

CVDP rally held

The annual rally '94 of the Comprehensive Village Development Programme (CVDP) of BARD was held at Deodar Model High School premises, Comilla recently, says a BARD press release.

A total of about 800 representatives from the ministries, the Planning Commission, BRDB, the Cooperatives Directorate, RDA Bogra, RDTI-Sylhet, Comilla district administration, Comilla Sadar Thana, Burichang Thana as well as members from 23 CVDP society participated in the rally.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Minister for Labour and Manpower, and Rabiya Choudhury, Member of the Parliament were present in the opening ceremony of the rally as chief guest and special guest respectively. Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Director General, BARD presided over the session. The chief guest distributed prizes among the best societies as well as noted male and female cooperators for their significant contribution.

Brother kills brother!

JHENIDAH, Apr 22: A man was killed allegedly by his younger brother following a family feud on Sunday at Gariya village in sadar, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Rafiuddin.

Police said, Rafiuddin's father sold a plot of land a few days back and Raisuddin demanded the money from his father. But Rafiuddin asked his father not to give him the money. At this a quarrel ensued between the two brothers and at one stage Raisuddin hit his elder brother Rafiuddin with a bamboo stick causing his instantaneous death.

The body was sent to sadar hospital morgue. A case was lodged with the police.

Another report adds: A student of class II of local Al-Hera Institute drowned in a pond on Sunday.

The victim Rabeya Basri (8) was the only daughter of Rabul Islam of Adarshapara village of sadar thana.

According to family sources, Rabeya while taking her bath alone in a nearby pond suddenly slipped into the deep pond and drowned. Later her body was recovered by neighbours.

More police camps to curb terrorism

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 22: Five new police camps have been set up in three thanas of the district to root out the criminal activities from the areas, source said here Friday, reports UNB.

Out of the total camps, three have been installed in Kamarkhand thana, known as the criminal zone of the district and one each in sadar and Belkuchi thanas to bring into book the criminals including trouble mongers and professional murderers.

Since the independence of the country more the 100 people, including police officials, political leaders, UP chairmen, government officials, businessmen and local elite were killed in Kamarkhand, the smallest thana of the country.

Local leaders said, political killings by the professional assassins recently intensified in the thana.

Police said, Jamat Ali, Kamarkhand thana BNP president, was killed by the professional killers on April 12.

Earlier, on March 23, Titash, the nephew of Jamat Ali, was stabbed to death by the same group of assassins.

On February 20, Kamarkhand Jubbahad leader Hanif was stabbed critically by the rivals in the district court premises.

The same group also assaulted, the local MP Shahidullah Khan as he had undertaken various measures to curb terrorism in the thana.

A large number of villagers started to settle in the district town as they feel insecure in their villages.

Meanwhile, police arrested infamous Matin 45, the alleged killer of Jamat Ali on April 13.

Matin have long been involved in various criminal acts, including murder, robbery, filing of false cases and cattle lifting, police and villagers added.

Two paper mills workers killed in Pabna

PABNA, Apr 22: Two workers of the North Bengal Paper Mills were killed and three others injured when a steam-valve collapsed on them early today, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Akbar Hossain Balai, 35, and Golam Kibria Dilsa, 26.

Injured, Bamu, 22, Abul Hossain, 24, and Tufazzal, 27, were rushed to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in serious condition.

A case was filed with the law court.

Flood damages boro paddy worth Tk 124cr

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Apr 22: A serious flood has totally paralysed different areas of Sunamganj district following massive losses to the Boro paddy, the only cash crop of the region.

The calamity, caused by the incessant rains and onrush of water from the hilly areas across the Indian border of Meghalaya has totally broken the backbone of lakhs of farmers. The farmers were preparing to harvest the boro paddy, which had already been inundated by the flood waters. The farmers in Sunamganj are now worried about their fate, in the near future.

