

Upazila roundup

PATUAKHALI

Tk 58 lakh land development tax realised

May 21: Land development tax amounting to Taka 58 lakh has so far been realised from six upazilas of the district, officials said, reports UNB.

Of the total, Taka seven lakh were collected from Sadar, Tk three lakh from Mirzapur, Tk 8 lakh from Bauphal, Tk 15 lakh from Galachipa, Tk 16 lakh from Kalapara and Tk 8 lakh from Dashmina upazilas during the current fiscal year.

Realisation drive will face a setback in the cyclone-battered areas, officials feared.

Acute bullock shortage has been prevailing in four southern districts posing threat to cultivation, officials said.

According to sources, about 60 to 80 per cent farmers have no bullocks to cultivate their lands.

Consequently about 25 to 30 per cent land in these districts remain uncultivated causing shortfall in crop production.

Most farmers work on share basis as they can not afford to buy bullocks due to sharp rise in their prices.

Moreover, a large number of cattleheads is lost every year due to various diseases. Some greedy cobblers allegedly poison cows to death for procuring skin of the animal.

On the other hand bullock slaughtering has been going on unabated following rise in the price of fish in the market.

PIROJPUR

Two commit suicide

May 21: Brawl over dowry in separate incidents culminated in the loss of two lives in Nesarabad upazila, police said here today, reports UNB.

Selma Begum (25), wife of Ratan Mia of Rajbari village killed herself by taking insecticides recently, family sources said.

In another incident, Jahannara Begum (23), wife of Mostafa Mia of West Shohagdal village also committed suicide last week by taking poison.

Meanwhile, another report from the district says Shathi (4) drowned on Wednesday while having a bath in a pond.

In an attempt to facilitate safe supply, Public Health Engineering department here has taken programme to instal 215 tubewells in the district during the current fiscal year.

Of the total, 135 deep and 80 shallow tubewells will be sunk in diarrhoea-prone areas of Sadar, Nazirpur, Swarogkati, Brahbaria, Kaukhali and Madbaria upazilas.

Doctors said safe drinking water would help contain the spread of diarrheal diseases.

SATKHIRA

One gets life-term for murder

May 21: Additional District and Sessions Judge awarded a man for life imprisonment on charge of killing a minor boy, court sources said here yesterday, reports UNB.

The court also fined him Taka 2,000, in default, to suffer rigorous imprisonment one year more.

According to prosecution story, Amir Hossain of Katalbaria village in Shymnagar upazila abducted Subal Chandra Mandal, one and a half year old boy from his mother's lap and killed him on September 23, 1989.

Police after investigation charge-sheeted him.

The learned Judge after examining the evidences and records found Amir Hossain guilty and awarded the punishment on Saturday.

MUKTAGACHA

Farmers urged to help augment food reserve

May 21: State Minister for Food Barister Nazmul Huda yesterday called upon the farmers to help the government augment its food reserve by making the internal food procurement drive a success, reports BSS.

This would meet the emergency requirement of food-grains in view of the recurrent cyclonic storm, tidal surge, flood and other natural calamities, he added.

Barister Huda was addressing a gathering of farmers at the local LSD food godown premises.

He said the government would extend all possible help and cooperation to the cyclone, flood, tidal surge and tornado affected farmers so that they could resume their production. Since coming to power the government of

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had written off agricultural loan upto Taka 5000 and exempted land revenue upto 25 bighas of land, he added.

The State Minister reviewed the foodstock position, its supply and movement and overall food situation at a meeting of the officials at Mymensingh Circuit House.

MAGURA

15 injured by tornado

May 21: At least 15 people were injured and 20 cattle-heads killed by a tornado that lashed four unions of Sreepur upazila of the district Saturday night, reports UNB.

According to sources, the nor-wester raged 100 mud and straw electric poles.

The tornado also caused extensive damage to the standing crops including paddy, jute and mango.

The affected people urged the authorities to take immediate steps for their rehabilitation.

KUSHITIA

2 killed as truck falls into ditch

May 21: Two people were killed and 20 others injured when a truck plunged into a roadside ditch near Dangmarka bazar in Daulatpur upazila Saturday, police said, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the truck (Dinajpur TA-6973), carrying about 40 labourers was heading towards Jaipur village of the same upazila and skidded when the driver lost control.

