

National

Processing of raw skins pose threat to health

KISHOREGANJ, June 1: The processing of raw skins of animals in the residential areas of Bairab Pourashava has been causing health hazards and suffering of the people, reports UNB.

312 development projects undertaken

MYMENSINGH, June 1: A total of 312 projects under Food for Works Programme have been taken up in 12 thanas of the Mymensingh district during the current dry season, reports BSS.

The ministry of disaster management has allotted 5,783 metric tons of wheat worth Taka 3,75,89,500 for the implementation of these projects.

The people of the thickly populated river port town have urged the authorities to take immediate steps against the unscrupulous skin dealers for the sake of public health and sanitation.

Pregnant housewife, three sons slaughtered to death

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, June 1: A five months old pregnant housewife and her three sons were slaughtered to death by a suspected miscreant at the victims' residence in Chatpur under sadar thana recently.

The victims were identified as Husneara, 28, house wife of Mohammad Ahad Ali and her three sons Suman, 20, Khukan, 6, and Siful.

Eye witnesses said, the neighbours saw the victims as they were being slaughtered on the floor. Later the neighbours informed the police station at Brahmanbaria thana. The police sent the bodies at Brahmanbaria sadar hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, Ahad Ali, husband of Husneara was reportedly not in his house on the day of the murder.

An UNB report adds: A man was killed and 50 others were injured in a clash over a petty matter between two rival groups at Darlapang village of Nabinagar thana last week.

According to witnesses, the clash ensued over cow grazing in a paddy field. Villagers divided into two groups, one

supported the owner of the cow and another took the field owner's side in which Ratan Mia 30 died on the spot.

Among the injured, three people were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, eight admitted to Nabinagar Hospital and another 37 released after first aid.

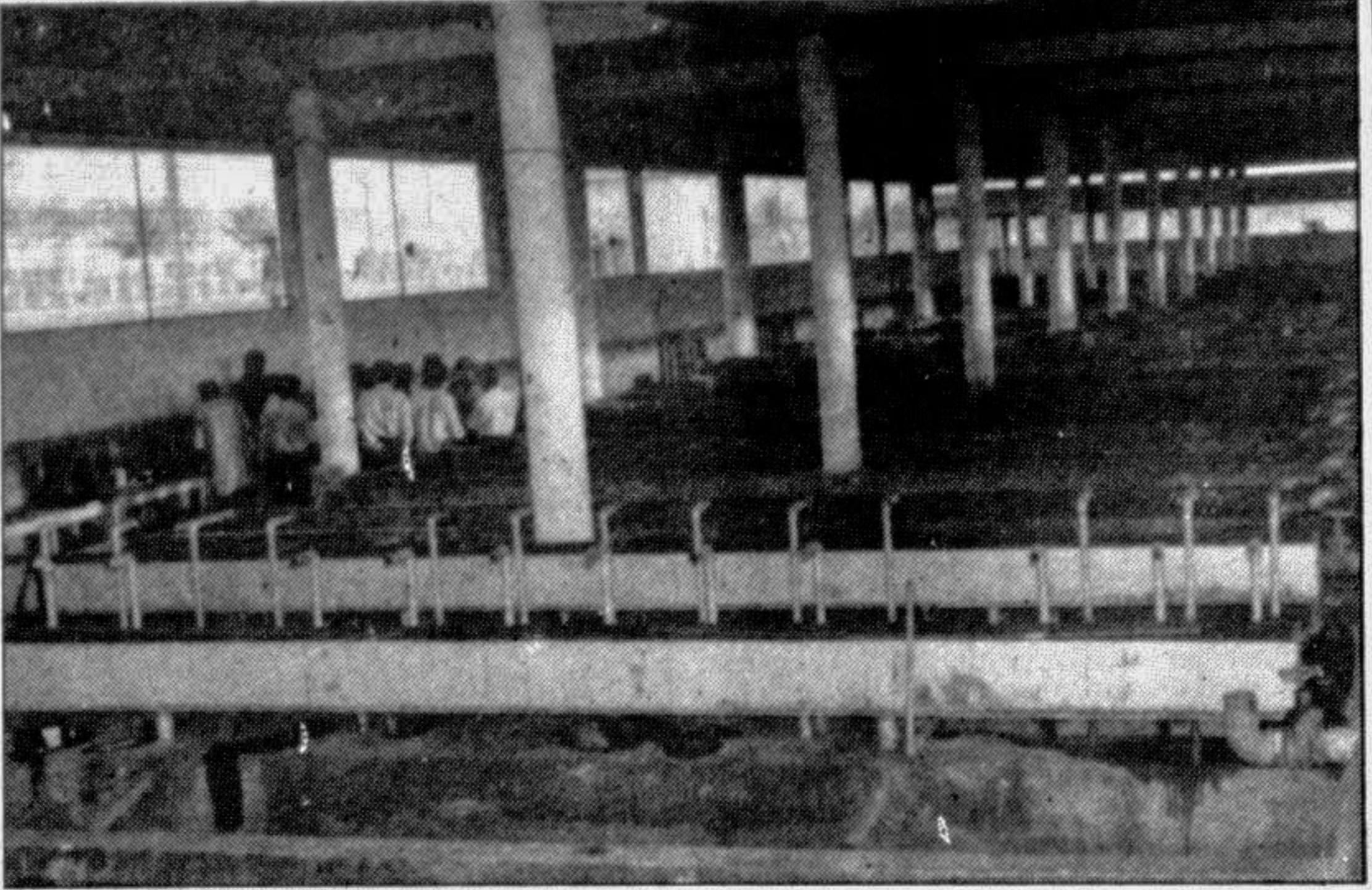
Police arrested four people in this connection.

