

Govt firm to remove illiteracy

KHULNA, Feb 9: Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Ashraf Hossain said here that the present government had given priority to education in order to wipe out illiteracy from the society, reports BSS.

The government has provided various opportunities so that younger generation in different age group could prosecute studies.

Hossain was addressing the freshers reception of the Shahpur Madhugram College at Dumuria thana in Khulna district on Monday.

The function was addressed among others by M Nurul Islam, President of Khulna City BNP, newly elected commissioners of Khulna City Corporation.

Man jailed for killing his wife

SATKHIRA, Feb 9: A special tribunal on Monday awarded a young man life imprisonment for killing his wife for dowry, reports UNB.

The convict identified as Jahangir Alam of village Chaurab Nagar in Shyamnagar thana of the district used to torture his wife since their marriage a few years back.

The case in brief was that Jahangir mercilessly beat his wife, Sirna Khatun (25) on 31st March '92 for dowry money. Later, she succumbed to her injuries.

Char dwellers fight over border demarcation

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 9: Dispute over the border between Char Zahiruddin of Bhola and Char Gazaria of Lakshimpur led to a fresh round of violence at Shahjahan Bazar this afternoon.

Early this morning, hundreds of armed men reportedly from Char Gazaria of Ramgati union raided Char Zahiruddin and Naldugi and damaged and looted some 50 houses. The miscreants also set fire to the houses leaving hundreds of people without shelter.

The inhabitants of the two char areas also fought a gun fight in the afternoon.

Earlier on Sunday the inhabitants of the two chars of the adjoining districts fought over the border demarcation.

Uninvited guests!

SATKHIRA, Feb 9: A gang of armed dacoits swooped on a marriage ceremony being held at a house in Shyamnagar thana on Saturday night, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the dacoits numbering 10-12 forcibly entered the house of Swapan Kumar, beat the inmates, including invited guests indiscriminately and decimated with cash, ornaments and valuables worth over Taka two lakh.

A case has been filed with the police.

Town roads in poor condition

KUSHTIA, Feb 9: Almost all the roads under the pourashava are in bad shape due to absence of proper and timely repair and maintenance causing untold sufferings to the town dwellers, reports UNB.

Local people said, innumerable potholes have developed at many points of the roads hindering the movement of the vehicles and pedestrians.

The playing of vehicles on Sirajuddowa road, BCRC road, Arjunadas Agarwala road, Rajabali Khan Chowdhury road and the road connecting GK resthouse has become very risky due to their dilapidated conditions.

5 dacoits held in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 9: Police arrested five alleged dacoits including two women with huge arms and ammunition from Gokhali village in Chokoria thana today, reports UNB.

The arrested are Emdad Mia, 48, and his two daughters Parveen Akhter, 22, and Neufar, 15, Jasim Uddin 25, and the Moghna UP member, Shamsul Karim, 30.

Acting on a tip, police raided the house of Emdad Mia and nabbed them with looted goods and arms and ammunition.

The arms and ammunition included one 303 rifle, one Belgium made gun, three cut guns, one cut rifle and 24 rounds of ammunition. Police said the arrested people had a link with a number of dacoities committed in the thana recently. Two separate cases were filed.



MADARIPUR: The only diabetic clinic in the district, Hazera Howladar Diabetic Clinic, was closed down after few days of operation. — Star photo

Boro cultivation target may not be achieved

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 9: The target of boro cultivation throughout the greater Sylhet region may not be achieved during the current season due to different reasons, it is apprehended.

Abnormal rise in the prices of different kinds of chemical fertilisers, non-availability of high yielding variety of seeds, large-scale anomalies in disbursement of agricultural loans to the poor and marginal farmers are the main causes. Inappropriate system of supplying the irrigation equipment has attributed much to the situation, it is alleged.

According to the official sources, an intensive programme was taken up to bring 3 lakh 42 thousand 700 hectares of land under Boro paddy farming in all the four districts in the greater Sylhet region during the current season.

The districts are: Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Habiganj and Sylhet. Out of the total area 2 lakh 4 thousand hectares under the different high yielding variety and the rest one lakh 37 thousand 700 hectares under the local varieties.

The source further informed this correspondent that, the target of paddy production had been fixed at 7 lakh 98 thousand 400 metric tonnes. It includes 5 lakh 81 thousand 400 metric tonnes of high yielding variety and the

rest 2 lakh 8 thousand 50 metric tonnes of local varieties.

