



AGRI-VARSITY (Mymensingh): Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Shah Muhammad Farouk of the university delivering his speech as chief guest in observance of the International Day of Elderly held under the auspices of the Association for the Aged Teachers and Officers of the Bangladesh Agricultural University. — BAU photo

### Sharp fall in Padma water level, dredging continues

RAJBARI, Oct 29: Dredging work of the river Padma near the Daulatdia Ferry ghat is going on in full swing to facilitate movement of vessels, reports UNB.

According to Bangladesh Inter-district Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), about 1.30 lakh cubic metres of mud have been removed from the river in last one month.

Meanwhile, the BIWTA authority has shifted the launch ghat at Rajbari, two ferry ghats and suspended operation of a ghat here following the sharp fall of the water level in the river Padma.

Moreover, the dredging work, is being hampered due to unavailability of spare parts necessary for the dredging operation.

Dredging work has become a regular feature here in the dry season each year due to the fall of water level in the river Padma, local people said.

### Coordination meeting of LGED, ISP, TDMA held

TANGAIL, Oct 29: A coordination meeting of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Institutional Support Project (ISP) and Technical Development and Management Authority (TDMA) was held at Sagordighi Rural Development Project Training Centre under Shakhipur, reports BSS.

Thana team leaders, foreign experts and advisors, project directors and superintending engineers of these organisations took part in the meeting. The meeting highlights physical planning and mapping projects, training of staff contractors and target groups, preparation of manuals and implementation guidelines of their development projects.

Among others M Grimm, Acting Chief Technical Adviser of Tangail Infrastructure Development Project, Christer Kirneberg of ISP, Stefan Ekelund, team leader RDP spoke on the occasion. Ataulah Bhuyan, Superintending Engineer of LGED presided over the meeting.

### Two killed, 15 hurt in separate incidents

KHAGRACHARI, Oct 29: Two people were killed and 15 others injured in two incidents in Guimara and sadar thana of the district recently, reports UNB.

Police said, a young man was killed and 15 people were injured when a minibus dashed a roadside hill at Taichala in Guimara thana in the morning.

The dead was said, to be the helper of the ill-fated bus. The body was brought to Guimara Health Complex for autopsy. Four of the injured were also admitted to the same complex with serious injuries.

In another incident, a tribal girl, Chimra Chang Marma, 20, allegedly killed herself by taking pesticide at Araimail in sadar thana.

Police recovered the body in the evening and sent it to sadar hospital for autopsy.

### 71 development projects planned for Tangail city

TANGAIL, Oct 29: Tangail paushava has taken up 71 projects under Annual Development Programme at a cost of Taka eighty-eight lakh, reports UNB.

The projects included the construction and reconstruction of sixty two roads, lanes and sublanes, five drains and four culverts.

Bazur Rahman of the paushava said that the works will be completed before March 1995.

## Tk 7.5 lakh sanctioned to rehabilitate drought-hit farmers in Pabna district

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Oct 29: The government has sanctioned an amount of Tk 750,000 to rehabilitate drought-hit farmers and compensate for the losses suffered in Pabna district.

Of the total amount, it is learnt, about Tk. 5.96,000 would be spent for the distribution of fertilisers and Tk 1,47,000 for distribution of seeds among the affected farmers of eight drought-hit thanas of Pabna district. The remaining amount will be kept as reserved by the District Agriculture Department authorities for meeting various expenditure.

The District Food Department authority has planned to procure 73,000 kgs. of chemical fertilisers, 11,000 kgs of seeds of boro

paddy, maize and lentin (musur). The actual distribution would be taken up after the procurement of the above seeds and fertilisers which many take three to four weeks as the process requires many formalities.

However, the government decision to sanction Tk 7,50,000 would not be able to meet even five per cent of the total requirements for undertaking agriculture rehabilitation works as the total amount needed, according to unofficial sources, is Tk 2,50,00,000. Official sources, however, claimed that the rehabilitation work could be successfully completed with Tk 1,50,00,000 which they asked for the purpose.

It may be recalled here in this connection that crops worth about Taka 20 crore, according to unofficial sources - official sources, however, claim to loss is worth about Taka ten crore.

The affected thanas of the district are Pabna Sadar, Santhia, Syamnagar, Atgharia, Ishurdi, Chalmohar, Bhagoora and Faridpur.

