

## Hundreds of children becoming blind for vitamin deficiency

**CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 7:** Hundreds of babies of the district are becoming blind due to vitamin 'A' deficiency, reports UNB.

Medical sources said mothers of these children were found reluctant to breast feeding due to their sheer ignorance adding about 500 infants have already lost their eyesights due to vitamin 'A' deficiency which can be met by breast feeding and intake of small varieties of fish and vegetables.

A recent survey also revealed that child mortality is on rise among these children. Thirty per cent of the total babies have been suffering from night blindness, malnutrition, skin and other gastro-intestinal diseases.

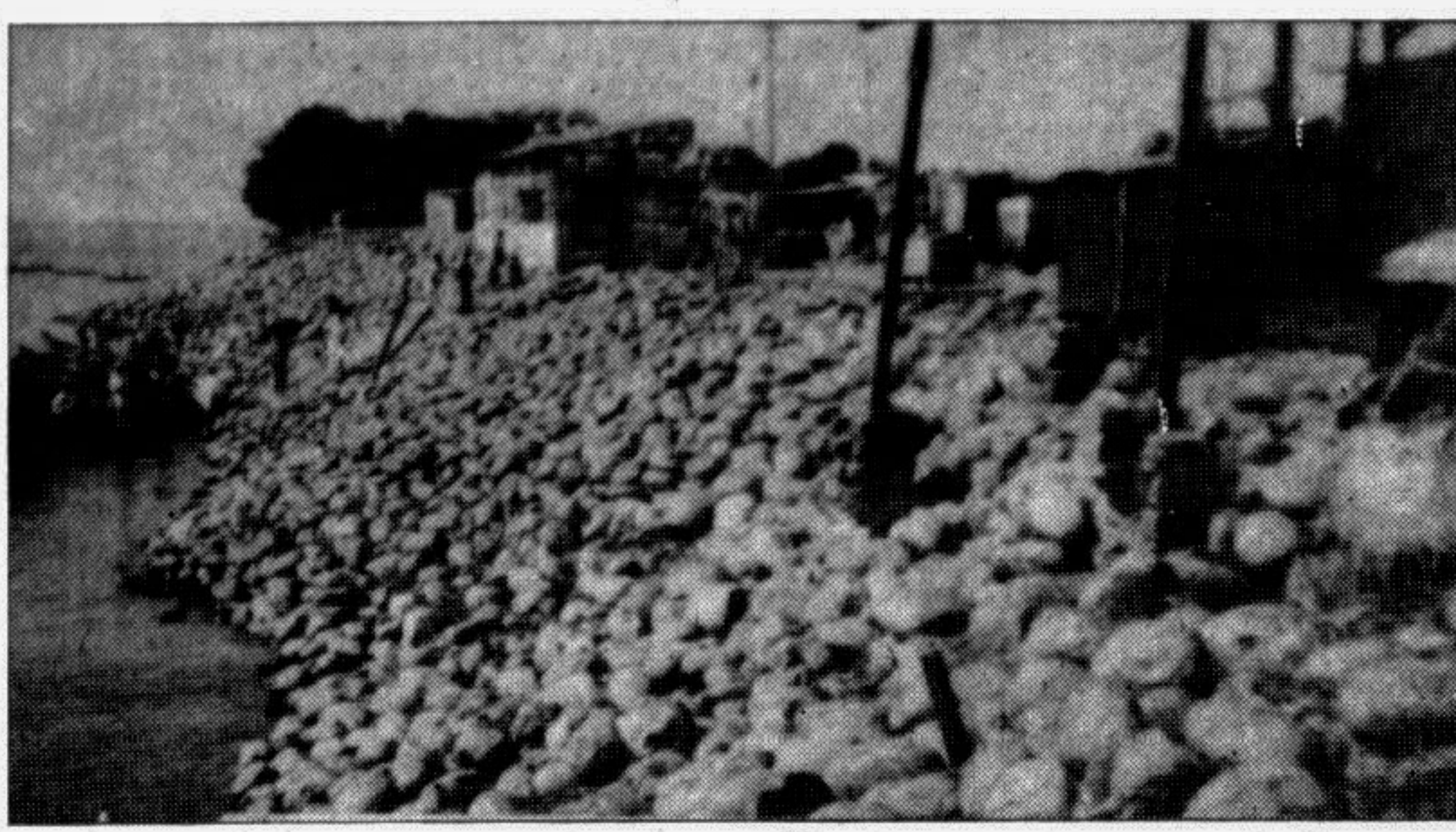
Local elite called upon the government and NGOs to motivate the mothers through short films and other audio-visual means about the utility and usefulness of breast feeding, intake of small varieties of

fish and vegetables. Another report says: Facilities Department has taken up a programme to construct classrooms of six colleges of three districts in Rajshahi zone in the current financial year.

