

Upazila roundup

PATAKHALI
BAED distributes 8,000 kgs of seeds

May 6: Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department (BAED) has distributed about 8,000 kilograms of seeds in four upazilas of Jhalakati district during the current rabi season, reports UNB.

All the seeds — 6,000 kg of boro seeds, 1,000 kg potatoes, 600 kg wheat and 135 kg mustard — were of High Yielding Varieties.

The BADC will distribute about 2,000 kg of jute seeds among the farmers of three districts in Khulna Division during the current season.

Officials said 1,000 kg jute seeds will be distributed in Khulna, 743 kg in Satkhira and 150 kg in Bagherhat.

Meanwhile, 1,500 acres of land were brought under intensive jute cultivation in Khulna district, of which 1300 acres were brought under cultivation of local variety of jute.

The officials said about 400 metric tons of jute will be produced in Khulna district during the coming jute season.

SATKHIRA

33 held while crossing border

May 6: Thirty-three Bangladesh nationals, including 20 women and 5 children, were arrested here on Monday last while crossing the border, reports UNB.

The BDR said 24 of them were rounded up from the Bhomra BDP while trying to cross the border without passports. Indian BSF nabbed seven others and handed over to the BDR.

The arrested people said they were being trafficked into India on promise of jobs.

A case has been filed with the sadar police station.

SYLHET

Miscreants damage 17 thatched houses, 50 hurt

May 6: A group of miscreants damaged at least seven thatched houses in broad day light in Sylhet town recently.

According to the police, on the day of incident at about 11 a. m. a gang of miscreants armed with deadly weapons attacked the Khandaura Kucha Colony of Dhopadighirpur area of the town. They ransacked and damaged there about 17 kucha houses.

About 50 persons including the children and women sustained injuries in the incident. Some of the houses were also set on fire, eye-witnesses said.

Valuables worth about Taka two lakh were damaged in the incident. On getting information, police went to the spot and arrested four persons.

A case was registered with the police in this regard.

MAULVIBAZAR

Slaughtering of animals rampant

May 6: Indiscriminate slaughtering of animals at several places in the district and its adjoining areas has been depleting cattle wealth causing health hazard and polluting the environment, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that old and diseased cattle, buffaloes and rams were being slaughtered in and around the town and beef is sold in the local markets without certificate from the health and sanitation inspectors.

A huge quantity of meat is put up for sale in unhygienic and dirty conditions and is sold at exorbitant prices. At present, beef is being sold at Taka 60 per kg and mutton at Taka 75 per kg they added.

CHUADANGA

Two housewives beaten to death

May 6: Two housewives were killed by their husbands in different villages of the district recently.

Of the victims, one Majeda Khatun of village: Khashkarara under Alamdanga upazila was burnt to death by her husband Jantu.

Another victim, one Parul of village: Komorpur under Damurhuda was beaten to death by her husband Insan.

Separate cases were registered with police in this connection.

KISHOREGANJ

One crushed under wheels

From Our Correspondent

May 6: Md Enus Ali (45) of village Katabaria under Kishoreganj sadar upazila was crushed under the wheels of a passenger bus on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road recently.

The incident occurred when the driver of the Kishoreganj bound bus from Mymensingh was overtaking another bus on the road.

Police seized the buses but the drivers, however managed to escape.

The body was sent to the Kishoreganj sadar hospital for postmortem.

BARISAL

Foundation of Amrita Lal Dey College laid

May 6: The foundation of the Amrita Lal Dey College was laid at the Jhataula area of the Barisal town recently, reports BSS.

Presided over by Professor Md Hanif, Principal of Brojomohun College, Barisal, the function, was attended by Principal Md Yunus Khan, State Minister for Education as chief Guest. Mosarref Hussain MP and Mujibur Rahman Sarwar MP were present as special guests.

