

# River Ghagot may soon disappear

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, June 5: The river Ghagot flowing through Gaibandha Pourashava has been silted up as a result boats cannot ply causing much inconvenience to the inhabitants of the localities. Originated from a large marsh about hundred kilometre long river Ghagot lastly falls into the Brahmaputra at Rasoolpur under Gaibandha sadar thana.

Due to consecutive siltation the river become almost dry and lost its usual navigability. The transport cost of merchandise to and from the hats and bazars of distant locations has much increased due suspension of plying boats. This enhanced cost of transportation of merchandise invariably affecting the price of different essential commodities.

The adverse impact of the drying up river also affected the cultivation Irri-Boro crops on the vast tracts of agriculture lands. During winter season power pumps do not find water reservoirs to irrigate agriculture field. In many points of this river from which water is pumped out in the paddy fields almost dry and the water level of the river goes down in time of need. Consequently power pumps installed at various places along the vast tracts

in the down stream are rendered virtually inoperative and useless. As a result production of Irri-Boro crops are being hampered due to short supply of water. This area is a flood affected zone and now Irri-Boro crops are the main item here.

If the river can be re-excavated upto such a level that it can accommodate water in all season, thousands of farmers from both the sides of river can produce huge Irri and Boro paddy, vegetables and sugar-cane.

Earlier there was continued water flow in all season but due to rapid siltation the river lost its usual course of water flow and the area become covered with water hyacinth caused breeding of mosquitos.

It is felt that the re-excavation of river Ghagot has become inevitable to arrest flood water, ensure fertility on both the side of river and to promote trade and commerce through river route. Moreover the river will ensure the livelihood of thousand of fishermen through fishing profession.

Local people urged upon the concerned authority to take necessary step to re-excavation of river Ghagot with immediate effect.

# Sharp decline in fish output in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, June 5: Scarcity of fish in local markets has been acute for quite some times adversely affecting food habit of common people.

It is learnt that many varieties of fish have now become costlier item due to small supply, higher demand.

According to a survey report native carp like ruhi, mrigal and katla, have almost disappeared from markets while magur, singi, kol, puti, tengra, maya, khalisa have followed suit much earlier. Even some varieties of sea fish available in plenty few years ago are no longer available. There were times when these fish were abundantly available at nominal price.

Same is the case with exotic carp like grass, silver and mirror carp. Prices of these varieties have shot up abnormally with the availability becoming rare everyday.

Small size hillsha is occasionally available in the fish markets in small quantity. But prices remain high. It is also learnt that the picture prevailing in rural hats and bazars are no better. Fish of any variety have now become luxury food. Knowledgeable circles say

that days are not far-off when consumers will have to forget this item.

Another source says that production of fingerlings has been drastically hampered after many of the beels, khals, ponds, baors and rivers have dried up following unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water by Indian authority through Farakka barrage.

Indiscriminate and widespread use of insecticides, including Dieldron, Albron, Heptacolar, Chlorodyne, Thiodin, Tynol and Hillfish in agriculture fields have also contributed to deaths of fish habitat.

Kushtia is noted for having a good number of water bodies which are used for pisciculture projects throughout the district. Some of the water bodies are used for fish development under World Bank loan with a determine effort to boost fish production in massive quantity purely on scientific method to meet local deficit and supply the surplus to other markets of the country.

In second phase some more water bodies will be taken up for aquaculture to cover deficit in the district under IFAD fund.

## Farakka effect

# Changes in climate of north-western region

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, June 5: Scanty rainfall every year and sharp fall in the underground water level will bring a tremendous change in the climate of North-Western region of the country.

It is alleged that the change in the climate of North-Western region has been brought by acquisition of water of the Ganges and other rivers through Farakka. At the same time deforestation in this region has aggravated the situation.

It is reported that the Padma and the Ganges rivers in Bangladesh have been silted up and lost its depth during the last two decades. As a result, the North-Western region has been turning into a desert. The underground water level in the area of the Padma and its tributaries have decreased alarmingly while the rainfall in 1992 has been reduced by 900 mm compared to 1991.