While talking to this correspondent, some government official of the district informed that, a total of 159 haors have been affected by the early flash flood in the district this year. Embankments along the haors have been damaged in many places. Standing crops on 81,000 hectares

their standing crops damaged by the early floods. They also alleged that, unplanned and faulty construction of embankments had also caused the crop damages in some areas as breached developed at different points and inundated the standing crops inside the embankment areas. Narayan Sutradhar, of village Kachua under Karimpur union said, "we do not want relief, please arrange work for us. About 200 farmers who had harvested crops in this village have been affected by the flood. We will now have to wait for the boro crops, in the next year," says one farmer.

The official source further informed that, 13,520 hectares of boro land have been damaged as 13 haors went under the flood waters in Sunamganj sadar thana areas. The estimated loss stands at Taka 20

haor areas causing a total loss of Taka 19 crore 40 lakh.

The official source further informed that, in Dera thana 12,500 hectares of boro land in eight haors had been inundated causing a total damage of 32,500 metric tonnes of paddy worth about Taka 19.15 crore. In Sulla thana crops on 6365 hectares of boro land in 20 haors were damaged. About 16,600 metric tonnes of paddy were damaged worth Taka 9.78 crore. In Jamalganj thana 15,168 metric tonnes of paddy on 5834 hectares of land were damaged which was estimated to cost 9.94 crore.

Boro paddy on 8954 hectares of land in 16 haors of Dharampasha thana have totally been damaged by the calamity. The total loss stood at Taka 13 crore 72 lakh as 23,280 metric tonnes of crop were damaged, the source

gone under water. I had nothing to worry about if I could save my crops," he further added who had never experienced such early floods even during the last 30 years.

A number of villagers of Kachua under Karimpur union of Dera thana said that boro paddy was the only cash crop of the region. They heavily depend on this crop.

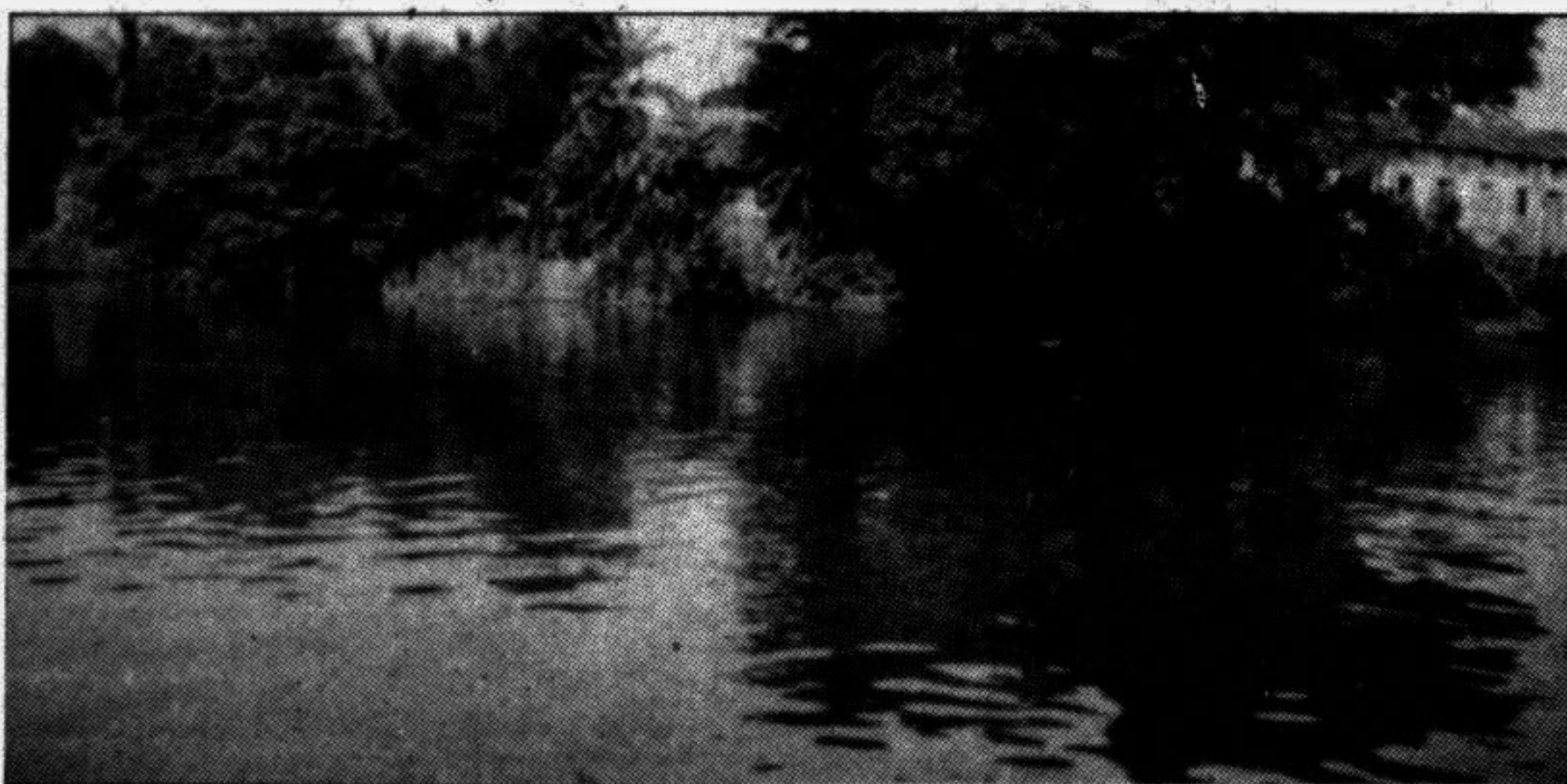
Boro is the only crop grown in the vast tracts of land in the haor areas of the district. There is no scope for cultivating any other crop in these comparatively low-lying areas.

