of polythene bags

From Our Correspondent
NARAIL, February 4: Polythene bags, used for shopping and carrying goods home, have been causing health hazard to thousands of people of the district by polluting environment. Students, teachers and common people are equally using the bags for carrying books, paper files and commodities. A survey report reveals that there are 20 factories to manufacture polythene bags in the country. When contacted the shopkeepers of the town told me that thousands of polythene bags are sold everyday. To save people from health hazard wide spread use of the polythene bags should be controlled.

121 rescued while being smuggled into India

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, Feb 4: The Jawans of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) at Navaran rescued 121 women and children while they were being smuggled into India, on January 22. Of the rescued most were children. An organised gang of women and child traffickers were sending them to India on temptation of work and marriage. BDR sources said that these illegal traffickers have collected the victims from different areas of Barisal and Patuakhali and were passing them through Benapole border in two buses. All the traffickers were arrested except one Promila (35), an Indian citizen. The rescued women, men and children were sent to Sharsha police custody.

One injured

One person received bullet injury when terrorists attack his house on January 21. The incident occurred following the participation of Hasan of Benapole in an anti-terrorism procession brought out by the local people. Terrorists Kalu, Masud, Tapan, Bera, Babu, Shapon, Md Ali and 20 others raided the house of Hasan and ransacked it. As they fired, Hasan received serious injury below his left knee. He was rushed to Jessore General Hospital.

Population Day observed

CHANDPUR, Feb 4: National Population Day was observed in Chandpur district on Saturday, reports BSS. A procession brought out in this connection paraded the main street. The processionists carried posters and placards. A public meeting was held at Chandpur Rotary Club premises by Chandpur District Family Planning Department. The meeting was presided over by Mr Md Abul Kashem, Deputy Commissioner, Chandpur and addressed by Dr Nurur Rahman, Dr M A Rashid, Principal Matari Rahman, Prof Md Hossain Khan, Mahubur Rahman, Deputy Director, Family Planning.

Political scene

Parties pay higher wages to workers

Star Report
Day labourers in village areas now find little time to work in fields and perform other jobs because of their involvement in electioneering. They are better paid when hired by political parties than the usual rate of daily wages in the rural society. Labourers find utmost pleasure in election activities. They run election camps supply tea and food on orders from local party bosses. Most of the time they help organise public meetings and make announcements over microphones fitted in rickshaws or vans. The hired labourers work till late in the evening and take little sleep in the election camps. They remain on duty almost round the clock.

Kushtia
Our Kushtia Correspondent says: Ali Ahmed Tutul central Joint Secretary of Chhatra Moitry in a statement to the press said recently that election conduct rules framed by the government are not being maintained in Kushtia-3 constituency. Reports of tearing posters and other anti-election activities have been received from different areas which are not congenial for smooth holding of election and urged upon the authorities concerned and people to resist this sort of activities in the greater interest of establishing democracy in the country. Meanwhile, milad mahfil, special prayers in mosques and feeding of destitutes are being carried out in various parts of the district in support of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Participants wished long life of President Saddam and brought out processions chanting slogans in support of victory in the war against Jews and enemies of Islam.

Chandpur
Our Chandpur Correspondent writes: The central leaders of All-Party Students Unity on Thursday demanded of the government to send ousted President Ershad to Central Jail and arrest all of his corrupt associates immediately. Student leaders were addressing a big public meeting at Chandpur Hasan Ali High School ground organised by APSU, Chandpur unit. Presided over by Sharif Md Enus the meeting was addressed by DUCSU General Secretary Khairul Kabir Khokan and other leaders Shah Alam Chowdhury, Humayun Kabir Towhidul Islam, Bill Hossain, Jahruddin Babar and Mazbur Rahman Bhuiyan.

B'baria
Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent writes: Kazi Nazmul Khadem, a candidate of Jamaat from Brahmanbaria-4 constituency addressing a meeting on January 29 at Kaslia New Market said they wanted to establish a true welfare state. The meeting was arranged by Kaslia Upazila unit and presided over by the upazila Amcer, Abdul Hai, Nayeb Ali, Nizam and Maulana Habibur Rahman, the Imam of upazila mosque were among others present in the meeting. The 55 birth anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman was observed recently. BNP of Brahmanbaria unit drew elaborate programmes to mark the occasion. The students of the unit held a meeting at Town Hall where Abdullah Al Bakr was in the chair and Harun-ar-Rashid was the chief guest. Among others, Advocate Ferdous Alam, Abdul Khuddus, Gulam Sarwar, Hamdul Haque Hamdu were present. A 100-member 'Juba Dal' committee was formed. Abdullah Al Bakr and Shaik Habibullah were elected President and Secretary of the committee.

Barisal
A message from Barisal says: A meeting organised by Islami Otkya Jote was held here on Saturday in front of Aswani Kumar Hall urging all concerned to stop war in the Gulf. The meeting was addressed, among others, by Professor Ashraf Ali, Professor Abul Kashem Shahjhan and Abdul Matin. It was presided over by Maulana Ali Akber. After the meeting a procession was brought out. Later they held a meeting at Netrakona power house playground. District level Jatiya Party leaders addressed the meeting.

Rajbari
A report from Rajbari adds: The forthcoming parliamentary polls have created much enthusiasm among people of the district. Election campaign started in full swing in various parts of the district. The candidates are now visiting their respective constituencies to mobilise support in their favour. Election camps have been set up in every union. Processions and meetings are now common features in the district. Posters and symbol of the candidates have been plastered in building and walls of the town. A total of 18 candidates are in the race for Jatiya Sangsad election in two seats of the Rajbari district.

Bogra
A Bogra report states: Mr. Mahmudur Rahman Mannan, joint convener of Janata Mukti Party on Saturday called upon the people to wipe out the politics of terrorism by casting votes for those who believe in democracy. Addressing a public meeting at his Shibpur constituency here, Mr. Mannan cautioned the people that this who had snatched away people's right in the past with the help of guns have once again become active to implement their evil designs. He hoped that such designs would be foiled through united resistance of the democracy-loving people. He reminded the people that the February 27 election was very important for the country, hence they should vote judiciously.

Feni
BSS from Feni adds: All the political parties which have fielded nominees for the forthcoming parliamentary election have geared up electioneering through public meetings, posterings and wall writing in union, upazila and district headquarters in Feni. Twenty eight candidates have been contesting Jatiya Sangsad polls for three constituencies in Feni district. Feni-1 constituency consists of Chhagalnatiya and Parshuram upazilas and Fulgati thana. Sixteen unions of these areas are within this constituency with 2 lakh 7 thousand and 5 hundred voters under 75 polling centres. Of the candidates in Feni-1 constituency Begum Khaleida Zia (BNP) Mohamed Zakaria Bhuiya (AL), ex-Minister Zafar Imam (JP) and Shirin Akther of JSD (Inu) are prominent. Eight unions of Feni Sadar upazila including Feni Pourashava and Dhagon Bhuiya upazila constitute Feni-2 constituency. There are about 2 lakh and 70 thousand voters and 91 polling centres in the constituency.