The deceased were identified as Anuddin (30) and Abul Hossain (28).

Critically injured Rabiul (22) was admitted to General Hospital while the rest were released after first aid.

Police seized the truck but the driver fled. The bodies were sent to the hospital for autopsy.

SYLHET

Flood-hit people assured of all govt help

May 21: State Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs Tariqul Islam yesterday supervised the relief distribution and rescue operation in the flood affected Balaganj, Fenchuganj and Mongla Bazar areas in Sylhet district, reports BSS.

Mr Tariqul Islam, who has been entrusted with relief coordination in flood affected Sylhet and Sunamganj districts, assured the affected people that all possible governmental assistance would be provided, according to their need.

He said that the present government was firm to combat the flood situation with courage and determination.

Mr Islam urged the local business community to maintain stability in commodity prices at this juncture of natural calamity for the greater interest of the commonman.

Special assistant to the BNP chairperson Harish Chowdhury, MA Jalil and local MP Abdul Malek accompanied the State Minister.

BOGRA

Directive to take action against loan defaulters

May 21: State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman yesterday asked the bank officials to take stern measures against the major defaulters of bank loans under the existing laws for restoring financial discipline in the sector, reports BSS.

He said crores of Taka had long been lying unrealised which has slowed down the economic activities of the country. The Minister was speaking at a meeting of the bank officers here yesterday.

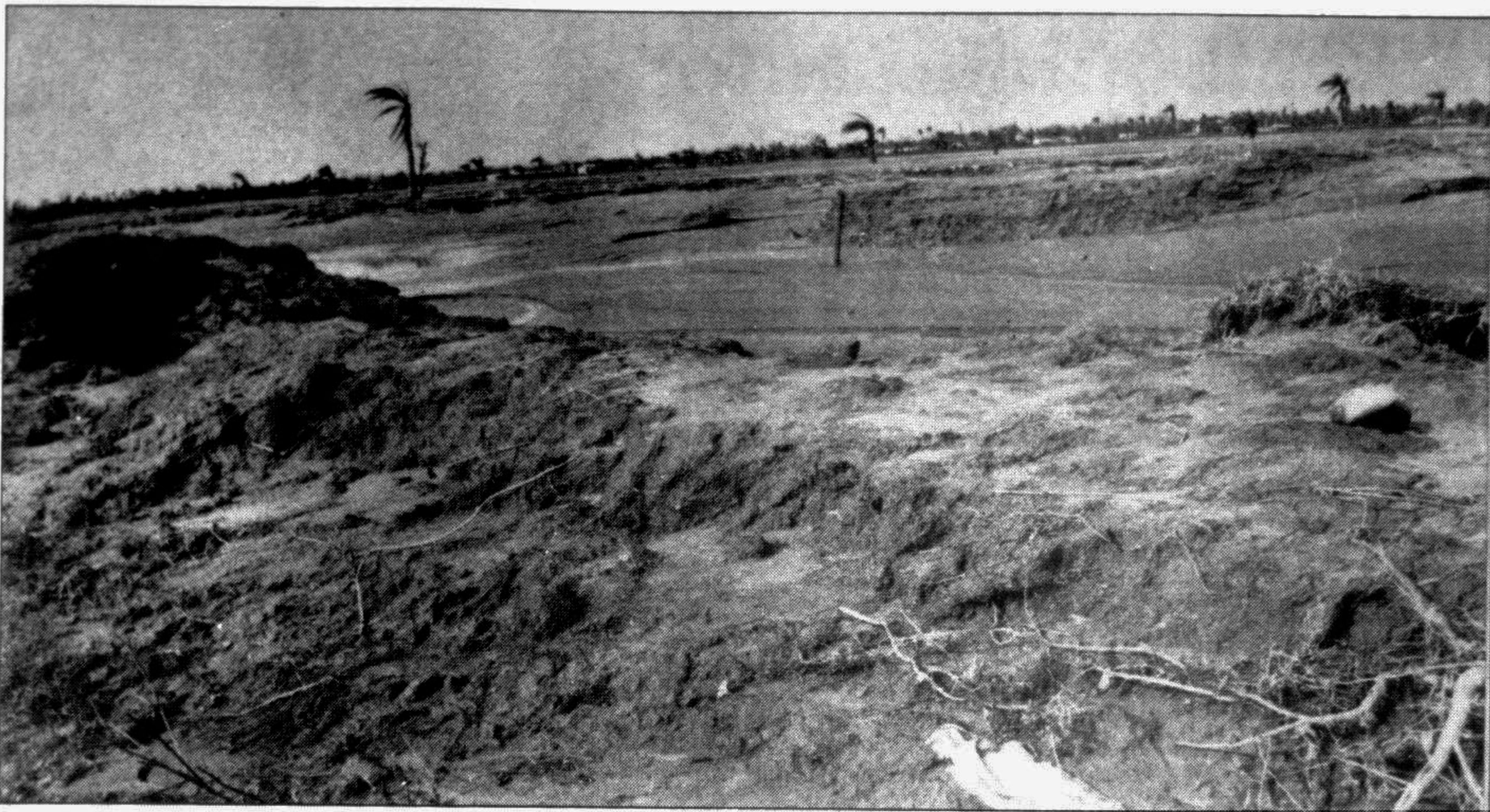
Mr Mujibur Rahman said the country had suffered enormously due to the severest ever cyclone storm.