According to official sources, an amount of Taka 1.22 crore has been sanctioned under the Annual Development Programme for the implementation of the scheme.

The colleges are — Rajshahi City Government College, Nazipur Government College, Badalgachi Government College, Pabna Government Womens' College, Pabna Shaheed Bulbul Government College and Pabna Government Commercial Institute.

The construction work is expected to be started soon, the source added. With the implementation of the scheme, a long felt demand of the local people will be met and the student will get better education facilities.



**CHANDPUR:** Boulders have been dumped along the bank of the river Meghna to protect Chandpur town from erosion. — Star photo

## Supply of power irregular to mills, factories

From Our Correspondent

**CHANDPUR, Mar 7:** The mills, factories, business establishments and irrigation projects in the district can not operate normally as the power failure is frequent.

The power failure has created a major problem for the commercial and industrial units of the Puranbazar of the district town.

Different areas of the district plunge into darkness several times.

Theft of copper wires and transformers is going on which causing loadshedding. Very recently, copper wires were stolen from the government staff quarters.

The operation of deep tubewells and some low lift pumps in the rural areas has almost come to halt due to power disruption affecting the irrigation system adversely.

It is reported that the mismanagement in Palli Biddut Samity has also causing disruption of power in the remote

areas. The power failure and loadshedding are going on as there is shortage of power in the national grid, according to Chandpur Power Development source.

The short supply of power has also affected Chandpur Irrigation Project and Matlab-Meghna-Dhanagoda Project.

The cultivation of IRR, Boro, wheat and other crop has also been affected due to frequent power failure.

The town residents informed that often the entire town plunges into darkness after the sunset giving opportunities to anti-social elements.

The students suffer much for the erratic power supply.

Another report says: Thousands of passengers who travel by steamers from Chandpur Steamer, Ghat to Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and other places of the country

have been facing various problems for want of facilities.

There is only one old pontoon at the steamer ghat. The steamers use to anchor the pontoon and there is a temporary wooden bridge at the steamer ghat to pass the passengers. The bridge is also lying in a decapitated conditions.

There is no waiting room for the passengers in the steamer ghat. Passengers have to wait standing on the pontoon. There is no toilet at the steamer ghat.

The ghat has now become a den of criminals. Criminals are found roaming in an around the ghat.

There are many shops on the way to the steamer ghat causing problems for movement. Hawkers and coolies are disturbing the passengers. There is no time table for the arrival and departure of the steamers.

## Success story of a school

By Naimul Haq  
back from Mymensingh

Nazrul Islam, a proud student of Mukul Niketan High School of Mymensingh, who stood 10th in the 1992 SSC examination of Dhaka Board, acknowledges the generous contribution of Amir Ahmed Chowdhury, Headmaster of the school for his brilliant result.

A poor farmer's son of Fulbaria thana of Mymensingh district, Nazrul Islam was picked up by the headmaster for his talent. The headmaster one day asked Nazrul's parents to take him to his school and promised to take care of his education.

Nazrul enjoyed being part of the Headmaster's family as he lived in his house for about six months before a seat was found for him in the school hostel. Nazrul lived a burden free life, except the burden of learning heavy lessons at the institution. He now studies at the Dhaka College.

Mukul Niketan High School is perhaps an ideal institution

deputy commissioner's office and of course the guardians. The committee decides on various development programmes of the school.

Turning to the education system in the country, the headmaster said, "the present education policy needs change. It contains numerous cracks which must be rectified. Complex methods should be simplified. At present, the teaching practices contain a lot of loopholes which ought to be removed".

The school stands on 1.5 acres of land in the centre of Mymensingh town. It has 3455 students, 2048 of them are male and rest of them are female. Interesting, boys are not allowed to talk to girls during school hours or vis versa yet they learn in harmony.

