

Upazila roundup

SATKHIRA

Minor girl violated

From Our Correspondent
June 3: A minor girl was violated by one Abdul Mazid of village Enayetpur under Tala Upazila of the district recently. According to report, the victim, one Khukhu (8), daughter of Komoruddin of the same village went to a nearby paddy field in response to the call of nature where Mazid caught and raped her. Later, the villagers recovered her in a critical condition. The culprit Mazid is still absconding.

Another report adds: One Selina Khatun (19), wife of Shawkat Ali of Bakal under Satkhira Pourashava committed suicide by taking poison recently.

NETRAKONA

Newly elected UP chairmen confce held

From Our Correspondent
June 3: A conference of the newly elected union parishad chairmen of Netrakona district was held at Public Hall here recently. The conference was organized by Netrakona district administration to educate the chairmen about different development programmes initiated by present democratic government. Deputy Commissioner, Netrakona, Alim Abul Kashem inaugurated the conference. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Netrakona, Bimal Kumar Kundu, Advocate Fazlur Rahman Khan, Advocate AKM Fazlul Kaddir, Abdul Kuddus, General Secretary, BNP, Netrakona, Gazi Mosharrar Hossain, President of School Teachers Association of greater Mymensingh district, Mahbulul Kibria Chowdhury, District Correspondent of The Daily Star, two union parishad chairmen Abdul Hakek Talukder and Jahurul Haque Hira among others addressed the conference.

FARIDPUR

Indian sarees worth Tk 6 lakh seized

From Our Correspondent
June 3: Indian sarees worth about Taka six lakh were seized by police from Charbhadrassan Upazila of the district recently. According to police sources, 2279 pieces of Indian sarees were being carried from Pakshakti bazar under Sadarpur Upazila to Dhaka via Charbhadrassan. Acting on secret information, a contingent of police led by Officer-in-Charge of Charbhadrassan Thana seized the sarees. Another report adds: A programme on Pure Water and Sanitation held at Nagarkanda Upazila under Faridpur district by Association for Village Advancement (AVA) recently. AKM Arzuul Haque, Chairman of AVA, Nagarkanda, Faridpur presided over the function. SM Shahajan, ADC (General) attended in the function as chief guest.

SYLHET

Miscreants stab 2 persons including school boy

From Our Correspondent
June 3: Two persons including a school student were stabbed in two separate incidents in the Sylhet town recently. At about 2 pm a student of Class X of the Sylhet Aided High School at Zindabazar area was stabbed by a group of miscreants. The victim Saiful Ali was then on his way home from the school after appearing in the 1st Terminal Examination. He was admitted to the MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital with injuries immediately. The incident occurred near the gate of the school. The school-committee in a meeting held in the evening strongly condemned the incident and demanded legal action against the culprits responsible for the incident. On the same day, a young man named Masud was stabbed at the Surma Market area at about 12 pm. He was immediately rushed to the MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital with serious injuries. A case in this connection had been registered with the Kotwali police.

MAULVI BAZAR

2 absconding convicts nabbed

June 3: Police have arrested two absconding convicts from Sreemongal town, reports UNI.

The arrested convicts are Saban Ali, son of late Amir Hussain of Saigaon village in Sreemongal upazila and another Selim son of Abdus Sattar of Chunarughat Upazila. They had been sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for two years each on charges of various crimes.

Police said Saban Ali was arrested from Motipur slum area and Selim from college road area of Sreemongal town.

MANIKGANJ

Chhatra League unit committee formed

From Our Correspondent
June 3: The biennial conference of Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-S) of Manikganj district unit was held here at Government Devdoro College premises recently. The central leader of JSD, Iqbal Hossain Khan attended the conference as chief guest while Acting President of Chhatra League Mokhesur Rahman and Secretary Saidur Rahman were present as special guests.