Crops damaged, according to official assessments, are as follows: Local variety of rice paddy on 1,655 hectares of land, broadcasting aman paddy on about 2,000 hectares of land and transplanted aman paddy on about 2,000 hectares of land resulting in complete loss of about 9,000 metric tons of grains.

## A village so insecure

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Oct 29: Shahzadpur village in Sarail thana of Brahmanbaria district has turned into a den of criminals due to increased anti social activities as well as deterioration in law and order situation.

According to villagers theft, cattlelifting, burglary, ransom and gambling have been increasing day by day hampering the peaceful atmosphere of Shahzadpur village under Sarail thana of the district.

Meanwhile, cattlelifting, burglary, ransom, gambling and theft have assumed an alarming proportion in Shahzadpur.

It is alleged that a least 50 cattle were lifted during the last five months. At the same time three shallow tubewell engines for irrigation schemes were stolen. Some of these were given back realising ransom by the miscreants. It is reported that some miscreants stole a pregnant cow from Atrial village had demanded ransom money. Later receiving no response for ransom they slaughtered the cow in broad day light at the house of Surujaman of Sikderpara of Shahzadpur village. Police were informed about the ran-

som but it alleged they did not take any step in this connection but collected only the skin of dead cow.

It is also alleged that during the harvesting period an organised gang steal paddy from fields almost every night. Meanwhile, burglary has also increased in the Shahzadpur village. At least 15 case of burglaries were reported during the last 25 days, the villagers said.

Sources said that at a time two burglaries had been committed in the two houses of Shahzadpur village. The house of district correspondent of the daily Sangram was one of the victim. The burglars stole valuables worth about 17 thousand taka including Cash Taka 4500.

Meanwhile, a few months back thieves also stole two cattle worth about Taka 16 thousand from the house of the same correspondent in Shahzadpur village in Sarail thana of the district. Besides, two dispensaries of Sadhananda and Dan Miah of the same village were robbed recently.

Such anti social activities are regular feature in Shahzadpur village creating

panic among the peace loving people who pass their sleepless nights. On the other hand a few unruly men are holding gambling sessions and unauthorised lottery at Chakbazar and few other spots of the village and its adjoining areas involving young generations who are reportedly being demoralised day by day.

No body advances to protest the illegal activities carried out by the miscreants who are allegedly patronised by some muscle men of the village. The dwellers are often threatened by them as a result they cannot file any cases.

When contacted Sattendra Mahan Sarkar, Chairman of Shahzadpur Union said that he had informed the Sarail thana police but the police did not take any action in this connection. Due to poor services offered by the law enforcing agency the criminal activities have tremendously increased in Shahzadpur creating panic and also paralysing the peaceful atmosphere.

The sufferers urged to the authorities to curb crime by taking proper steps against the miscreants to help restore peace and security of the people.



SYLHET: Pitiable condition of Sylhet-Jakiganj road near Julair Pool.

### Just to escape social disgrace

BHOLA, Oct 29: Rehana Begum, 25 of village Bapta in sadar thana committed suicide taking pesticide allegedly to escape a social disgrace of being violated, says UNB.

Police said, miscreants kidnapped Rehana from her uncle's residence on the night of October 20 and raped her in a nearby jungle.

On hearing screams of the girl, neighbours rushed to the spot. The miscreants, however, managed to escape.

Fallen from grace, Rehana took poison on the following day and died.

A case was filed with the local police.

### 113 centres will be opened to sell rice, wheat in Pabna

PABNA, Oct 29: Some 113 dealers have been appointed for open market sale of rice and wheat at fair prices in nine thanas of the district to ensure a stable supply of food in the area, an official source said, reports UNB.

Of them, 99 centres will sell wheat and 14 centres will sell rice. Each of them will sell about one ton of wheat and rice every day, according to the district food controller.

Price of rice has been fixed at Tk 10.50 per kg and wheat Tk 7 per kg.

The district has a stock of 2,600 metric tons of rice and 2,800 tons of wheat which can meet the demand for six months in the area.

But some local people alleged that they could not buy rice at fair prices as a section of dealers, with the help of some officials and employees, were selling rice in the black markets.

### Gunbattle leaves 2 injured in Habiganj

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Oct 29: Gunbattle between the members of local Dragon Club and Lion Club left at least two persons injured in Habiganj town recently.

The injured persons were identified as Ejaz Choudhury and Abdul Ahad.

They were later admitted into Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

Police said, the gunfight between the parties continued for hours together and both the parties used pipeguns, cocktails, bombs and other firearms.