Students are prohibited from leaving the school boundary. However, one can obtain permission on request. Hundred and eight tutors keep

is how we work, pupils are given lessons, we expect the results."

"However," he went on to explain, "One cannot expect all to learn the same way. Some pick up better others lag behind. To solve this problem the school takes extra classes."

Students who are weak in picking up any particular subject are identified and put to this type of lessons until he or she improves. If too many students fall in this group they are divided into smaller groups so that each receives proper attention. We identify the weaker ones and separate them, so their problems can more easily be noticed by the tutors. "This way," Ratanda says, "Tutors are also given chances to show their best performance. Usually both male and female tutors are assigned for any particular subject, but at times they are interchanged to avoid monotony."

Every week the headmaster invites all the tutors to exchange views at his office room. "We sit to identify problems. We then find solutions and present the solutions to the students before these are applied".

This school, like any other school in the country, has a committee comprising of teachers, officials from the



A view of the Mukul Niketan High School. Classes are held in the tin-shed houses which can not accommodate the increasing number of students. — Star photo

which stands out as an example of modern-day educational environment.

It was in 1970 when the school just started as a primary school with only 42 students and five tutors. It stood on a very small piece of land. It never had to look back. In fact, it went on to enrol more and more students and tutors over the years. In 1976 the school fulfilled the necessary conditions to be recognised by the government. More students poured in aid, accordingly, expansion works were done to accommodate the influx.

Two good reasons worked behind the successive expansion of the institution. First, facilitated education for poor children who could not afford to pay for studies, and the second, the institution's policy of recruiting only worthy tutors.

The guiding spirit was, however, the Headmaster, Amir Ahmed Chowdhury, who is more popularly known as Ratanda. In his mid fifties, Ratanda cared for the school as he would do for his own family. His devotion plus his ambitious ideas helped the school achieve great reputation. The school had the distinction of being adjudged as one of the 12 best schools of 1993 in Dhaka Division. It received an award for it this year. In 1988 too, the school received a

their eyes on the students round the clock.

There are two hostel building only for boys accommodating 120. These hostel occupants come as far away as Rajshahi, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Kishoreganj, Comilla, Natore, Brahmanbaria and the capital city. Those who cannot afford to pay for food and other hostel expenses are pardoned.

Students who are on the merit list are given bonus. They also take charge of keeping school premises clean. This type of social work encourages, specially girls, to follow discipline.

Indeed, discipline has probably earned the school national championship in Nirman School Cricket Tournament in 1989. Other similar achievements include first prize in art competition from Japan, reached semifinal round in the Bangladesh Television inter school debate championship and many more.

Many dignitaries visited the school to see for themselves academic environment of the institution. Some of them are World Bank Asian Development Bank, USIS, VOA executives and education team from Inner London Education Authority. In the end Ratanda says, "We hope to train many more Nazrul Islamis with even better performances".

per cent compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Our Natore Correspondent reports: Prices of essential commodities including fish, meat, vegetables and oil have gone up in Rajshahi city markets and at different hat-bazars of Shingra, Baraigram, Bagatipara, Lalpur, Gurudashpur and Sadar thana of Natore district following the approach of Ramadan.

According to reports, the low income groups including farmers are the worst sufferers of the price hike of essentials. Hilsha fish sells at different markets between Taka 100 and Taka 130 per kg, ruhi between Taka 95 and Taka 120, kai fish between Taka 140 and Taka 170 and magur between Taka 120 and Taka 135.

The prices of one kg beef varies from Taka 50 to Taka 75, beef from Taka 85 to Taka 110. Poultry birds are selling at prices ranging from Taka 70 to Taka 100.

Potato is being sold at Taka 8 to Taka 10, onion at Taka 16 to Taka 18, brinjal at Taka 8, cucumber at Taka 10 and jinger at Taka 7 to 8 per kg. Gram is being sold at Taka 30 to Taka 35, masur dal at Taka 24 to Taka 27 and tomato at Taka 7 to 9 per kg.

On the otherhand paddy, jute and sugar-cane growers who are not getting proper prices of their commodities have become frustrated.

Traders said, prices of essential registered on increase due to shortage of supply.

But according to some reliable sources, a section of unscrupulous traders are creating artificial crisis in local markets to make undue profit.