The conference was presided over by Sultanal Azam Apic, President of Chhatra League district unit. Addressed among others by Masum Haque Khan Pottol, Badsha, Shahidul Islam Pulak, Shaiful Islam Chapal and Monam Khan.

PATUAKHALI

Construction work on

June 3: The construction work on three family welfare centres in Bauphal Upazila of the district is progressing fast, reports UNI. According to official sources, an amount of Taka 35 lakh has been sanctioned for execution of the centres. The World Bank is financing the project. With the completion of the centres primary healthcare for the mothers and children of the upazila will be geared up. Another report adds: A worker of an ice factory of Daulatkhan Upazila in Bholi district was electrocuted recently.

SIARIATPUR

Fishermen face fund shortage

From Our correspondent
June 3: Thousands of fishermen have been facing hurdles to carry on their age-old profession for acute fund stringency and price-hike of fishing appliances. According to a statistics, about 20,000 fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing in the rivers, canals, beels, haors and ponds of all 6 upazilas of the district. A fishing boat along with net is being sold at Taka 1.50 lakh which is beyond the purchasing capacity of the fishermen.

Its is alleged that some jagraders in collusion with the vested interest groups are giving sub-lease to the non-fishermen. They also take away the fishing appliances from the professionals with impunity inconsequence with the law-enforcing personnel.