Another message from Narshingdi adds: Five people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of the town following a previous enmity.

Witnesses said, the clash ensued on May 20 night when a group of people numbering 20-25 of East Dattapara attacked the Bhuiyan Bari group of West Dattapara and looted the valuables.

The attackers opened fire and blasted bombs on Bhuiyan Bari in which one Alamgir received bullet injuries.

Three attackers were caught red handed by the people, identified as Shahjahan, Shamal Saha and Pradip Saha of West Dattapara when they tried to flee.



MYMENSINGH: The hatchery of the Fish Research Institute. This hatchery is one of the most modern equipped with all necessary apparatus. Fish from this hatchery are taken to open pond for further growth and experiment.

— Star photo

Mighty Brahmaputra now a mere canal

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, June 1: The Brahmaputra river is now turning into a canal for rapid silting. It lost its current from its source of the eastern Himalayas down to its mouth.

The river is 1,830 miles long streaming through Dibrugarh, Gauhati and Meghalaya and pours into Bangladesh from the western side at the Garo hills.

From Dewanganj, Nalitabari, Jamalpur town to Bhairab Bazar where the river meets Meghna it has created thousands of shoals and sand banks on its stream.

On the soggy shoals farmers grow paddy, wheat, ground nut and pulses, beans and pumpkins.

People cross the Brahmaputra by walking these days. A brisk business is being carried out digging sand and dumping that on the bank for sale. Cultivators plant transplanted boro on the sand banks. Frogs croak in the evening and at night jackals howl and break the silence of the hour.

M A Jalil, a day labourer of Nandina Bazar area, under Jamalpur thana said he

along with other colleagues came down to Brahmaputra everyday to dig sand which provides him means of living. He earns Taka 55 a day, he said. All along Dewanganj, Nalitabari, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Nandina, Begunbari, Nurundi, Riazpur, Biddaganj, and Mymensingh Brahmaputra is drying up and leaving chars.

Lifting his hands from the ankle deep water at Shambhuganj Bridge side Abdul Kalam, a local farmer said, we do not blame any one for our misfortune of not having water in Brahmaputra.

In replying to a question why Brahmaputra is running dry, an engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) Mymensingh said, the seventeenth century earthquake has caused this river to adopt a major change.

Centuries ago the river was flowing through Bahadurabadhat as Samuna-Brahmaputra. There were torrential stream. But due to severe heat of the earthquake its course has been diverted and ran through Mymensingh-Shambhuganj.

Numerous haors, baors, oxbow lakes, depressions have been formed due to these earthquakes. Besides due to creation of several barrages in its upper streams the natural water flow has been interrupted. There is tremendous silting all along the length of the river. Dredging is very expensive, he says. Dredging at this stage cannot bring any oilfield. Agriculture has been seriously affected. Underground water level is declining. Navigation has been ceased. Within a couple of years the river may not exist any more.

In answer to a question whether the river would totally dry up in future, the Executive Engineer of WDB of Tangail zone said, "this is not true. Water talks with India is on progress. We are hopeful about retrieving the flow of the river.

During the Pakistan period there were water treaties with India including Brahmaputra Multi-Purpose Barrage Projects. The treaty included (a) irrigation (b) water control, (c) hydroelectricity of this country. Many programmes were initiated

during the post-liberation period. Many meetings among technical committees of both the countries had been arranged. Efforts were made to revive the old contact. But no effective measures were taken in case of Brahmaputra. In 1977 a bilateral water development treaty was signed with India. It was said in the agreement that Bangladesh would get 34,500 cusecs of water during its lean period.

After 1988 the treaty agreements disappeared. We had our initiatives, but the Indian side showed no interest. However, 18,000 cusecs of water was flowing.