Deputy Commissioner, Nurul Alam Khan, Police Super Barisal, Principal Shamsuddin Ahmed, A Rashid Khan, Hemayet Uddin Ahmed, Debendra Nath Ghose and Amrita Lal Dey also spoke on the occasion.

HABIGANJ

One to suffer 14 yrs RI for keeping arms

May 6: Ayub Ali of village Usmanpur of Chunarughat upazila was sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment and fined Taka 1,000 for possessing arms without licence and involvement in smuggling, reports UNB.

According to the prosecution, Ayub Ali was involved in border smuggling with illegal arms. Police arrested him from Chunarughat Bazar on December 30, 1990. Police also recovered one country-made gun and a bullet owned by him from the house of his accomplice.

Later, police submitted charge sheet against them.

Shamsun Nahar Begum, Assistant Sessions Judge and Special Tribunal court No 3 after examining the records and witnesses convicted Ayub Ali while his accomplice Mofazzul was acquitted.

RAJSHAHI

Gay girls on increase

From Our Correspondent

May 6: Gay girls have increased in the Rajshahi city alarmingly.

Shahebbazar, Malopara, Ranibazar and Railway Station areas of the city have virtually been turned into the shelter for the gay girls who are engaged in anti-social activities.

It is learnt that most of the gay girls are coming from poverty-stricken families who are compelled to indulge in this heinous activities.

Meanwhile, venereal diseases among the teenagers and the young people have increased in recent days with the influx of gay girls.

According to the physicians, most of the venereal disease patients have got a tendency to conceal the disease as they are illiterate and consequently suffer without undergoing any treatment.