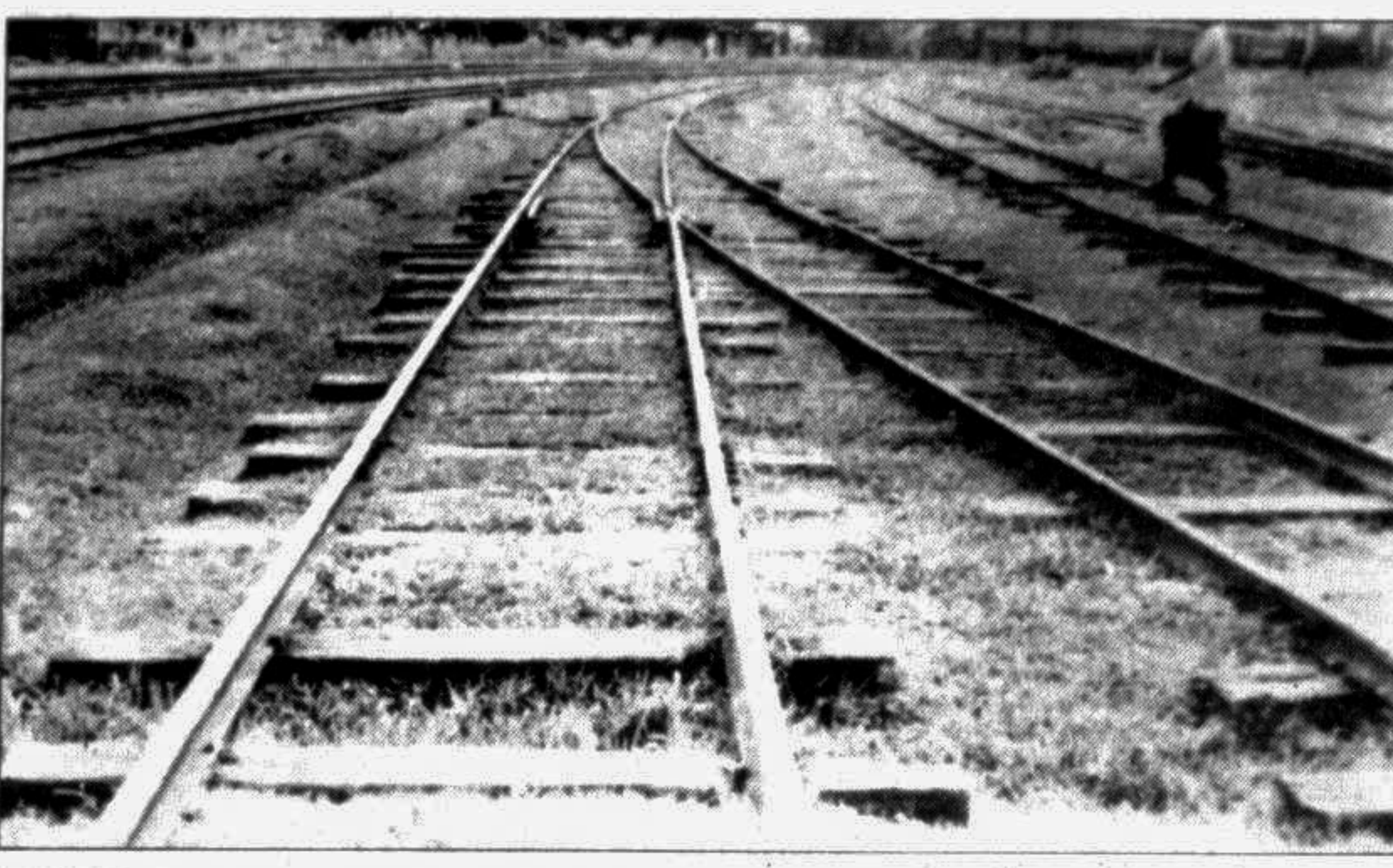
KUSHITIA

Number of divorces on increase

From Our Correspondent
June 3: Number of divorces is increasing gradually with mushroom growth of unlicensed marriage registrars in six upazilas of the district. Fake marriage registrars are doing their business at the cost of poor people of the villages.

According to sources, about three thousand divorce cases have been recorded in six upazila courts of the district during last three years.

Violating government ban, marriages of under-aged girls are being solemnized by a section of greedy marriage registrars.



RAJBARI: The stoneless railway tracks are in pitiable condition in the area. Travel on these tracks is very risky. —Star photo

30 pc pry students out of school

Poverty, ignorance deprive children of education

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, June 3: The Universal Primary Education Programme (UPEP) has been facing serious setback in the district.

According to Primary Education Department, there are 713 government and 186 non-government primary schools in the district. The number of students in these schools is about one lakh.

It is reported that dilapidated condition of school buildings, inadequate furniture and shortage of teachers are the main causes which are hampering the education. High prices of papers and other educational appliances, financial crisis and social problems are also hindering the programme.

Moreover, the schools damaged by floods, storms and cyclones over the last few years have not yet been repaired. The shortage of benches and accommodation problem have aggravated the situation. Cracks have developed on the roofs of most of the school buildings for which the students can not attend classes during the rainy season. Very often classes are taken under the open sky. Most of the schools have no tubewells and the students are to take impure water from the nearby ponds and canals.

For economic crisis, the students are to help their parent in their daily work for earning bread. So, a large number of students are unable to attend classes and consequently they are deprived of the education.

Abdul Karim (23), a day labourer of village Raipur under Kaliganj Upazila met the tragic end of his life after falling from a tree recently.

The victim, son of one Sahamat Ali told his master that he would not be able to climb up a tree as he was too weak. Karim was very much hungry as he could not take meal for last two days.

The master did not pay heed to the words of Karim and pursued him to pluck cotton from big shumul tree. The unfortunate Karim was thus compelled to climb up the tree and fell from it.

A seriously injured Karim rushed to the hospital but the doctor declared him dead.

In another incident, one person was killed by the Royal Bengal Tiger in the Sunderbans.

It is reported that the victim Attur Rahman (55) of Burigaline under Shyamnagar Upazila went to the Sunderbans for collecting honey. While he was engaged in deep forest, a tiger swooped on him and killed him.

One Gopal Moid (50) of Gabura under Shyamnagar Upazila was killed in the thunder bolt on May 6.

It is learnt that while Gopal was working in the field, he was electrocuted by the thunder.