The sudden flash flood hit the district in the last week of March and continued till mid April. The haors are still full of

different thanas like Dera, Tahirpur, Sunamganj sadar and Jamalganj. He distributed some relief materials to the distressed people of these areas.

A meeting was held at the Sunamganj Circuit House security with leaders and parliament members from all political parties. The speakers unanimously called upon the government to declare the district as 'distressed zone' immediately, saying, lakhs of people in the haor areas had become helpless as they had lost the only cash crop due to the sudden floods.

Meanwhile, prices of different essentials have shot up in different remote areas. Prices of rice have also increased in different areas during the last



A scene of the flood affected Tukderai village of Dera thana.

have totally been damaged.

The quantity of damaged paddy stood at 2 lakh 10 thousand metric tonnes. The loss has been estimated at Taka 124 crore, the official source informed.

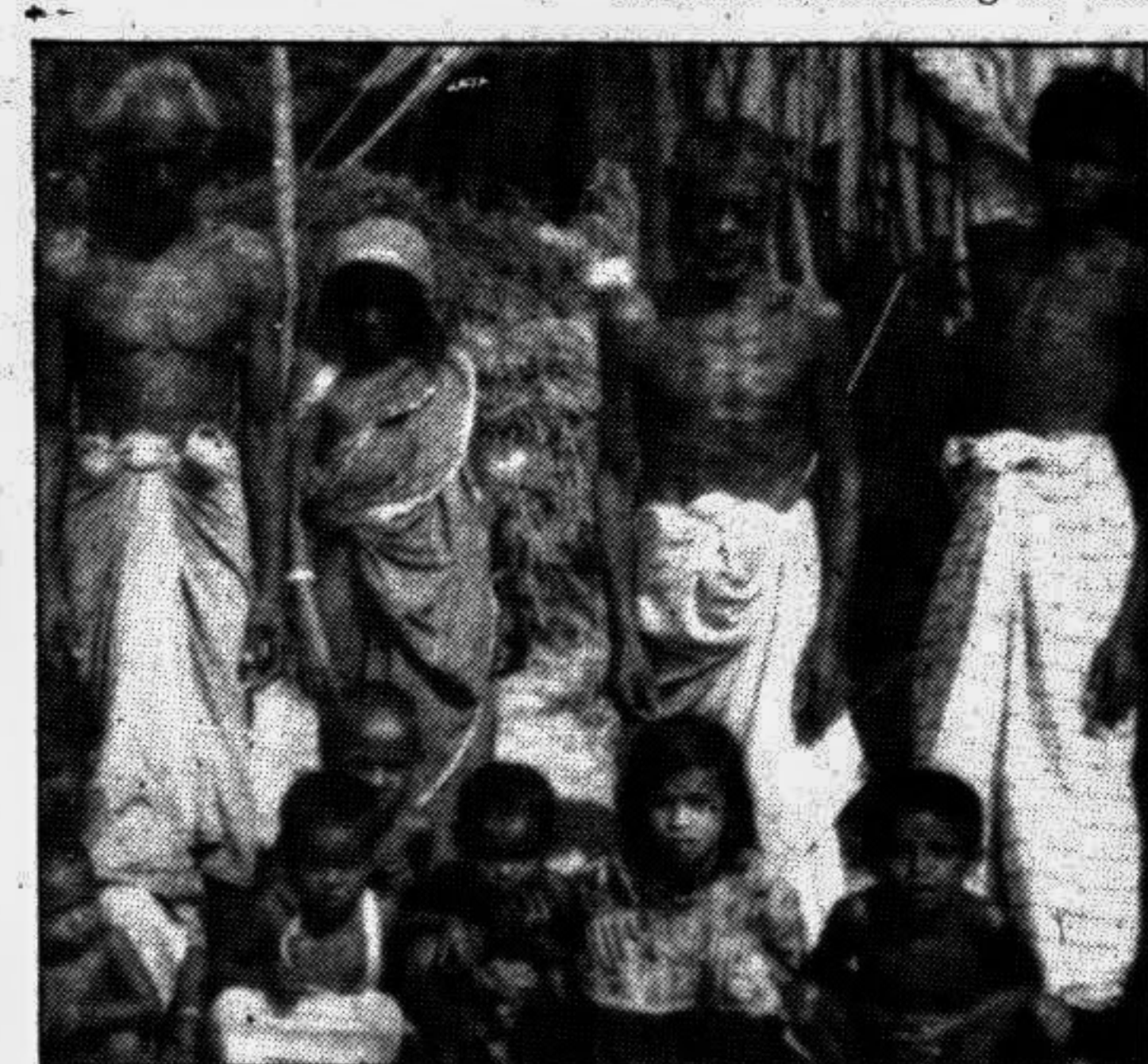
But the unofficial estimate of the loss stood at about Taka two hundred crore.

While visiting some badly affected villages in Dera thana many people were found stunned at the sudden loss of