The acquisition of water by the Indian government is causing dryness and less rain-

fall in the North-Western region.

Authorities should take proper steps to solve the problem otherwise the situation will go out of control, the experts opined.

On the other hand, due to influence of the Farakka Barrage water in the Padma including its 12 tributaries, 16 beels and canals and 14,000 ponds have been dried up and the irrigation problems has been prevailing in 21 North-Western districts.

It is learnt that generally the irrigation crisis exists in the dry season but this year the irrigation crisis has been observed in the winter season.

According to the reliable sources, greater Kushtia, greater Jessore, part of Faridpur, Pabna, Sirajganj, Natore, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Joypurhat districts are worst affected. Most of the tube wells in northern areas have become inoperative.

There are 6500 deep tubewells in Barendra area comprising 25 thanas. Of them about 2000 deep and 7000 shallow tubewells have gone out of order and about 3000 are not operating due to decrease in the underground water level in different places of the Barendra area.

Similarly for want of water in the river Ganges, GK project has been closed down during this first Kharif season.

About 3 lakh acres of land in North and North-Western region have been deprived of irrigation facilities as 5000 power pumps have turned un-serviceable for want of required ground water level.

Several organisations for environmental development and preservation are carrying out various activities to protect the influence of Farakka Barrage in North Bengal and North-Western region.



KURIGRAM: These child labourers, supposed to attend school, are on their way to work at a ferry port area. Hundreds of child labourers are found to work at different factories, hotels, brick fields throughout the district. — Star photo

# Sunflower cultivation gaining popularity in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, June 5: Sunflower cultivation is becoming popular day by day in our country. It's prospect is undoubtedly bright like other countries if it is cultivated widely. Good amount of foreign currencies may be earned every year, said an agriculture scientist.

According to the scientist, in Russia, South America, Argentina, Europe, Rumania, India and Pakistan it has been cultivating abundantly on commercial basis for last about 15 years. To survey the prospect of sunflower as oil seeds in Bangladesh research was started in 1979. After three years National Seed Board approved a variety named 'Kironi'. This was approved after grading from a variety titled as 'Aldopolexy' from Poland.

Sunflower has been cultivating in our country in demonstration plots since 1985. Through demonstration plots it has been proved to the agriculture scientist that it has a bright prospect in our country as oil seeds.

The per acre output of sunflower is much more than mustard and groundnut. Due to this the cultivation of

sunflower is becoming popular among the farmers. Further, it may be cultivated rabi and monsoon seasons, that is two crops may be cultivated in a year.

The scientist opined sunflower contains 55 per cent of Limonic Acid which is helpful for human body. Further there is no Erosic Acid in sunflower though it is remained in mustard. Erosic acid is injurious to human health, he opined. Sunflower seeds may be crashed in local mills or electric expeller and its baggas may be used as the food of cows, goats, ducks and hens. Further the production cost of sunflower is 30 to 35 per cent lesser than that of mustard or groundnut. It may play vital role if the cultivation is done with confidence, the scientist hoped.

According to the agriculture scientist, agriculture extension department started cultivation of sunflower in 1990 in a small scale. In 1993-94 more than 100 acres of land was brought under sunflower cultivation in Jhenidah district and 150 acres in Bagharpara thana of Jessore district.

A silent bargaining is prevailing over the consumption of sunflower as edible oil in the

country which would be stopped without further delay as it is baseless, said the scientist.

About 5 lakh metric tons of edible oil is required for our country every year. Another section says, the quantity is actually 7 lakh metric tons.

According to a statistics minimum requirement of edible oil is 7 grams per head everyday and on the basis of this statistics 6 lakh 22 thousand 2 hundred 50 metric tons is required every year to meet the requirement. The country has to import edible oil spending valuable foreign currencies.

In 88 lakh 53 thousand 9 hundred 5 hectares of cultivable land is used for cultivating sunflower, soybean, mustard, tishi and groundnut, the country might be self-sufficient in producing oil seeds as we meet the necessity importing 80 per cent soybean and palm oil and the rest 20 per cent mustard seeds.