Under the programme, in Moulvibazar district, 24 thousand hectares under local variety and 11 thousand hectares would be brought under the high yielding variety. The production target was fixed at 84,000 thousand 900 metric tonnes of paddy.

In Sunamganj district, 86 thousand hectares and 79 thousand hectares of land would be brought under the high yielding and local varieties respectively with a target production of 3 lakh 64 thousand 650 metric tonnes of paddy.

In Habiganj district, 65 thousand hectares and 10 thousand 500 hectares of land would be brought under the cultivation of high yielding and local varieties of Boro paddy respectively with the target production of 2 lakh one thousand metric tonnes.

In Sylhet district, 29 thousand hectares and 37 thousand 500 hectares of land had been targeted for cultivation of high yielding and the local varieties respectively with a total target production of one lakh 47 thousand 900 metric tonnes, the source added.

Abnormal rise in the prices of different chemical fertilisers has pushed the farmers in great miseries. The supply of high yielding variety of seeds

was also quite scanty, it is alleged. These were not at all available at thana-level offices of BADC at fixed prices. But, in the open markets, these were found selling at exorbitant prices. It is learnt that the poor stock of seeds of the middle class had been exhausted during the floods this year, in all the four districts.

The government has recently withdrawn the system of renting the agricultural equipments to the farmers. Now, a number of big farmers would dominate the irrigation system. The poor and marginal farmers will now have to buy water from those people at high rates during the peak season of irrigation.

Rise in the prices of fuel will also cause much for the farmers in general, it is learnt.

Disbursement of agricultural loans to the farmers is also not at all satisfactory, it is alleged. Though there is sufficient sanction of loans by the different nationalised commercial banks including the Bangladesh Krishi Bank, a section of officials and employees of bank branches in the remote areas are found less interested in distributing the loans to the farmers, it is alleged. But a section of local tout and influential people are getting the loans from the banks, it is alleged.

No primary school in 23,494 villages in 16 N-dists

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 9: There is no primary school in 11,365 villages out of 23,494 in 16 northern districts of the country.

More than 15 lakh children within age group of 5 to 10 in 16 northern districts are deprived of primary education due to shortage of schools, teachers, furniture and lack of motivation.

It is learnt from a reliable source that a total of 42,31,000 boys and girls of (22,59,000 boys and 19,72,000 girls) are able to take primary education in 16 northern districts.

Of the total, only 27 lakh children took admission in the registered government and non-government primary schools of the northern region.

Besides, the posts of 15 District Primary Education Officer, 61 headmaster, 1551 assistant teacher have been lying vacant for a long time hampering education. Eleven posts of superintendent of 16 Primary Training Institutes (PTI) have also fallen vacant.

However, the Government have taken up a scheme to motivate the children of lower income group by introducing

'Food for Education' Programme. The newly introduced programme is being implemented step by step in all the thanas of the country.

The programme has shown a positive response at primary stage. Steps of infrastructural development of the schools are also taken up by the Facilities Department to solve accommodation problem of the schools.

The knowledgeable circle have opined that prompt posting to the vacant posts and to increase other facilities in the primary schools would make Universal Primary Education programme a success.

Another report says: Badminton, volleyball, table tennis and chess competition under the auspices of Ekak Sangha began at Sirajganj.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Abdul Malek formally inaugurated the competitions.

Four teams in volleyball at Gyanadayini School Ground, 16 teams each in single and doubles badminton at Post Office Ground, 16 teams in table tennis and 22 teams in chess at the club auditorium are taking part in the competition.

Bangabir Abdul Kader

Siddiqui Bir Uttam has said that after killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country is gradually led under the anti-liberation forces including the Razakars are enjoying the taste of power in this country which is liberated by bloods of 30 lakh shaheeds.

He was speaking in a huge public meeting at Khamargram in Chowdhali thana on February 3 with Sodha Chandpur Union Awami League President Ahmed Mostafa Khan Bacchu in the chair, among others central Awami League leader and former MP Fazlur Rahman, Rabaul Alam Badu, Advocate Abdur Rahman, Abdul Latif Biswas and Rashedul Islam spoke at the meeting.

Kader Siddiqui said that during three years' regime of BNP government the economic system have collapsed and people have been the hostages to uncertainty and terrorism. He called upon all to resist the anti-liberation forces with the spirit of our great Liberation War.

Earlier, Siddiqui visited the mazar sharif of Hazrat Shah Suli Enayetur-Rahman and the office of local Muktiyodha Sangshad.