"We need speedy mobilisation of internal resources and the bank loan defaulters must come forward to repay their loans in this critical hour of the country," he said.

ADAMJEENAGAR

Milad Mahfil

May 21: A Milad Mahfil was held at the Daira Sharif of Kadamtali on Saturday last. The Milad Mahfil held at the residence of Salimuddin Khan Majibhandari was led by Alhaj Maulana Syed Mujibul Haq Al-Hasani Al-Majibhandari. Special Munaajat was offered for the salvation of departed souls of those who lost their lives in the cyclone in coastal areas.



Chittagong city protection embankment washed away by the catastrophic cyclone on April 29.

— Star photo

Tornado survivors await rehabilitation

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, May 21: Tornado of May 20 swept 11 unions of Agailjhara upazila in Barisal district rendering 10,000 people homeless, claiming 17 lives and injuring more than 200 persons.

Hundreds of dwelling houses were razed to the ground. Seventy per cent of standing crops were damaged. The most affected areas are Nalchira, Chandsi, Mahilara, Gaila and Batajore of Agailjhara upazila. Ten persons died only in Nalchira and one lakh people have been affected.

Numerous electric poles have been uprooted and existing power lines snapped in the area. One Bahalul (12), a student of class six of Tikasur village was beheaded by a flying CI sheet during the tornado. One Sudhamoyee Roy along with her three relatives, Jamila Khatoon (50) with her daughter-in-law Raushan and grand daughter Rahima were buried under their dwelling house.

UNO of Gournadi upazila, Syed Abu Raihan, expressed his deep grief and utter surprise at the destruction which happened within four to five minutes of tornado.

Meanwhile, almost all the district-level officers including DC, SP, ADC and other high officials, Civil Surgeon and Deputy Civil Surgeon visited the affected areas and started relief operations providing necessary medicare facilities. Besides, non-government organisations like CARE, CARITAS, CCDB, BDS and some other organisations have rushed to the affected areas for distribution of relief materials.

District administration has allocated 20 tons of rice, 150 kgs of chira and Taka 30,000 in cash for the affected people.

No roof on their head

On the other hand thousands of affected people of April 29 cyclone are still under the open sky. Though the government and various agencies are providing them with food and meagre clothing but question of rehabilitation of these huge number of people is being ignored.

According to official sources, 70,000 acres of forests have been completely damaged while 85,000 acres have been partially damaged. According to the Forest

Department, 258 houses, 12 trawlers, five wireless sets, eight speed boats and 20 boats of Forest Division have been completely damaged while 407 houses, three motor launches, five trawlers, ten wireless sets, five speed boats and 25 boats have been partially damaged.

Meanwhile, thousands of acres of afforested areas along the vast coastal belt are yet to be surveyed and assessed fully.

According to the official sources, five district health centres, 68 upazila health

complexes, 190 health sub-centres, 400 union health centres have been damaged. Besides, 434 kilometre embankment has been completely and 855 kilometre embankment partially damaged in the tidal surge.

Crop damage

Crops on 64,726 acres of land have been damaged completely in Bhola, Daulatkhan, Monpura, Tajumuddin, Borhanuddin, Lalmojan and Charfasson upazilas of Bhola district. About 500 acres of be-

tel leaf 'baraj' have also been damaged. Nearly 78,710 houses partially and 29,955 houses were completely damaged.