The source said, about 20 years ago we had to import mustard from Canada, now a good quantity of mustard seeds being produced in the country and if the people are motivated to cultivate the sunflower, we may fulfill our demand within very short time.

# Handicrafts need patronisation in Satkhira

# Exports may fetch huge foreign exchange

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, June 5: The country may earn a huge amount of foreign currency from the export of handicrafts made by the people of Satkhira district if proper attention is given.

The people of the district especially the women folk possess the skills of making different kinds of jute bags and textures locally called 'chhuka' which has a high demand in foreign markets.

Some exporters are earning a lot by selling them abroad. The jute bags and 'chhukas' are generally made by the women folk of the district during their leisure.

But the craftsmen connected with these industries are not getting proper incentives and patronisation.

The women of the district make a kind of cake with rice powder locally called 'fool pi-

tha' or 'pakkam pitha', many of the distinguished foreign guests praised the arts. 'Fool pithas' (flower cakes) while these presented to them by the local people.

The experienced circle feel that the authorities concerned should examine the viabilities for exporting the above handicrafts and cakes which accord-

## One killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, June 5: One person was killed in a road accident in Jhenidah recently.

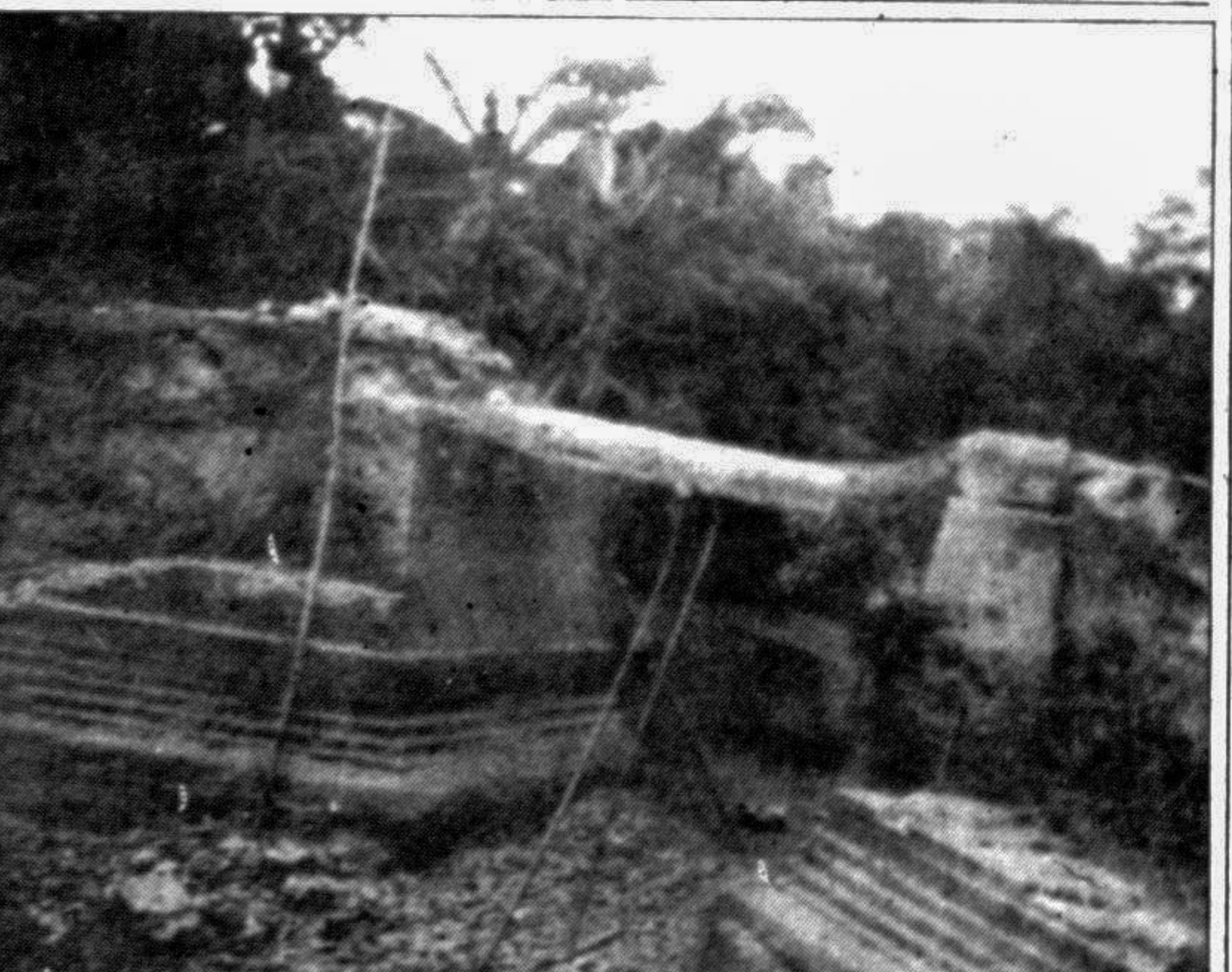
Report says the victim identified as Abdus Satter, 65, a day labourer was sitting by a road near Goalpara in Jhenidah in the morning.