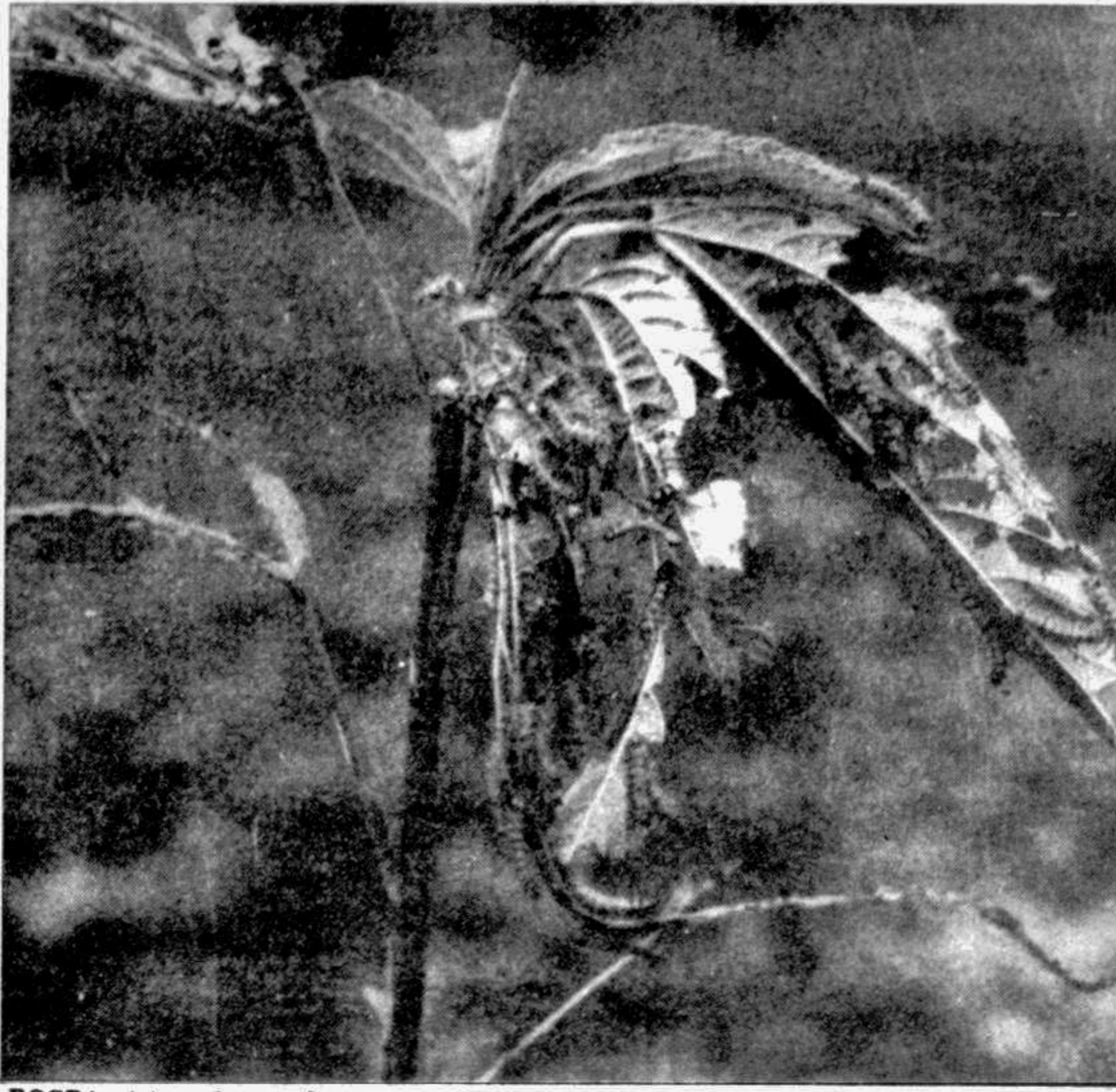
AGRI-VARSITY

BAU teacher gets Ph D

May 6: Md Abul Quasem, Associate Professor in the Department of Anatomy and Histology of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) has recently been awarded with the degree of Ph D from BAU for his thesis entitled 'A morphological study of the gastrointestinal tract of Black Bengal goat during pre-natal and Post-natal development', says a press release.

Dr Quasem is the third son of late Md Arjat Ali Bepari of the village Puran Bausia under Cazaria upazila of Munshiganj district Prof Dr Md Ismail Hossain of the Department of Anatomy and Histology of BAU was his research-supervisor.

The importance and possibilities of Black Bengal goat are enormous in the rural economy of Bangladesh. It is expected that results of this study will make significant contribution to the further development of this species of animal including basic research on goats.



BOGRA: A jute plant under pest attack.

Star Photo

Shortfall in jute output target this year likely

From Our Correspondent

BOGRA, May 6: The jute production target in 16 districts of northern region may not be achieved as the cultivation has faced a serious setback due to prolonged drought.

The lands in many places could not be prepared for jute cultivation in the absence of moisture in the soil and rain. Besides, small jute plants which were cultivated earlier are under pest attack. The pests are locally identified as 'Changa Poka'.

On the other hand, ground water level has fallen 30 to 35 feet during this summer which also rendered the jute cultivators in northern region helpless and that is why the achievement of jute production target has become uncertain.

Earlier, a massive programme for jute cultivation on 1,78,412 hectares of land was taken up in northern region of the country during the current season.

According to the plan, local variety of jute was scheduled to be cultivated on 82,175 hectares of land while tosa variety on 96,237 hectares.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, cultivation target in Bogra was fixed

at 16,200 hectares and of them local variety on 11,800 hectares.