Akbar Gazi of village Karaganchi under Kalaroa Upazila of the district died while he was taking 'gul'.

ing 'gul' after taking meal. Suddenly he fell ill and died instantly.

Another Nur Ali Mallik (45) of Baushipur under Shyamnagar Upazila while standing on the road, a BDR truck of 25 Battalion dashed him from behind and he died on the spot.

One China Begum daughter of Keramat Ali of Munjipur died from snake bite.

A UNB report from Comilla says: About 1.58 lakh children of the district are unable to receive primary education for various reasons, a survey report said here.

The primary school teachers of the district recently conducted a survey in 12 upazilas which revealed that out of 6,62,135 eligible children only 5,04,517 are going to school.

The reasons behind the big gap between the school and out of school children showed by the survey group are: poverty, lack of consciousness of the guardians, inadequate number of primary schools and high prices of education materials.

There are only 1,342 government primary schools and 227 registered non-government primary schools in the district which fulfilled only 70 per cent of the total need.

Inadequate classrooms, teachers and education materials also discourage the children from going to school.

The reports said that about 233 posts of teachers in the district have long been lying vacant.



MYMENSINGH: The local unit of Democratic Teachers' Forum brought out a procession here recently demanding the implementation of 'public court' judgement. —Star photo

Chisti Textile Mills faces closure

COMILLA, June 3: The Chisti Textile Mills of Comilla is about to be laid off financial stringency caused by the huge quantity of unsold yarn it is alleged, reports UNI.

The mill had about 15 permanent customers of yarn from Narayanganj who deposited earnest money for execution of the latest contract. But a recent directive from BTMC discouraged them from purchasing yarn from March last.

This has created a huge stock of unsold yarn causing serious financial stringency. About 162 bales of yarn worth about Taka 2.20 crore have been lying with the godown of the mills, according to a mill source.

The closure of the mills may put about 300 employees out of job, it was feared.

about 26,000 consumers of different categories including residential, commercial, cottage industries and small irrigation schemes.

The highest amount of about Taka 1 crore bills are outstanding with the Comilla Pourashava, Taka 10 lakh with the BDR headquarters at Kotbari, Taka 6 lakh with different offices under the district administration, Taka 5 lakh with the various police offices, Taka 3.50 lakh with Comilla Victoria College, Taka 17 lakh with Qatayam Steel Mills and Taka 1.20 lakh with Jangalia Krishak Shamabaya Society.

Accused held
Wanted Criminal Rafiqul Islam Rafiq of village Kashimpur in Chandina Upazila was nabbed by police with the help of the local people on May 25.

He was wanted in Chandina thana case No 20/27 of 1991 for committing heinous crimes and involvement in terrorism in the area since 8 months last.

It is alleged that Rafiq and his accomplices assaulted Chowkder (small) and a police constable injuring them seriously on 26.5.91.

Jolekha Begum (45) wife of Kadim Ali of village

Mashikara in Devidwar Upazila has been missing since May 15 last.

Relatives said she had gone out at night for defecation but did not return. It is feared that she might have been kidnapped and killed.

Another report adds: Masoom Mia, a worker of Ratapur Textile Mills in sadar upazila was electrocuted when he came in contact with a electric machine on May 21.

The mill workers conducted his death and the mills remained closed for 24 hours.

A three-week long training course on 'Co-operative Management' held in Bangladesh Co-operative College at Kotbari here concluded on May 21 through a brief function.

Twentyone leading co-oprators, both male and female participated in the course.

Guests at a demonstration session tasted delight food cooked with Soyabean oil. Woman and housewives took part in the cooking at village Belghar in Laksam Upazila on May 24.

The demonstration was sponsored by Upazila Agriculture Department, Laksam, was also attended by about one hundred farmers of the area.