ing to them possess the potentialities of earning foreign exchange and remove unemployment problems of the district to a great extent.

A kind of nylon rope especially used for the purpose of tying the whistles of the army and police personnel with uniforms is made by some women of the district. But the makers of these profitable commodities poorly paid.

Many of the people of the district make fine bamboo and cane baskets of various types during their leisure mainly in rainy season.

Sometimes they are beautifully coloured with a view to making them attractive. Many women make excellent embroidery works on these baskets and hand fans. But the craftsmen of these handicrafts do not feel encouraged for lack of minimum patronisation.



MADARIPUR: The Pachhar bridge in Chibchar thana was damaged a long time ago. Measures to repair the bridge were not taken though the bridge links an important business centre with the thana area. — Star photo

# Seminar on universal moral development programme held

RAJSHAHI, June 5: A seminar on "A proposal to the United Nations on moral development approach; a new world order for peace" was held recently in the Economics Department of Rajshahi University (RU). Teachers from Rajshahi University as well as from different colleges of Bangladesh attended the seminar to participate in the discussion at the seminar, according to a RU press release.

Prof Anisur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University attended the seminar as the chief guest. The key note paper on "a proposal to the United Nations on moral development approach; a new world order for peace" was presented by Dr Abu Obaidul Huque, Professor and Director of the Bangladesh Institute for Advancement of Science and Technology Teaching (IASTT).

The speakers at the seminar unanimously appealed to the UN and its all member states to consider this timely proposal for this universal moral development programme in the greater interest and welfare of mankind for promoting the causes to establish durable peace, discipline and justice at individual, social and global level.

Prof Abdur Rahman, Chairman of Economics Department of Rajshahi University presided over the seminar.

# Counterfeit notes seized in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, June 5: BDR personnel seized 10 counterfeit notes of Tk 100 denomination and 19 bottles of Indian Phenisidyl from a house at a village in Debhata thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

On a tip off, the BDR personnel raided the house of Anisur Rahman at Narerchak village on Tuesday night and recovered the forged currency and the contrabands. Anisur, however, fled the house.

A case was filed with the local police.

Another report adds: A housewife at Parulgachha village in Kaliganj thana received acid burns on the day.

A group of miscreants threw acid at the face of Taslima (18), wife of Abdul Hamid, at dead of night while she was asleep.

A case was filed with the local police.

On the same day, a young man was robbed of his belongings, including cash Tk 10,000, wrist-watch and his bicycle at Kushilla in Kaliganj thana at gunpoint.

A group of muggers attacked Abdul Hannan as he was on his way to Kushilla from Kaliganj riding a bicycle.

A case was filed with Kaliganj thana.

# Construction of drilling well at Shahbazpur starts

BARISAL, June 5: Construction of a 4000-meter drilling well for gas exploration at Shahbazpur in Borhanuddin thana of Bhola district has begun, official sources here said, reports UNB.

Initially, government has sanctioned Taka 35 crore to meet the expenditure for the drilling works of over 1200 metres.