The district-wise cultivation target was Jaipurhat-local variety on 1,000 hectares and tosa variety on 3,100 hectares, Pabna-local variety on 4,500 hectares and tosa on 12,700 hectares, Sirajganj-local variety on 11,162 hectares and tosa on 12,121 hectare, Rajshahi-local variety on 1,635 hectares and tosa on 4,905 hectares, Nator-local variety on 2,753 hectares and tosa on 3,820 hectares, Naogaon-local variety on 3,200 hectares and tosa on 5,300 hectares, Chapainawabganj-local variety on 390 hectares and tosa on 900 hectares, Rangpur-local variety on 8,810 hectares and tosa on 8,200 hectares, Nilphamari-local variety on 11,741 hectares and tosa on 2,215 hectares, Gaibandha-local variety on 8,750 hectares, Kurigram-local variety on 7,819, Lalmonirhat-local variety on 4,146 hectares and tosa on 2,815 hectares, Dinajpur-local variety on 3,439 hectares and tosa on 2,824 hectares, Thakurgaon-local variety on 650 hectares and tosa on 2,785 hectares and Panchagarh-local

variety on 500 hectares and tosa on 2000 hectares.

UNB adds: A sum of Taka 34 lakh is to be spent for reconstruction and maintenance of four government colleges and four high schools in the district during the current fiscal year.

Of the total, Taka 4.97 lakh was allotted for Mozibur Rahman Government Women's College, Taka 14.96 lakh for Government Shah Sultan College, Taka 5.81 lakh for Government Nazir Akhter College of Sonatola, Taka 1.50 lakh for Government Commercial College, Taka 1.25 lakh for Bogra Zilla School, Taka 2.22 lakh for Bogra Government Girl's High School, Taka 3.13 lakh for Santihar High School and Taka 1.49 lakh for Sariakandi High School.

According to official sources, work on the project is expected to be completed by July this year.

Meanwhile, work has been completed on the development of six other government colleges and five government high schools at a total cost of about Taka 50 lakh during the current fiscal year.

Law, order situation deteriorates

KISHOREGANJ

Law and order situation in the district has deteriorated in recent days causing great concern to local people, reports UNB.

High way robbery, dacoity, theft, murder, gambling kidnapping, rape, cattlehead lifting, hijacking, pick pocketing, smuggling, murder and mugging have been rampant in all the 13 upazilas of the district, local people said.

The miscreants allegedly move almost freely in and around the town, upazila headquarters and the adjoining areas with unauthorised lethal weapons and engage in anti-social activities with impunity.

Open sale of drugs, ganja and liquor is rampant in the town and as well as in almost all upazilas giving rise to criminal activities.

Local people complained that law enforcing agencies remained silent over the illegal sale of drugs and wine for unknown reasons.

They urged the authorities concerned to take steps to check the anti-social activities in the district.

Another report adds: Six separate dacoities were committed at the village Padha Digreekanda in sadar upazila on Thursday.

A group of armed dacoits entered the houses by break-

ing the doors at midnight.

The dacoities were committed at the houses of Abul Hashem, Abul Kashem, Ratan, Mannan, Rafiqul Islam and Nurul Islam.

The members of the houses were reportedly tied up and some of them were assaulted by the bandits during their raids to the houses.

The dacoits threatened the inmates on gun points and

took away valuable articles including ornaments worth about Taka 60,000. They also took away cash money amounting to Taka 20,000 from the houses.

Local people and leaders alleged that dacoity, robbery, theft, gambling and pick-pocketing in sadar upazila have increased largely in recent days.

A case was lodged with local police in this regard.

Problems hamper edn in Nazimuddin College

From Our Correspondent

MADARIPUR, May 5: Government Nazimuddin College has been facing multifarious problems including shortage of teachers.

The accommodation problem and shortage of books in college library also causing serious impediment to pursuit of knowledge, college sources said.

Most of the departments of the college have been facing shortage of teachers which hampers the students. Recent promotions and transfers of

teachers have made the problem acute.

The college runs without any auditorium while indoor sports cannot be arranged due to the lack of common room facilities. There is only one common room which is now in a deplorable condition.

A large number of girl students are accommodated in a small old common room without any amenities. There is no hostel for them.



JAMALPUR: Gay girls are sleeping at local railway station area during daytime.

— Star photo.