Folk festival on Kalu Shah from Feb 12

An eleven-day long folk festival will begin on February 12 at village Kaumara of Satoria thana under Manikganj district on the occasion of 88th death anniversary of mystic poet Kalu Shah, says a press release.

Discussion meeting and different kinds of songs will be held on this occasion. A mela will also be held.

Kalu Shah was born in 1810 at village Kalganj of the district. He died in 1906.

The Urs of Kalu Shah, the contemporary of Lalon Shah is being held every year on 10th and 11th of Bengali month of Magh. He wrote more than 2000 songs.

Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television use to hold programmes on Kalu Shah.



226 projects implemented

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Feb 9: A total of 226 projects in five thana and pourashava areas of the district have been completed under World Food Programme during the current year.

Four hundred and nineteen metric tons of wheat were sanctioned for the completion of the projects.

Thirty-two projects were completed in Gopalganj sadar thana at a cost of 72 metric tons of wheat, 55 projects in Moksdepur thana at a cost of 94 metric tons, 48 projects in Kasiani at a cost of 85 metric tons, 44 projects in Kotilipara at a cost of 80 metric tons, 32 projects in Tungipara at a cost of 58 metric tons and 15 projects in Gopalganj pourashava at a cost of 30 metric tons of wheat.

The projects included repair of kutchra roads, making of

Habitat of Royal Bengal Tigers endangered

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Feb 9: The health of Royal Bengal Tiger, the most ferocious yet a beautiful wild animal of the world, is gradually deteriorating due to degradation in the environment of their habitation.

They need adequate quantity of sweet drinking water to satisfy their thirst. But since the environment of the Sundarbans areas came under control of man, no tanks or sources of sweet water have been created for them as yet in the Sundarbans. They however, manage to drink sweet water from deep inside the dense forest.

But in absence of drinking water in some areas, these tigers are reportedly compelled to drink saline water just for survival. This on the other hand is causing ill health for them and at the same time, because of their health hazards, the growth of their next generation is being seriously affected.

According to a source of the concerned forest office, there are about 450 Royal Bengal Tigers in the Sundarbans. They have been living in high lands Tiger Point areas by the sides of canals and rivers surrounded by dense woods.

Despite nature's gift for survival it has not been possible to create a sanctuary for tiger habitation in the

Sundarbans as yet. Besides, due to expansion of visiting areas in the forest by human being like Mowals, Bawals, fishermen the tigers are reportedly retreating deep inside the dense forest, where the living condition for them is far more unhealthy.

When the concerned official of the forest department was contacted, it was informed that they were giving it a serious thought. We have already submitted a project proforma of Taka nine crore as estimated cost to the Ministry of Forest and Environment," said one officer.

The local concerned authority hopes that the proposed project will be approved soon. The project

documents states that the new growth of Royal Bengal Tigers in the area would have to be increased by creating a healthy atmosphere in the Sundarbans, congenial to their survival.

As stated in the plan, the number of tigers would increase sharply from 450 to 5000 once the plan is implemented. For this purpose high lands would have to be made by dumping earth. Besides, the most important of all, sources of sweet drinking water would have to be made available in the forest at different points.

Royal Bengal Tigers, the national wealth of Bangladesh needs better preservation facilities to attract larger masses of foreign as well as local tourists.



This tigress, brought from the Sundarban forest, is seen with her newly born cubs at Mirpur Zoo. — Star photo

District roundup

C'NAWABGANJ

Sharp rise in prices of essentials

Feb 9: Prices of essentials have registered a sharp rise with the advent of holy month of Ramadan in the district affecting the low income group of people, reports UNB.

Although, the price of rice is comparatively low but the price is going up in the markets gradually.

A kilogram of the coarse rice is being sold between Taka nine and Taka 10 which was sold at Taka 8.15 a week ago and fine variety of rice is being sold at Taka 13 per kg as against Taka 11.

Prices of all types of pulses have shot up during the period. Masur is being sold at Taka 25 per kg as against Taka 22 while Chhola is being sold at Taka 22 per kg as against Taka 20. Khesari is being sold at Taka 20 per kg as against Taka 18.

Prices of onion, garlic and other spices also registered a sharp rise. Onion is being sold at Taka 15 per kg as against Taka 12 and garlic at Taka 32 as against Taka 28 per kg.