The students of Mukul Niketan High School are attending class on mat for want of benches. — Star photo

## District roundup

**FARIDPUR**

### Day labourer killed in landslide

**Mar 7:** A daylabourer was killed and two others were wounded in a landslide while they were cutting earth to make bricks at Dhuldi in sadar thana on Saturday, eye-witnesses and hospital sources said, reports UNB.

Syed Munshi, 30, was rushed to the Faridpur General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Two others — Azim Uddin (28) and Jalal Mondal (27) are fighting for life at the hospital.

**C'NAWABGANJ**

### Aus seeds to be distributed among farmers

**Mar 7:** An extensive scheme has been taken up to distribute Aus seeds among the farmers and dealers of the country during the summer season, reports UNB.

According to Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation here, 500 metric tons locally produced high yielding variety Aus seeds will be distributed throughout the country under the scheme.

The quantities and the varieties of Aus seeds are as follows — four mts of BR-1, 18 mts of BR-3, 430 mts of BR-14, 8 mts of BR-21, 7 mts of BR-24, 23 mts of BR-26 and 10 mts of Hashi Kolmi.

The sources said the price of all varieties of Aus seeds is fixed at Taka 9 per kg which are being sold directly to the farmers from BADC thana sale centres on first come first serve basis.

The dealers of the district are also getting seeds in 10 kg polycoated bag at fixed commission from BADC regional sale centres.

The seeds are produced in the BADC's seed multiplication farms as well as by the contract growers of BADC under direct supervision of seed experts.

These seeds are scientifically processed and stored in BADC's seed processing centres.

**NATORE**

### Project to supply furniture for pry schools

**From Our Correspondent**

**Mar 7:** Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) here has taken up a project to supply furniture to 45 government and 83 registered non-government primary schools in Natore district at a cost of Taka 3.72 crore during the current 1993-94 fiscal year.

The LGED will also supply furniture to 29 registered non-government primary schools which were built during the 1992-93 financial year. About Taka 17 lakh will be spent for this purpose.

The official sources said once the work is completed about 30 thousand students of rural areas of the district will get opportunities to study in better condition.

**MOULVIBAZAR**

### Road uplift works in progress

**From Our Correspondent**

**Mar 7:** The work on development of "Growth Centre Connecting roads" is on satisfactory progress and expected to be completed by April next.

The government sanctioned about 761.43 metric tons of wheat for the scheme under "Food for Works Programme." A total of 52.42 kilometre rural roads will be reconstructed under the scheme.

According to source, the scheme includes reconstruction of 8.14 kilometre long Rajnagar-Fatehpur Road, 15.17 kilometre long Brahminbazar-Fenechugonj Road, 1.70 kilometre long Dasherbazar-Fakirbazar road, 8.26 kilometre long Kamalgonj-Adampur Road and 19.15 kilometre long Bhuboer-Dubarhat Road.

## Prices of essential goods up

From Our Correspondent

**CHUADANGA, Mar 7:** Prices of essential commodities have gone up with the beginning of the Ramadan in the local markets causing hardships to the general consumers particularly the low income group and the farmers.

Prices of sugar, pulses, fish, meat and edible oil have registered a sharp rise causing sufferings to the common people.

Mosur pulse now sells at Taka 28 per kg and Khesari which is mostly consumed by the low income group of people is now sold at Taka 26 per kg as against Taka 24 a week ago.

Prices of spices particularly turmeric, onion and garlic have gone up and those are being sold at Taka 60, 16 and 60 per kg respectively. Due to shortage of supply, prices of fish and meat have registered a rise. Prices of egg and milk have also gone up. The high price of edible oil is causing anxiety among the low income group of people.

Pure mustered and soyabeans oil is hardly available. Most of the people of the district have been suffering from various intestinal disease due to consumption of adulterated mustard and soybean oil which are now being sold between Taka 60 and 48 per kg. It is apprehended that the price of edible oil may further go-up if the government do not take necessary steps to supply oil through rationing system.

The prices of rice have shot up in the local markets. Rice is now being sold at Taka 11 to 14 per kg. The prices of meat have also gone up. The beef is now sold at Tk 50 per kg while mutton at Taka 90 to 100 per kg.

It has also brought 6,000 men and women under permanent sterilisation programme.

The prices of wheat, vegetables aita and flour have also increased.