crore 71 lakh due to the damage of 35,152 metric tonnes of paddy. In Chhatrak thana, 4943 hectares of land had gone under water damaging 12,851 metric tonnes of paddy in 14 haors. The loss stands at about Taka seven crore 57 lakh. In Jagannathpur thana 12,660 hectares of boro land were totally damaged. About 32,916 metric tonnes of standing paddy were damaged in 20

added. In Tahirpur thana, 27,362 metric tonnes of standing boro paddy on 10,524 hectares of land were damaged worth Taka 16 crore 12 lakh. In Biswamharpur thana, 1976 metric tonnes of paddy on 760 hectares of land were damaged. The loss stood at Taka 1.16 crore.

"We are not poor, we have households. But now I am helpless," says Taiyab Miah. "All of my farm land have



Some of the flood victims of Kachua village under Karimpur union of the district.

water. The situation further worsened with the continuous rains.

The Industries Minister M Jahiruddin Khan has visited some affected areas in Jamalganj, Tahirpur, Chhatrak and Sunamganj sadar thanas in March. While talking to the affected people, the minister assured them of taking necessary steps. The State Minister for Relief Harun-Al-Rashid also visited the affected areas in

few days. Immediate steps should be taken to arrange selling of rice in the rural markets and thana headquarters at fixed prices under the Open Market Sale (OMS) programme. It is widely felt. When contacted, an official source informed that, only 34 tonnes of rice had been sanctioned for selling in Dera, Sulla, Jagannathpur and Tahirpur thanas under the OMS programme.