About eight to 10 trillion cubic feet of natural gas are likely to be available on 5.180 square metres area at Shahbazpur under 1,900 - 3,000 metres depth, it added.

It is also expected that a huge quantity of hydrocarbons will be available there.

Meanwhile, government has imported drilling materials worth about Tk two crore from America.

Another report adds: Works on 140 uplift projects to modernize the town area as a divisional headquarter are progressing fast under town development scheme with an expenditure of Tk 3.50 crore.

According to official sources, at least 50 per cent works of these projects have already been completed.

The projects include repair, expansion, construction and reconstruction of roads, culverts, bridges, stalls, two-storied market building, residential quarters and sanitation.

The rest of the works are expected to be completed within the current fiscal, the source added.

Another report says: The Revenue Department has so far distributed 10,000 acres of khas land among 6,700 landless people in 10 thana areas of the district during this year.

The thanas are — Sadar, Gournadi, Agailjhara, Bakerganj, Babuganj, Wazirpur, Uladi, Hizla, Mehendiganj and Banaripara.

# District roundup

COMILLA

## Zia's death anniversary observed

June 5: The 13th death anniversary of President Ziaur Rahman was observed here on May 30 in a befitting manner, reports UNB.

Different socio-cultural organisations and district unit of BNP and its front organisations held various programmes to mark the day.

The programmes included offering fateha, milad mahfil, Koran Khawni, feeding the destitutes, discussion meeting, photo exhibition.

The discussion meeting was held at the BNP office which was presided over by advocate Atiqul Islam. Local BNP President Begum Rabeya Chowdhury was present as chief guest.

The discussion was attended, among others, by Abdus Sattar, Prof Abdul Wahab and Abdur Rouf Chowdhury.

Comilla Central Jail authorities have suspended two warders for taking bribe from visitors at its gate, official sources said Friday.

The accused are Haroon ur-Rashid and Mubarak Hussain.

The suspension orders were issued following allegation that the two warders took illegal gratification from some visitors at the jail.

District Commissioner upon hearing the report of the malpractice asked the jail authorities to take necessary action against the offenders.

CHITTAGONG

## Wall collapses, young girl killed

June 5: A minor girl was killed when a portion of an under-construction retaining wall of a five-storey building collapsed on her at Jhaotala, Momin Road, here recently, reports BSS.

According to Kotwali police, the mishap occurred when the victim, Qamrunnahaar, 5, was playing with other children in the under-construction room of the building. Suddenly a big chunk of the wall fell on her. She died on the spot.

The victim Kamrunnahaar was a student of national government primary school.

The body was sent for post-mortem examination. A case was lodged with Kotwali police in this connection.

MADARIPUR

## 5 outlawed party members held, one rescued

June 5: Five members of outlawed Purba Bangla Shabbara Party were arrested and one person who was kidnapped by them before, was rescued on Monday, police said, says UNB.

The outlaws, identified as Rafiqul Islam Mafiz, 27, Habib, 25, Nannu alias Pannu, 23, Sirajul Islam, 25, and Babu alias Bhulu, 25, kidnapped Mongrej Khan, 85, from Char Shemareil in Shubchar thana on March 6. They were demanding Tk two lakh as ransom money from his relatives.

Police said, the outlaws took shelter at Shilchhara Family Planning Centre in Sadar thana the day before they were arrested. Local people gheraoed the area and informed the police. A contingent of police drawn from Shilchhara and Rajfor thanas led by Police Super Shafiqul Islam raided the spot and rounded them up. The miscreants also traded gunshots and hurled crackers at the police.

According to abducted Mongrej's relatives, the outlawed activists realised Tk 25,000 from them but declined to free the victim.

BRAHMANBARIA

## Clash leaves 15 injured

June 5: Fifteen people were injured, ten seriously, and several houses were damaged in a clash recently between two rival groups at Konapur village of Nabinagar thana, says UNB.

Witnesses said the clash following a previous enmity and village politics. Later a group of armed people attacked and ransacked the houses of their rival groups.