Across the country

Kurigram : A tale of the poorest of the poor

By H B Khan

KURIGRAM, May 6: With its poverty, floods and famines, often meaning colossal disasters and deaths, abysmal poverty and sub-human existence, Kurigram presents a picture of underdevelopment epitomised.

Poverty in rural Kurigram is stark naked and very deep. The spectre of hunger, disease and death stake every living thing staving from the humans — and relentlessly.

In so far as hardcore of the rural poor — the functionally landless and land-poor constitute a vast majority, no development strategy can reasonably ignore them. It should also be pointed out that even policies which are meant to benefit small and marginal farmers exclude a great number of landless and functionally landless farm labourers. Hence, the rationale for reformulating rural development strategies, since the hitherto by-passed poor majority have hardly anything to gain from preserving the status quo i.e. the existing agrarian structure.

Bordered on the north and east by India, the district is traversed by the great Himalayan rivers: Brahmaputra, Dharla and Teesta, and their tributaries — Sankosh, Dudhkumar and Phulkumari. While rivers are a boon to mankind everywhere in the world and throughout history, the rivers of the districts have been caused the 'Sorrow of Kurigram'.

Under the British Rule, in 1875 (22nd April), Kurigram was set up as subdivision and it was upgraded into a district a full century later in 1984. The

per cent. Agriculture commands an operated area of 4,26,915 acres of land in the district. Net cultivated area is 3,30,794 acres. The difference tends to indicate that the entire land is yet to be brought under constant farming for every year.

As to land utilization, Kurigram district has 8,000 acres of uncropped, 2,36,000 acres of double cropped and 42,000 acres of triple cropped areas. Net cropped areas stood at 3,58,000 acres and gross cropped areas at 6,78,000 acres of land. Local agricultural authorities state that the cropping intensity is lower than the national average.

Kurigram is traditionally one of the main jute producing areas. Rice and wheat are also major crops of the district. Other important crops include kaun (millet), potato, sweet potato and sugarcane. Per acre yield of foodgrains in the district is very low. On the other hand, the farmers are not getting fair price of their produce.

The irrigation facilities in the district is also meagre. Net irrigated area of 26,327 acres accounts for 6.16 per cent of the operated areas.

People of Kurigram are instantly fighting against erosion of land and floods by the mighty rivers Brahmaputra, Dharla, Teesta and their tributaries for their survival.

Erosion of land by shifting river channels washes away human settlement almost every year. Floods do the same, of course, in a greater magnitude rendering poor

Control and Irrigations Project' was taken up in 1969 and work commenced in 1973-74. This project may apply to be termed as the lifeline of Kurigram district. Due to inadequate allocations of funds, work progress is very slow. A revised estimate of Taka 586 crore was prepared in 1985-86. After completion of the project will bring about additional income to the tune of around Taka 93 crore annually on account of increase output. The project will help increase production of foodgrains, and other commercial crops by providing flood control and drainage to an area of about 2,61,000 acres, and irrigation facility to an area of 1,95,500 acres. Besides, it will offer enormous indirect benefit in the form of road links, development of growth centers, markets etc. in the rural setting. The project is vitally necessary for the existence of the people of this distressed district. The target period of completion of the project is June 1993. But will it be completed within this time? No one is ready to believe it will be.

The district's communications network is wholly made up of kutchra roads, there are some 3,000 kilometers of them.

There is a total of 96 kilometers of puuca road in the district connecting the district headquarters with Rangpur, Chilmari and Bhurungamari.

many parts, far and near, including some upazilas and trade centres are yet to be linked by road communications with the district headquarters.

Remote rural areas are almost inaccessible due to dearth of reasonably good roads, culverts and bridges. During the season of monsoon, rain and surging flash-floods that often precede a havoc, road communications in most villages, sometimes become totally disrupted rendering them almost islands isolated from the district headquarters.

It was an old dream of the people to have a bridge over the river Dharla at Kurigram town ghat. Attempts were made earlier to construct a bridge with Dutch Assistance but this could not be implemented. Further attempts of work made with British Assistance Programme. But no fruitful result has yet been noticed.