Early this year there was another water treaty signed with India. The technical committee members at both the countries had talks on this issue. Efforts are underway to restore old water treaty and make it permanent.

The present picture of the Brahmaputra river is grave. Ferry services of Ghatal, Jamalpur-Sherpur and Shanandbari still remain suspended.

Two held with arms, ammunition

BRAHMANBARIA, June 1: Police arrested two people along with arms and ammunition from Mathbaria village of Sarail thana last week, reports UNB.

Acting on secret information, police raided the house of Syed Miah at Mathbaria village and rounded up two people and recovered a country made pipe gun and three rounds of bullets of 303 rifle from their possession.

A case has been filed with the local thana.

Police in another drive arrested two people from the town and recovered a stolen typewriter from their possession on May 26.

The arrested were identified as Kamal Hossain and Shapan Das. The typewriter was stolen from local BADC office on May 24.

A case has been filed with the local police.

'Immediate steps needed to solve problems of greater Sylhet'

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, June 1: President of the UK unit of Bangladesh Awami League, Ataur Rahman Khan has called upon the government for taking immediate and necessary steps with a view to solving the different problems of greater Sylhet region. He also criticised the government's reluctance over the legitimate demand of the one crore people of the four districts of the region to form a new administrative division.

Khan, on a short visit in Bangladesh was speaking at a press conference arranged at the Sylhet Press Club Monday last. He said, a number of long-felt demands of the Sylhet region has been lying unheard for long decades. He said, these include, Internationalisation of the Sylhet MAG Osmany Air Port, re-establishing the headquarters of Tea Board at Srimangal, formation of haor development board, establishing Sylhet Technical College, dredging of the rivers and taking immediate necessary steps to save the Sylhet region from the floods every year.

Besides they also seized Indian salt and a rickshaw worth about Taka 5 thousand 860 under an anti-smuggling operation 'aguner fulki'.

Local people said, they are not getting any preventive or curative measures from the concerned department. As a result, the poultry farmers are badly affected. Mentionable that poultry farming is one of the main sources of income of the rural poor of the district.

Due to the spread of the diseases the prices of poultry birds have sharply fallen in the local market while the supply of eggs has also declined.

It is alleged that many poultry birds had died even after they were vaccinated. Villagers said the vaccines were not properly preserved and frequent power failure was also responsible for the effectiveness of the same.

They urged the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to protect the poultry population of the district.

Woes of rly passengers in northern region

More railway coaches demanded

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, June 1: More railway coaches have been a long standing demand of the passengers of different northern railway routes, specially Dinajpur-Teestamuk Ghat, Santahar-Lamonirhat, Rangpur-Kurigram and Parbatipur-Panchagarh sections. The existing passenger coaches are also in deplorable condition.

Since the liberation, railway routes were occasionally closed down facing acute shortage of engines. Moreover, passenger coaches are being reduced day by day due to disorderly and unserviceable condition of the coaches. As a result, at present only a few number of trains run in different sections with negligible number of passenger coaches for which most of the trains remain jam packed most of the time.

The railway authority has been urged to mitigate the sufferings of the passenger by increasing number of trains in different sections with adequate passenger coaches.

Anti-social activities on increase

Gaibandha Railway station has become a den of anti-social activities. Such activities take hold of the Railway platform and adjoining areas after dusk.

It has become simply impossible for passengers to get the women to come to the Railway station for trains. In the night large number of these anti-social elements come here on afternoons and take their position shortly after dusk. They fix up terms with the partners and leave for nearby dark places. The floating gay girls return at late night and take shelter on the platform for the rest of the night.

Gaibandha Railway station, situated in the heart of town has long been occupied by the gay girls who pollute adjoining areas.

There is none to look into the matter. Local police station is situated close by but they do not poke their nose in the matter.

Influx of floating people

have been increasing in the district head quarters posing problem to the town dwellers.

Almost everyday floating people are pouring in the town. Generally they come from river side of Teesta and Brahmaputra where erosion remains active round the year.

Earlier those people lived along the western banks of rivers but the wide spread erosion engulfed all their belongings.

To earn their bread they are moving to town for survival. The exact figure of the floating people is yet to be ascertained. According to social observers and local NGO workers these people have been polluting the environment as well as the social life. They have been erecting their temporary sheds here and there. They young women belonging to floating families are compelled under desperate condition to sell their chastity to earn their livelihood.

On the other hand, the birth rate among them has increased while the opportunity for employment has decreased. It may be mentioned that the natural calamities pushed them to unfortunate situation and consequently thousands of people were compelled to leave their houses with families in search of provision. There is no programme in the district for the rehabilitation of such floating people.

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