Let us not see poor as a burden

By Naimul Haq

In Bangladesh half of our population live in poverty mostly in rural areas. Many of us see this population as a burden who has no potential or resources. This idea must be removed because it has already been proved that the poor are the most efficient workers. A hidden potential is prevailing among them which is gradually being explored.

The poor population in our country can no doubt produce the highest amount of wealth given the chance. It has already been proved in most villages that in right environment poor utilise credit the most efficient way. The poor infact, produce more for every taka invested on them.

So, poverty, one of the main reason which is holding back growth of our socio-economic condition in rural areas, has to be given more attention than ever before. Our correspondent had recently visited the Kotwali Thana Central Co-operative Association Limited (KTCCA) in Comilla to find out how the rural poor help themselves and organise to alleviate poverty.

The KTCCA Ltd or more popularly known as the old Abhoy Ashram acts as a centre for improving socio-economic condition of rural people through various types of training programmes.

activities expanded over the years adopting many more new subjects for training which included women and youth other than the men.

The institute prepares models for demonstration. This is done through co-operatives. A number of principles are followed as guideline so it becomes easy for illiterate poor people to understand the demonstration works.

Each co-operative society, having members of all different ages, would select one member as their leader who is preferably an influential person (imam, school teacher, chairman etc) of the group. The members also select one manager, accountant who is more trusted and responsible, model farmer etc. The selected members are then given intensive training on various subjects at the KTCCA Ltd.

In this way leaders, manager, accountants etc of different co-operative societies are put to training in classes as well as on practical issues like, farming, irrigation, seed preservation, flood control, handling machines, crop growth, post harvesting methods, poultry and cattle farming, rearing of fishery, tailoring etc. All these members of co-operatives are given thorough lessons leaving no gap at all. All necessary support are given throughout their stay

part," says one member. To implement projects such as a fish farming or dairy farming many do not brave to participate fearing loss of money he or she had invested through savings. The KTCCA Ltd, however, helps the co-operative societies in many occasions by extending credit, supervision, planning, as well as implementing the whole programme. But KTCCA always

serve his or her expertise. The area, specially in farming, has achieved remarkable success stories. A major portion of vegetables were grown from the area which earned a substantial amount of cash.

All of the credit goes to KTCCA Ltd, which happens to be a central association of two tier mutually dependent co-operative system. The first one is based on village



Female members of a number of co-operative societies are being given lessons on account keeping. — Star photo

tries to stay behind the scene giving the members a chance to realise that the whole programme was initiated by themselves. The co-operatives build up their own capital through regular savings. The capital is obviously used for something constructive.

Every week the co-operative members would sit and discuss issues on progress of a project and its problems. They also plan for future projects.

So, the implementation part becomes the most vital part of training. In reality the rural people show more interest on a particular issue as long as they are engaged in a self-employment job.

The KTCCA Ltd covers an area of 135 square miles which includes 549 villages. All these villages act as model villages which set examples to others who show keen interest on rural development. The whole population of the area has directly or indirectly benefitted the examples set by the co-operative societies.

The areas under KTCCA Ltd has turned into a food surplus region. Small industries have been established most of which manufacture agricultural equipment and agro-based products.

Literally, there are no poor people in the area. Individuals are now skilled workers who feel proud to

based co-operatives. The village society helps its members to adopt developmental programmes through proper implementation. The second one is making sure the programmes do not fail and continue to work efficiently. For this purpose the institution through its field workers and 115 instructors constantly supervise the projects giving the main guidance.

The institution has a number of units for demonstration purposes. A large area, adjoining the KTCCA Ltd boundary, has been set up for exclusively agricultural farming. A small lake inside the institution demonstrates fish rearing system. A tube-well section shows different uses of water in irrigation.

So, the KTCCA Ltd contributes towards balanced development of rural area. The total changes in socio-economic condition of rural areas largely depends on organisation and management.