The bridge will change the communication picture of Kurigram district and help accelerate pace of its economic development.

The pace of development of this distressed district would be accelerated with the establishment of a full-fledged river port at Chilmari.

During the British time Chilmari was a flourishing port connecting two major ports of India namely Calcutta and Gauhati.

Once a nerve-centre of the region's trade and commerce, Chilmari port now is nothing more than a relic of its own celebrated past sunk into the oblivion. Revival of the port is a must for the greater interest of the people of Kurigram.

Poverty causes disease and disease causes poverty. Kurigram district is trapped in a vicious circle. Its unhappy public health profile is but a legacy of the past. The district is historically known for its seasonal epidemics. Almost every year seasonal floods bring severe health hazards after linked with polluted drinking water and poor sanitary conditions. Child mortality, due chiefly to malnutrition, in the district is very high. Mortality rate is 30 per thousand as against the national average of 22 per thousand (1 to 4 years).

Generally, all over the district, the prevalence of TB and leprosy seems to be much higher than the national average. A large number of people especially women are affected by gotter — a throat disease, believed to be caused by an environmental deficiency of iodine in the diet found to be the resulting effect of annual flood.

The district public health sector is held back by a high shortage of qualified doctors, nurses, medical assistants, and paramedics and also by a very limited health care physical facilities.

The 50-bed modernised hospital for 13,26,853 people situated at the district headquarters, needs to be elevated to a full-fledged modern hospital having at least 200 beds and equipped in all respects.

The picture of education section of the district is also very grim. The literacy rate in the district was around 15.8 per cent against the national average of 23.80.



KURIGRAM: A farmer is irrigating his land in a primitive way.

Star Photo

first name of Kurigram was 'Kurigonj'.

Since 1984, a full-fledged district, Kurigram has nine upazilas, comprising 73 unions and 1500 villages. Its district headquarters — Kurigram is the lone municipality in the district. The total area of the district is 2173 square kilometers.

The district, is peopled by a total of 13,26,853 with a density of 611 persons per square kilometer.

The per capita income of the people of Kurigram is Taka 2545 which is about one half of the national average of Taka 4910. Kurigram's population are engaged in agriculture as against 64% for all Bangladesh. But according to unofficial estimates, the figure is much higher, possibly going up to 90

settlors homeless. High floods after lead to deaths and large-scale displacement of people, destruction of cattle and crops, as well as of grain stocks, farm implements, household utensils, and in fine, everything. Drinking water supplies are contaminated or are not at all available. Consequently principally a water-borne disease diarrhoea breaks out and claims lives in hundreds year after year.

It is important to note that Kurigram district has witnessed four devastating floods within a period of little more than a decade i.e. in 1974 and 1984, 1986, 1987. Kurigram was declared as 'famine district' in 1974 by the govt (in September 1974).

With a view to combating the flood, 'Kurigram flood

Unusual increase in female day labourers

Magura, May 6: There has been unusual increase in the number of destitute women in the district for the last few days, reports UNB.

About 5,000 female day labourers have been without work in the four upazilas of the district, social workers reported.

The number of jobless women is rapidly increasing in the district due to economic stagnancy and social unrest, they said. Hushing paddy, which had been their main vocation has been taken over by rice mills, set up almost at every village.

Besides, a large number of grown up girls have joined the jobless women force as demands for dowry blocked their

marriages. Some of these young girls turned to begging.

The helpless women are roaming in search of jobs and have been resorting to immoral anti-social activities to earn their livelihood, the social worker said.

Poura election

Electroenering for the coming pourashava polls has gripped the Magura Municipal Areas. Hectic campaign for candidates of different political parties and independents has been going on for some time.

Wall-posters have appeared in different areas in favour of candidates.

Some candidates are holding indoor meetings with the voters.