More than 60,000 affected people living in far flung areas and on the embankments of different areas need urgent rehabilitation.

According to the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), Aus and other crops on 4,50,000 acres of land have been damaged. To combat the situation Agriculture Ministry

has taken up a Taka 200 crore Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme.

According to the official sources, 181981 cattleheads and 1078 buffaloes have perished. Crops cultivation in affected areas including offshore islands of Bhola, Patuakhali, Borguna, Noakhali and Chittagong districts may be seriously hampered due to lack of cattleheads.

It is learnt that BADC will import seeds and fertilizers under the Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme.



This old man is left all alone in the world. Lightning killed his wife and three grandchildren at village Panchpara in Trishal under Mymensingh district recently.

— Star photo by Enamul Huq.

6 killed, 10 injured by lightning

From A Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 21: Six persons were killed and 10 others injured in Trishal and Fulbaria upazilas by lightning Saturday night.

The victims were Rahima (8) and Hallima (5), daughters of A. Razzak, Millon (8), daughter of A Karim, Wahida Khatun (45), wife of Badar Ali, Nilma (8), daughter of M. Rahman of village Chack Pachpara under Trishal upazila and Md. Shajahan (14) of Bakta Union under Fulbaria upazila. The tragedy occurred at night on May 18, when thunderstorm lashed the upazilas.

The injured were admitted to local hospital.

The storm damaged a large number of trees, kutcha houses and standing crops. Meanwhile one Mainul Hoque (14) died at Mymensingh district jail last Friday night. He was arrested two days ago against a theft case. His body was buried without autopsy. He was a student.

Relief distributed

BARISAL, May 21: A large quantity of relief goods have been distributed by different voluntary organizations among the cyclone-hit people in different coastal areas, reports BSS.

The Barisal unit of BNP distributed 50 maunds of rice, five maunds of chira, one maund of molasses, 5000 packets of oral saline, 550 pieces of hurricane, 1000 pieces of new cloths, 5000 pieces old cloths, 500 packets of salt, in the remote area of Bhola district.

Mr Nizamuddin Ahmed, Chairman of Karnaphuli Insurance Company distributed Taka 4 lakh and huge quantity of new and old cloths in the affected areas of Bhola district.

Kashemabad Darbarsharif of Gournadi distributed medicines and food to the victims of Patuakhali district. Abisakar a Social Sangskritik Sangathan, donated Taka 2400 and 1300 pieces of cloths to relief fund of the Deputy Commissioner of Bakerganj.

The workers of Uttarann Sangskritik Sangha distributed food and medicine to survivors of Monpura.

The Barisal Night School deposited 214 pieces of cloths to the Education Directorate of Barisal.

Indian sarees seized

Eighty-six pieces of Indian sarees worth Taka 11,000 were seized from a bus by the District Anti-Corruption Department recently.

Getting secret information, an Inspector of the department detained a bus in Durgapur-Netakona route and recovered the sarees. Two persons, Abdur Rahim and Enamul Haq were arrested in this connection.

Notes from Bagerhat

From Our Correspondent

BAGERHAT, May 21: Police of Bagerhat recently recovered one Amita Biswas, who was kidnapped from Barguna district a couple of days ago from Patlakhal village under Bagerhat Sadar Upazila recently.

It is reported that Amita Biswas (13), a student of Class IX and daughter of one Atul Biswas, Chairman of Khajura Union Parishad of Barguna district was kidnapped by Maniklal Sarkar and Shamir Das in April. She was taken to a house of Patlakhal village under Bagerhat Sadar Upazila where the two kidnapers raped her repeatedly and decamped with her gold chain and other gold ornaments.

Being informed of the matter the police of Bagerhat P.S. raided the village and rescued Amita Biswas from a house.

For medical examination she was sent to the hospital where it was detected that she had been raped more than once.

Tk. 1.45 lakh hijacked

An amount of Taka 1,45,000 of two businessmen of Fakirhat upazila market of the district was hijacked by some miscreants in broad daylight recently.

It is reported that on the day of occurrence Anil Saha and Nikhil Saha, two businessmen of Fakirhat were going to Khulna metropolitan town to purchase goods for their business establishments and when they reached Bahirdia, the place of occurrence the miscreants suddenly fell on them and hijacked their cash Taka and fled away. At that time the local people caught one Abu who was running away and handed him over to the police. A case was registered with Fakirhat police station in this connection.