Poverty in rural areas in real terms can only be removed through exploring the resources hidden in rural people. It is no doubt that the poor has vast potential of work forces. If we continue to think poor as a burden, we could be mistaken. We must think positive by giving a chance to our poor who has more to offer than we have.

'Avoid delay of Rohingya repatriation process'

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 22 Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury underscored the need to be more active of all concerned officials for the completion of Rohingya refugee repatriation works by the end of this year, reports UNB.

The minister said in a meeting held at the Cox's Bazar Circuit House on Sunday with the representatives of the United Nations High Commission of Refugee (UNHCR) and the officials involved in Rohingya refugees relief and repatriation programme.

Matin Chowdhury said, a congenial atmosphere has been created on Rohingya refugee patriation by signing the mutual agreement between the UNHCR and the Myanmar government. So there was no scope to delay the repatriation process, he added.

Bangladesh government gave shelter to the Rohingya refugees on humanitarian ground so it should be the prime concern of all for their safety repatriation, the home minister said.

Referring to the country's resource limitations and socio-economic problems created due to Rohingya refugees, he urged all concerned to come forward for solving the problems by gearing up the repatriation process.

The meeting discussed progress of the relief and repatriation works and overall situation. A total of 54,0224 refugees out of 2,50,877 have returned to their homeland till April 16.

Additional Home Secretary Faizur Rahman Chowdhury, local MP Shahjahan Chowdhury and the Commissioner of Rohingya refugee also attend the meeting.

9 hurt as Jhenidah BNP, AL clash

JHENIDAH, Apr 22: At least nine people were injured in clashes between the supporters of two political parties at a village in Moheshpur thana on Sunday and Monday, reports UNB.

Police said the clashes erupted between the activists of BNP and Awami League over previous enmity and both the groups used lethal weapons during the clashes.

The injured were identified as Nurul Amin, Sanaul Islam, Sohrab Hossain and Mozammel Hoq of BNP and Mobarak Hossain, Rabul Islam, Badaruddin, Abdul Majid and Abdullah of Awami League.

A case was filed.

District roundup

JHENIDAH

3 dacoits arrested

Apr 22: Police arrested three people on Sunday for their involvement in a dacoity committed in the town, says UNB.

Police said, acting on a secret information, they raided a house at Pabhati village in Jhenidah pourashava and arrested Satya Kumar Sikdar and Idris Ali. Later, on the basis of their confessional statement police also rounded up another accused Islamuddin.

The accused were wanted in connection with a dacoity case at the residence of N Kumar of the town.

Local leaders said, dacoity and anti-social activities are on rise in the district. Some smugglers and mastans have vitiated the life of the peace-loving people.

They urged the district administration to combat the growing menace by taking stringent action against the anti-social elements.

PABNA

Work on four fisheries projects nearing completion

Apr 22: The excavation and re-excavation work of four fisheries projects under "Food for Works Programme" in two thanas of the district is nearing completion, says UNB.

The projects include excavation of Tarapasha canal and Ashutoshpur WAPDA bureau pit in sadar and Sujannagar thanas and re-excavation of Isamati river.

About 85 per cent work of the projects has already been completed and the rest is expected to be finished by the end of this month, officials said.

After completion of the projects, additional fish worth about Taka 100 crore will be produced.

MAGURA

Valuables worth Tk 80,000 looted from school teacher's house

Apr 22: A group of armed miscreants attacked a residence of a school teacher and wounded five inmates, including the teacher at Khaslari village of Siripur thana on Monday, police said, reports UNB.

The miscreants also looted valuables worth about Taka 80,000 from the residence of the school teacher Satyandra Nath Roy. A neighbour of the teacher reportedly helped launch the attack at the residence.

A case was filed with the Siripur police station but nobody was arrested till Monday evening.

SATHKHIRA

Young boy meets tragic end

Apr 22: A boy was killed in a road mishap at Chandpur thana on Assamuni-Sathkhir road on Saturday morning, police said, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, Chandu, 3, son of Mostaq while playing on the road was run over by a minibus coming from Assamuni.