### 130 committed suicide in 10 months in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Oct 29: At least 130 people allegedly committed suicide in five thanas of the district from Jan 1 to October 20 this year.

According to police and Hospital sources 85 people were female and the rest of the 45 were male.

Poverty, family feud, failure in love, financial crisis and demand for dowry were said to be main reasons behind the suicides.

### VC of JU visits Rajnagar College

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Oct 29: Vice-Chancellor of the Jahangirnagar University Dr Amrul Islam Chowdhury and Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Ershadul Haque visited Rajnagar Degree College recently. They were accompanied by eminent economist and chairman of the Bangladesh Ummayyeh Parishad Dr Qazi Kholiduzzaman Ahmed.

Later, students of the college arranged an informal meeting in honour of the respected guests.

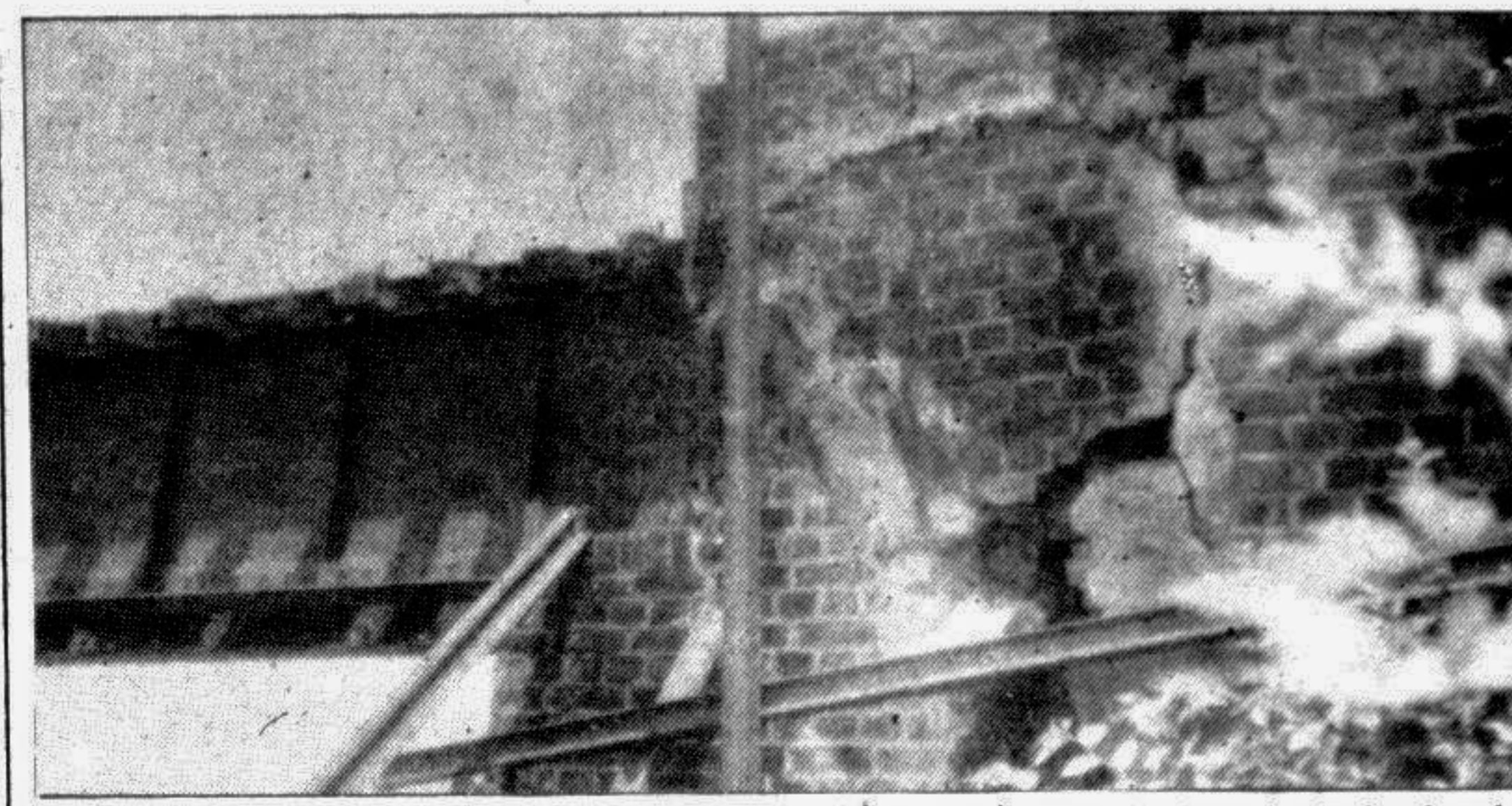
### Pirates loot Tk 50,000

MANIKGANJ, Oct 29: Armed pirates swooped on a mechanised boat in the river Padma near Alukdiar Char in Shibhalaya thana and looted Tk 50,000 from the passengers on October 21, reports UNB.