The seriously injured were admitted to Nabinagar hospital. Police arrested two people in this connection.

Another message adds: A boy was crushed under the wheels of a microbus near Ibrahimpur village of Nabinagar thana last week.

The dead, identified as Abu Yusuf, 8, was hit by the Nabinagar-bound microbus on Nabinagar-Companiganj road while crossing the road. Yusuf died on the spot.

MAGURA

## Exhibition of obscene films

June 5: Rampant exhibition of obscene films through cinema halls and VCRs in the town and rural areas is going on causing oral degradation of the youths, reports UNB.

A group of people are screening the violent English and Hindi films including blue films at certain cinema halls and particular areas on commercial basis.

A large number of students and local youths gather in the halls or in the VCR rooms to enjoy these obscene films by collecting money on various plea from their guardians.

Meanwhile, anti-social activities are on rise in the district.

Guardians have urged the district administration to help save their children from moral degradation by taking steps against the persons who are engaged in showing of obscene films.

FENI

## Seven killed in separate incidents

June 5: Seven people, including four minors, were killed in separate incidents of mishaps and drowning in the district last week, police said Friday, reports UNB.

Of the dead, five were killed and three others injured in separate accidents on Feni by-pass and Feni-Maljidce roads on May 28 and 29.

The road mishap victims were identified as Ratna (9), Shathi (6) and Shujat Ali (30) and Bindu Banik (20). A minor girl aged about eight could not be identified.

The injured were identified as Sued Rahman, Ayub Ali and Nasiruddin.

Another report adds: Fahmina (3), daughter of poura-commissioner Abul Kashem drowned in a nearby pond of their residence on the Eid day.

Meanwhile, a under trail prisoner named Mosharrif Hossain (30), died at Feni Sub-jail on the Eid day. He was arrested from Sonagazi thana of the district and sent to the jail on May 19.

KHULNA

## 'Govt extending all necessary help to spread universal edn'

June 5: Jatiya Sangsad Whip Ashraf Hossain said that the present government had been providing financial assistance to all the educational institutions in the country in order to ensure education for all by the turn of this century, reports BSS.

The whip was addressing the foundation stone laying function of the second new building of the Banikhalil Moulana Bhasani Memorial College under Dumuria police station on Thursday. Presided over by the Chairman, of the managing committee of the college, Advocate Gazi Abdul Bari the function was addressed, among others, by Principal Nazimuddin and local Union Parishad Chairman Molla Abdul Kashem.

Referring to the programmes undertaken by the government for spreading education in the country Hossain called upon the people to send their children to schools.

PABNA

## Nine dies of thalassemia, 50 attacked

June 5: At least nine children died and 50 others were affected following the outbreak of a new disease thalassemia in an alarming proportion in three thanas in the past one month, reports UNB.

The disease has broken out in Sadar, Sathia and Athgaria among the children causing panic among the guardians.

Medical sources said the deadly disease cause anaemia, only blood transfusion can save the patients for the time being. The patients die due to gradual decrease in hemoglobin.

According to Health Department the deceased children are — Arman (8), son of Fazel of Hemayetpur village, Hashem (3) son of Mondol of Kachharipara, Nishani (2), daughter of Mostafa Sotej of Mokkobra, Shahjahan (6) son of Hamid, Runu (8) son of Nurul Islam of Mahmudpur village of Sadar thana, Shimon (8) son of Dr Mozammel Haq of Haridpur village. Shyamol (2) son of Sontosh of Kalayanpur, Arafat (7) son of Khosru Miah of Kashinathpur in Sathia thana and Moti (3) son of Ramzan of Motijheel village of Athgaria thana.

## Opposition MPs urged to join JS session

BARISAL, June 5: State Minister for Education Principal Mohammad Eunos Khan Thursday urged the Opposition members of Parliament to attend the Jatiya Sangsad session for the greater interest of the nation, reports BSS.

"If the present democratic trend suffers any dislocation due to the abstention of Opposition MPs from Parliament, they will be liable to the people in future," he said while addressing BNP leaders and workers at Syanerhat under Bakerganj thana of the district.