Police seized the bus but the driver managed to escape. A case has been filed with the police.

Later, local agitated people created road blockade for about three hours demanding the punishment of driver. After the assurance from the authority they withdrew the barricade.

KUSHTIA

47 passengers injured in road mishap

Apr 22: Some 47 people were injured, 13 critically, when a bus fell into a roadside ditch on Kushtia-Iswardi road Monday, reports UNB.

Passengers said, the Bogra bound bus plunged into the ditch at Mirpur thana at 1.45 pm as its driver lost control over the steering.

Of the injured 35 were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital. Among them the conditions of Janmohammad (30), Reazuddin (40), Jhantu (35), Rahman (50), Mantu (30), Rahima Khatun (30), Jesmin (10), Nargis (22), Badarudin (30), Mizanur Rahman (35), Abdul Khaleque (35), were said to be critical.

RAJSHAHI

Attack on RU Press Club condemned

Apr 22: The president and general secretary of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) Saturday condemned the attack on the university Press Club by some unruly students, reports UNB.

In a statement, RUTA President Prof Anisur Rahman and General Secretary Prof Azizul Islam condemned the heinous attack on April 12 and demanded exemplary punishment to the miscreants.

They also expressed dissatisfaction over the inaction of the varsity authority in this regard.

Meanwhile, several student organisations including Chhatra League, Chhatra Mootree and Chhatra Shibir in separate statements condemned the attack and demanded punishment to the attackers. They also held JCD activists responsible for the attack.

Leaders of Rajshahi University Press Club Monday submitted two separate memoranda to the acting Vice-Chancellor of the varsity and the Police Commissioner of Rajshahi, demanding exemplary punishment of the students responsible for an attack at the club last week.

In the memoranda, the journalists of the university called upon the authorities to expel and punish the miscreants responsible for the attack within a week.

On April 12, a group of unruly JCD activists reportedly stormed into the RU press, and beat up a messenger of the office and ransacked some furniture.

DINAJPUR

Husband, wife commit suicide

Apr 22: Both the husband and wife allegedly committed suicide by taking poison at Hargana area of Kotwali thana in the town on Wednesday, police said, reports UNB.

Robnath Roy, son of Jatindra Nath Roy, and his wife Bharati Roy took poison at their house at 11 pm and died on the spot. The reason behind the suicide could not be known immediately.

A case was filed with the police.

Another report adds: A boy was beaten to death by his neighbours over the dispute of sharing irrigation water at Moheshkotha in Kotwali thana on Thursday.

Mofazzal, 14, son of Shorhab Ali, a farm labourer of Hazi Akbar Ali of the same village, picked up a quarrel with Tofazzal and Tozammel of south Faridpur village in the same thana over sharing of irrigation water. At one stage both the neighbours became furious and started beating Mofazzal causing his instantaneous death.

A case has been filed with the police.

LALMONIRHAT

More care, education for mentally retarded urged

Apr 22: Speakers at a seminar here have called for involvement of all sections of the community in the work for care, education and welfare of the mentally retarded, says BSS.

The need for rendering homebased services to the larger number of such people and their integration in society was emphasised.

The Lalmonirhat branch of the Society for the Care and Education of the Mentally Retarded (SCEMRB) organised the seminar on Sunday last in celebration of its 12th founding anniversary. Presided over by President of the branch, Nurul Huq Sarker, the function was inaugurated by President of SCEMRB, D P Barua and attended by Deputy Commissioner of Lalmonirhat district Kazi Farid Ahmed as chief guest and NPFU organisation advisor from Norway based in Dhaka Karl Johan Haanes as special guest.

Superintendent of police Mozammel Huq Chairman of local Municipality Mubul Hussain, second joint Secretary General of SCEMRB JI Mamun, Organising Secretary of SCEMRB Sajeda Humayun Kabir Shafi Majumder, Supen Dutta, A Salam Bakul addressed the seminar, among others. The programme was rounded off with a cultural show by mentally retarded students.

Earlier in the day about 150 mentally retarded students of the local school paraded the town streets.