One crushed under wheels

Hemayet (37), a bus passenger met his tragic end when he was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus on way to Bagerhat on Bagerhat-Pirojpur road at village Baitpur, one kilometre away from here recently.

It is reported that the victim was coming to Bagerhat from Pirojpur boarding the killer bus on its roof top. When the bus reached the place of occurrence, he somehow fell from its roof and was crushed under the wheels of the bus. He was immediately admitted into Bagerhat Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on the following day.

Library opens

A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman, Foreign Minister inaugurated the newly constructed Library-cum reading room building of Bagerhat Ramkrishna Mission Asram in presence of a large gathering recently. The Minister thanked the Mission Authority for establishing the library and the reading room where people can easily acquire their knowledge.

The Minister urged the people to extend their helping hands to the victims of the devastating cyclone accompanied with tidal surge that swept over the south-eastern zone of the country.

Encroachment of municipal land alleged

From A Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, May 21: An uneasy calm is prevailing at Maddhapara of the town over the issue of constructing a residential building on the road of municipality.

One Abdul Quddus, son of Pandith Meher Mia, has built the house ignoring the protest of local people of Maddhapara and notice of the authorities of Brahmanbaria thana which was issued on January 2, 1988.

Quddus bought a plot of land beside the 12-foot road of the municipality which started from Maddhapara-Poratala road and east bank of the Radama pond, in 1974, and he tried to occupy the road several times but local peoples resisted him.

Police did not take proper action as yet. This issue has created resentment among the people.

Erosion in Sirajganj

More 50 families were rendered homeless by the erosion of the river Jamuna during the last 48 hours in four villages of the district. Water Development Board (WDB) sources said, reports UNB.

A total of 1100 families were affected by the erosion in the river from April 20. The affected villages are Betil under Chouhali upazila, Diara, Patkpara and Ghonapara under Sadar upazila.

Indian products flood local markets

Handloom industries face closure

From Our Correspondent

DINAJPUR, May 21: The traditional handloom industries of three northern districts of Dinajpur, Nilphamari and Thakurgaon are facing crisis due to exorbitant prices of necessary inputs like yarn, weaving ingredients, dyes and non-availability of bank loan.

Meanwhile, some handloom factories of Ranirbandar in Dinajpur district, Saidpur of Nilphamari district and Pirganj of Thakurgaon district have been closed down rendering a large number of workers unemployed. The availability of Indian clothes at cheaper rate has considerably reduced the demand of local handloom products.

It may be mentioned here that in exchange of various local goods, Indian sarees and clothes are being smuggled

into Bangladesh through different borders of these districts. The handloom products like local sarees, lungies and napkins had a popular demand and the prices of these products were cheap earlier. But at present, the prices of hand-

loom products has reached beyond purchasing capacity of the common people due to increase of prices of raw materials and other necessary inputs. Consequently, the demand of these products has fallen considerably.

A spot survey reveals that there are 8,000 handlooms in the villages of Chirribandar, Parbatipur, in Dinajpur district, Saidpur, Jalidhaka and Domar in Nilphamari district and Pirganj, Rantsankail and

Balidagani upazilas in Thakurgaon district. It is learnt that the weavers procure raw materials like cotton yarn and dyes from black market at high prices which made them unable to cope with the present situation.

Karam Ali and Subhas Saha both handloom industry owners of Ranirbandar in Chirribandar upazila under Dinajpur district in an interview with this correspondent alleged that fake yarn traders being permit holders have taken over the control of yarn market and they are making windfall profit by illegal means.

They also alleged that fake yarn traders receive yarn regularly from the Dinajpur Textile Mills and Domar Textile Mills and help sneak the yarn into the black market ignoring the

necessity of actual weavers. The President and General Secretary of Ranirbandar Handloom Industry Association alleged that the yarn distribution system itself is defective. As a result, the genuine yarn traders are not getting their due supply of yarn. If positive and practical steps are not taken by the authority concerned to supply the cotton yarn to the real weavers directly from the Textile Mills. The present condition of the weavers will not be improved.

The weavers of these districts have urged upon the authority concerned to take positive measures for supply of cotton yarn to them at fair price so as to save the age old profession from impending destruction.