Powder milk in polythene bag is being sold at Taka 160 per kg as against Taka 140 a few days ago. Prices of condensed milk have also increased and per pot of milk is being sold between Taka 30 and 40.

Local people alleged that a section of traders created artificial crisis in the market to earn maximum profit with the advent of Ramadan. Denying the allegations, the traders said short supply of goods is the reason behind the price hike.

MAJDEECOURT

BKB disburses Tk 3.8 crore as agri loan

Feb 9: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) of Noakhali region disbursed loans over Taka 3.80 crore to the farmers, reports UNB.

The bank has set up target to disburse Taka 7.43 crore during the current fiscal year. The amount is being disbursed through its 17 branches.

The bank has also realised Taka 4.28 crore out of the target of Taka six crore up to January 30. Regional Manager of the bank said, vigorous drive is underway to realise the rest of the amount within the next three months.

The source also informed that at least 2617 certificate cases were pending for realising the outstanding loan of Taka 6,35,82,000. A week long eye camp jointly organised by doctors and medicine traders of Companiganj thana was concluded on Friday, reports UNB.

District Civil Surgeon, Mohammad Ali inaugurated the camp. At least 100 cataract patients were operated upon and other 700 patients with eye complications were treated at the camp free of cost.

Spectacles and necessary medicines were distributed among the patients. Jatiya Andha Kalyan Sanity of Chittagong assisted the camp by providing doctors.

BARISAL

9162 Sharbahara men arrested last year

Feb 9: About 9162 persons, including 443 members of outlawed Sharbahara Party were arrested from various district of Barisal Division during last year, reports BSS.

Division police range office source said, that a large quantity of arms and ammunition were also recovered during the period.

According to the source, 2,166 persons were arrested from Barisal district, 1,177 from Bhola, 1,205 from Jhalakati, 1,585 from Pirojpur, 900 from Barguna and 2,129 from Patuakhali district.

Besides, police recovered 114 different types of weapons, 706 rounds of ammunition, 61 pieces of hand bombs, 17 pieces of cocktails, and two grenades.

The arms included rifles, revolvers, pistols, smg.

KUSHTIA

Rabindra Sangeet conference concludes

Feb 9: The 13th national Rabindra Sangeet conference was held on Friday and Saturday at Kushtia Shilpakala Academy and Shiladaha Kuthibari, says BSS.

Rabindranath Roy, a vocalist inaugurated the conference at Shilpakala Academy Friday. Dr Sanjida Khatoon presided over the function. The programme included recitation from the poem of Rabindranath Tagore and Rabindra Sangeet by eminent artists of Bangladesh.

Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui opened an art and photo exhibition in the Shilpakala academy. Photos of liberation war and Tagore were displayed at the exhibition. The discussion was participated by Dr Sanjida Khatoon, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Prof Anwarul Karim, Maleka Azim Khan, Dr Attur Rahman, Dr Intiaj Ahmed, Anisur Rahman, Poet Shamsur Rahman and Ashok Saha.

JAMALPUR

Frequent power failure

Feb 9: Frequent power failure has become a regular feature since last one month in the town and other areas causing serious problems in public life, says UNB.

According to local people, power goes off almost every day from sunrise to sunset adversely affecting business centres, clinics, hospitals, rice and flour mills and teleprinter services.

Water supply system of municipal areas also remains off most of the time due to lack of power.

Besides, alleged mismanagement and lack of proper maintenance of power lines by the local electric supply division have aggravated the situation.

Local leaders have urged the authorities to look into the matter and take immediate steps to ensure regular power supply.

Floating fuel depots opened at Nagarbari

NAGARBARI, (Pabna), Feb 9: Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has commissioned three floating depots at Nagarbari in Pabna to ensure smooth supply of diesel fuel during the forthcoming irrigation season in the northern region of the country, an official handout said, reports BSS.