The prices of all kinds of commodities have recorded an increase between 20 and 30

### Tk 2.57 crore loan for self-employment projects

**RAJBARI, Mar 7:** The Social Services Department so far disbursed Taka 2,57,84,000 loan for different self-employment projects in greater Faridpur district, reports UNB.

The department under its Rural Social Service Project took the programme to improve the condition of the distressed men and women of the greater Faridpur district.

According to official sources, 17,184 poor men and women in 22 thanas of Rajbari, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur and Shariatpur districts were given loan.

The loan was disbursed for poultry, goat rearing, livestock, cane industry, net knitting and small business to make them self-reliant.

Meanwhile, the members of the distressed families also deposited Taka 11.78 lakh with their own fund from their own savings.

Besides, the department immunised 5,377 children and 3,825 women to protect them from various diseases. The immunisation programme was executed through family planning and rural mothercare centres.

It has also brought 6,000 men and women under permanent sterilisation programme.

## Poor farmers selling crops in advance for financial crisis

From Our Correspondent

**GOPALGANJ, Mar 7:** The poor farmers of the five thanas of Gopalganj district are compelled to sell their crops in advance to the money lenders at a nominal price due to their economic hardship.

The farmers informed that they do not get fair prices of their harvested crops due to the low price of paddy in the markets. Some farmers informed that paddy is now selling between Taka 160 and 180 per maund. Whereas the production cost per maund is about Taka 250.

Taking advantages of the situation the money lenders are doing brisk business by giving credit at high interest rates against security of standing

crops. The farmers are becoming debt-ridden as they are unable to repay the loan often selling their products.

The absence of government purchasing centres to procure paddy has helped the fall in paddy prices.

The production of IRR-boro is increasing day by day with the increased price of agriculture inputs.

According to sources, the prices of agriculture inputs have now gone beyond the purchasing capacity of peasants. Cultivation of IRR-boro is now impossible without using fertilizers and irrigation facilities, said one farmer.

Production cost of IRR-boro per acre is very high and

many farmers of the district are unable to spend such an amount.

If this situation continues the farmers may give up farming expressed one social worker who is working in the area.

Another report says: A K M Fazlur Rahman, District and Sessions Judge, Gopalganj, awarded Bijon Kumar, son of Birendra Nath, life term for killing wife.

The case in brief is that Bijon Kumar Biswas married one Binata Rani Roy daughter of Shatish Chandra of village Baran palta under Muksudpur thana of Gopalganj district in 1992 last.

### Heroin worth Tk 50 lakh seized

**NAOGAON, Mar 7:** Police recovered 450 grams of heroin worth about Taka 50 lakh from the town bus stand, reports UNB.

Following a tip-off police rushed to the bus station and recovered the contraband kept in two polythene bags under the seat of a passenger of Bogra bound bus.

Sensing the arrival of the police the man fled away, police said.

Another report adds: Police unearthed a fake bidi factory, seized 60,000 bidi with band rolls and arrested three people from Chakmohadev village in sadar thana on February 28.

Acting on secret information, police raided the spot and arrested the three people while they were making bidi. A case has been filed.

### Molasses output declines

From Our Correspondent

**MADARIPUR, Mar 7:** The production of molasses from the date juice decreasing in the district due to indiscriminate felling of trees for last few years.

According to an unofficial survey, there were more than two lakh date trees in the district in 1982 and molasses production was 3000 maunds on an average rate of ten kilograms per tree.

Earning from the molasses was about Taka three crore during the last season. But it is expected that the production will sharply fall during the current season due to large-scale felling of date trees.

Taking advantage of financial need and ignorance of the rural people the owners of brickfields are purchasing date trees at a cheaper rate for use as fuel.

Madaripur sadar, Mostofapur, Kalkini, Palong, Angaria, Goshherhat, Utrayel and Narla were once famous for the marketing of date juice molasses. People from different parts of the country used to come to these areas to purchase molasses.

Demand for molasses was increasing, it was observed. The molasses were also sent to many parts of the country.

Molasses of Khoazpur, Dasherzangol, Charmuguria and Madra were in great demand for its speciality and colour, says one dealer.

The "patali" and "hazari" brand of molasses also attract many for their taste and fragrance.

The molasses can also be a substitute of sugar.