Across the country

A city of rich people and rickshaws

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain

I had recently the privilege to travel to north-eastern and southern parts of Bangladesh. In the first week of May, I boarded the train, Parabat from Kamalapur Railway Station which was opened amidst fanfare by the Governor of the erstwhile East Pakistan, the late Abdul Monem Khan, who was really the blue-eyed boy of dictator Ayub Khan of Pakistan.

The train which left Kamalapur at 7.20 in the morning reached Sylhet, 246 kilometres from Dhaka, at 4 pm, one hour behind schedule. The Kamalapur Station wears a good look despite some hustle-and-bustle pockets on the entrance yard. Newspaper hawkers in particular could well be made to sell newspapers and magazines from stands inside the station.

A few minutes after the departure of my train, I noticed a huge number of shanties along the railway track. These were erected so closely that one could hardly pass between them without hurting oneself.

Apart from such sickly crowd of hovels, a huge crowd of tiny urchins were roaming around the lean-toes in their hundreds. Some of the crawlins were built on swamps. The scene comes as a shock after coming from the capital city made relatively attractive at a cost of huge amount of money from the public exchequer.

The consequences of these sprawling linear clusters of crawl-in hovels are bound to be all evil and injurious to our social being.

The inter-city train was introduced to offer nonstop and quick passage between cities. Alas, our train was late by an hour. The passengers, who travelled by Parabat very often, claimed that this had become habitual for the Parabat. The reasons are not known. Services in the compartments are pitiable. Upper parts of the seats are worn out. Food served in the compartments is not in good taste. Compartments need to be cleaner.

Of course, cleanliness does not depend on the management alone. An awareness about cleanliness among the passengers must be created. Some harsh regulation may be helpful in ensuring cleanliness and stopping pilferage.

The condition of most of the wayside railway stations made me sad. They were in a bad shape. Walls of the stations were splashed with a plethora of political slogans and election cries. Possibly these station buildings have not been white-washed for ages. I couldn't help thinking of regulations again, being a government functionary, which could attempt stopping the dirtying of the walls. Writings on the wall do not anymore represent the inexpressible of the wishes of the majority of the population. And passengers hardly care to read these daubings.

What struck me most was several hundred acres of cultivable land along the railway lines immediately after Brahmanbaria station giving a barren look. I did not notice any shallow or deep tubewell around the area for irrigation purpose. It was really amazing that no cultivation was seen in the area by me or my co-travellers in the compartment.

On arrival at Sylhet I found a huge number of rickshaws plying in the city. This was in contrast to what I had seen in 1961 in the same Sylhet town. There were very few rickshaws in Sylhet in 1961.

Sylhet is not particularly a cramped town but rickshaws make things difficult at times taking up most of the narrow thoroughfares. Sylhet, despite having a large segment of rich people as residents, looks dirty. Municipal authorities need to take care to clean the town properly, particularly around the bridge. There is no proper facilities for public sanitation. Street urchins and floating people are taking shelter in the night under the bridge. This area then becomes a den of evil doings.

Sylhet is known for tea gar-

dens which present a refreshing sight. Although the gardens are in the private sector, these give an impression that not much attention is paid for their maintenance these days. Owners of these gardens may consider planting rubber trees in the valleys along the tea gardens.

I read from a history of Sylhet written by Syed Murtaza Ali that once coffee also was grown in the valleys of Sylhet. So with little efforts another cash crop, coffee, could be produced easily on a large scale as the soil is suitable. This crop may bring us pots of foreign currency as the price of coffee in the international market is comparatively higher than that of tea.

Many multistoried and elegant houses are being constructed in the town and villages of Sylhet by the absentee land owners who are mostly settled in the United Kingdom. It is understood that owners are building such huge and expensive houses more out of status consciousness than anything else.

There is hardly any investment in the tea factories and the industry as a whole. There is lack of entrepreneurship. People are keen to only to work in foreign lands to earn hard currency. There is as such no industry worth the name except tea in the private sector. Industries like fertilizer, cement, gas and oil are controlled by the public sector.