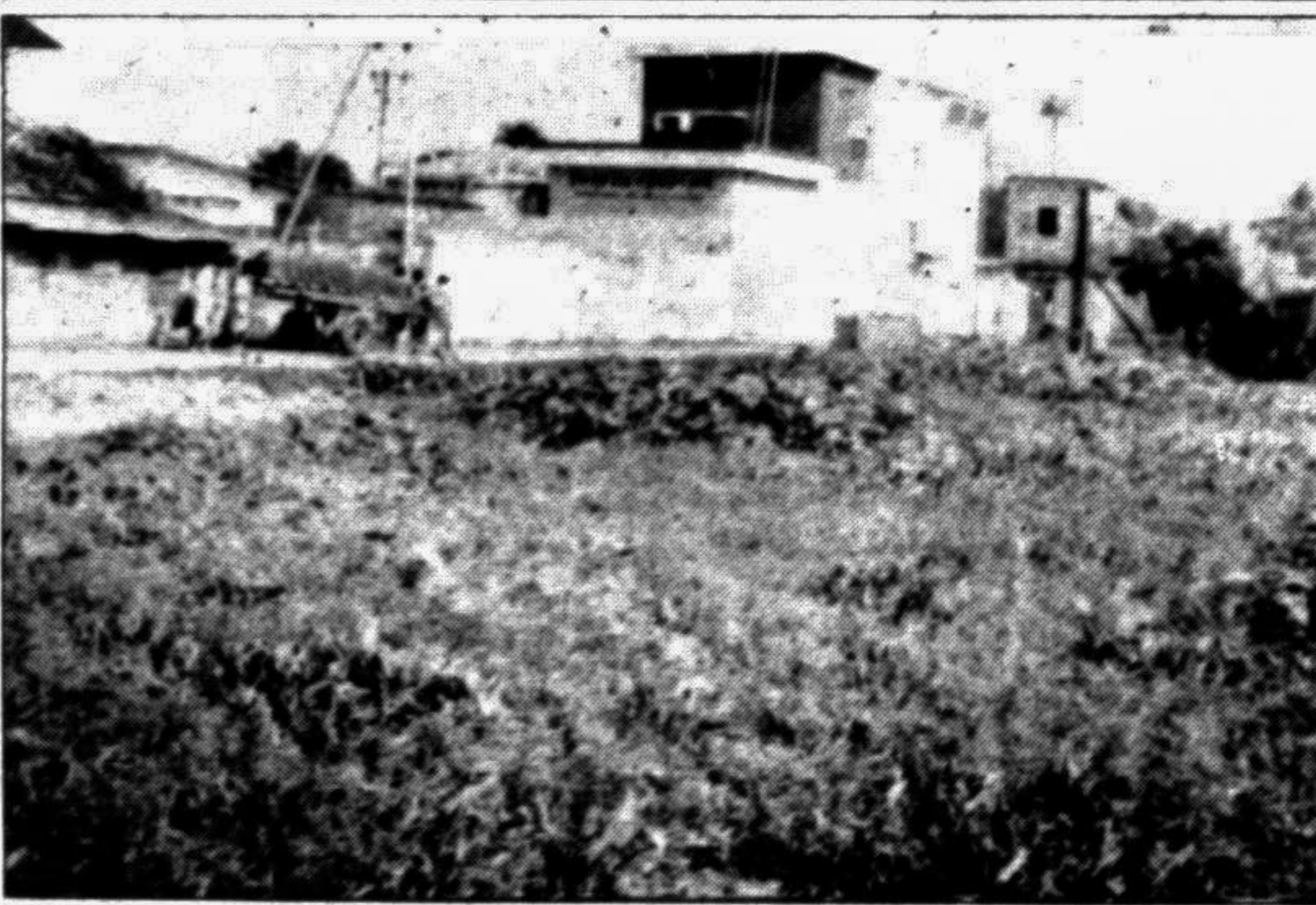
Chairman of BPC M. Fazlul Hoque, formally inaugurated the floating depots at Nagarbari Tuesday at a simple ceremony.

Supply of diesel fuel to the consumers will continue throughout the irrigation season. The depots with a capacity of about eleven lakh litre will be able to meet any urgent demand of diesel during the irrigation season. Besides the depots will be able to meet partial supply of diesel if normal supply of fuel to Baghabari

depots become disrupted following the fall of Jamuna river water in dry season.

Meanwhile, BPC has installed two rail-head depots at Natore and another two rail-head depots at Rangpur by Padma Oil Company and Meghna Petroleum Limited to keep diesel supply normal. Besides, BPC has developed a link-road between Kurigram and Chilmari to maintain steady supply of fuel, the handout said.

Director (marketing) of BPC, Bashirul Haque, General Manager of Jamuna Oil Company, Glasuddin Ahmed, Marketing Manager of Meghna Petroleum Limited, Mohammad Yusuf, Marketing Manager of Padma Oil Company, Manjur Ahmed Chowdhury and official concerned were also present on the occasion.



CHANDPUR: Plenty of water hyacinths lying in front of the district water supply tank at Nagarbari. — Star photo