Sylhet is importing vegetables from other districts to meet the needs of its people. I was given to understand that people here have paid little attention to farming as they are earning money easily by breaking and carrying stones from the rivers in Bholaganj and Jaf-fong.

I received a good news from a local daily, Shudin, that people of the district were going to reap a bumper crop of boro paddy because of favourable weather condition in the haor areas.

Dr Sattar laid to rest

CHANDPUR, June 3: Dr MA Sattar, a noted educationist and founder of Shikkha Samity was buried at Panchagram Complex premises at Noapara in Shaharasti Upazila on Tuesday, reports UNI.

Dr Sattar, former Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh, died of cardiac failure on May 26 at Islamabad, Pakistan.

Earlier, his Namaj-e-Janaza was held at Panchagram Complex premises. A large number of people including high government officials attended at the Janaza led by Al-haj Moulana Sheikh Manzoor Ahmad.

Jamuna erosion leaves 200 families homeless

PABNA, June 3: At least 200 families in Bera Upazila of the district were rendered homeless by the erosion of the river Jamuna during the last two days, reports UNI.

According to district administration, the affected villages are Puranbhanga, Raghunathpur, Madhupur, Rakshaw, Nagarbari, Nakulaia, Gonopadolia and Dhenakola. The Nagarbari Ferry Ghat and Nakalla River Port are also threatened by the erosion.

Water Development Board sources said water level of Jamuna is on rise but flowing below the danger mark. A large number of homeless families took shelter on the flood control embankment.

The affected people urged the authorities to provide them with relief and grants to help them rehabilitate without further delay.

A earlier BSS report from Sylhet says: Majid-Ul-Haq Minister for Agriculture, Irriga-

Dr Sattar laid to rest

tion, Flood Control and Water Resources, has directed concerned officials to take up protective measures against erosion by the river Khushiara. The Minister visited Zakiganj, Bhuyiamura and Amanalid areas of Sylhet district to see the extent of damage caused by the continuous erosion of river Khushiara. He was informed that more than one thousand acres been devoured the erosion, a Press release of Water Development.

The Flood Control Minister gave directive to the concerned authorities to take up both short and long term measures for protection against the erosion. He also issue on the spot instruction to the Irrigation Secretary M Asafuddin and other high officials accompanying him to take all possible steps including drawing up a scheme for the remedy of the situation on an emergency basis.

Policemen asked to enforce law strictly

TANGAIL, June 3: Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury on Tuesday called upon the members of police to check criminals and protect the people and their properties without fear and favour, reports BSS.

He directed them to take stringent actions to root-out crimes especially terrorism, hijacking, cruelty to women and children, smuggling, dacoity and extortion from society with utmost sincerity and honesty.

He was addressing the passing out parade of the 2nd batch of police constables at Tangail Police Training Center, here.

The Home Minister said the present government had created a momentum and congenial atmosphere for administration as well as for police force, so that they could change their attitudes, behave with people like their best friends. The police can restore their image and earn peoples faith, he said.

Terming peace and stability as pre-condition for speedy national development Matin Chowdhury urged the police personnel to strictly enforce law and order.

Turning to the problems of

Night coach falls into roadside ditch, 38 hurt

MAGURA, June 3: Thirty-eight people were injured, 10 seriously, when a night coach fell into a roadside ditch at Belnagar in Sadar upazila on Dhaka-Khulna Highway early on Monday, reports UNI.

Massive aus farming plan

MAULVIABAZAR, June 3: A scheme has been undertaken to bring 1.47 lakh acres of land under aus cultivation in the district, reports UNI.

According to official sources, 61,000 acres of land will be brought under High Yielding Variety and the rest 86,000 acres under local variety.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation will supply necessary seeds, fertilizers and insecticides among the farmers at fair prices for the successful implementation of the scheme.

It is estimated that about 78,000 metric tons of aus paddy will be produced in the district during this season.