Police said, at least eight passengers were injured when the gang of eleven pirates beat them mercilessly.

Pirates managed to decamp with the booty and injured people were given first aid at Nagarbari ghat, said police.

A case was filed with the local police.



A POSSIBLE DEATH TRAP: The Ashuganj railway bridge No. 25 in Brahmanbaria developed serious cracks which can collapse any time. The railway authorities put a number of rail rods to prevent the bridge from collapsing. — Star photo by Md Shahidul Islam.

## 3 branches of a commercial bank mysteriously shut down

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 29: The fate of Islamic Commercial Co-operative Bank, (now defunct) is still lying undecided even after remaining closed for about two and a half years.

Thousands of depositors who had deposited more than Taka two crore in three branches of the bank have been passing their days in uncertainty as the bank authorities took no effective measures yet to return the money.

The Laldighirpar branch of the bank in Sylhet town was sealed off by an order of the then deputy Commissioner, Sylhet following a petition from manager of the branch on July 6, 1992. The officials reportedly did not even ask for permission from the co-operative department, it is alleged. Surprisingly, the managers of two other branches at Biswanath and Charkhai in Sylhet also decided to close their branches.

Moreover, they were not keeping any contact with the department of co-operatives, it was alleged. After closing down the Sylhet branch, there were a number of allegations of misappropriation of huge amount of money from the bank accounts, against the manager Saad Uddin. Police arrested him. However, he was soon granted bail. The case was referred to be handled by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption.

It is further alleged that, the so-called, bank, was earlier allowed to operate as a co-operative society and not as a bank. But, the manager reportedly ordered to operate as a full-fledged commercial bank and opened numbers of accounts collecting huge amount of money from some 5000 depositors. The co-operative department once ordered to wind up the so-called bank in mid 1992. The manager of Laldighirpar branch Sylhet then requested the deputy commissioner to give order to shut down the branch.

The district officials of the co-operative department made an audit into the Laldighirpar branch in Sylhet town after the branch manager was given bail in August 1992. The audit team detected large-scale irregularities and misappropriations of huge amount of money from the bank accounts, it is alleged. It is learnt that, the co-operative department took no further step as they were not involved with the sealing order.

It is alleged that, the Sylhet branch manager, Saad Uddin, issued an OD (Over Draft) for Taka 22 lakh in the name of firm, whereas he had a limit of only Taka fifty thousand for OD. He sanctioned another OD in favour of another firm for Taka fifteen lakh against a mortgage of property worth about only Taka Two lakh. The reason behind the manager's request to close down the branch was not clear, but so far people allege that it was due to attempts made to escape further discoveries of his alleged misdeeds.

The depositors have demanded for an immediate enquiry into the matter and for taking necessary action to ensure return of their deposited money lying with three branches in Sylhet.

## Expansion of ferry ghat approach road demanded

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 29: The expansion of the approach roads of both Bhaairab and Ashuganj ferry ghats have become unfit for safe traffic movement.

The ferry ghats on Dhaka-Sylhet highway remain busy with the movement of hundreds of passenger buses, goods trucks, private car and jeeps, round the clock.

Besides, rickshaws and passengers avail the ferry boats everyday. But the movement of vehicular traffic and passengers are being hampered on both sides of the ferry ghats

due to small space on the approach roads. The situation further worsens when a large number of vehicles remain stranded on the ferry ghat leaving narrow strips for other vehicles to move to main roads after getting down of the ferry boats. The goods trucks and passenger buses often meet with accidents while getting on and down the ferry boats.

The concerned authority urged to take steps for expansion of the approach roads of the Bhaairab and Ashuganj ferry ghats for ensuring easy and safe traffic movement.

## Afforestation scheme taken for Tarash

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 29: A massive scheme for afforestation has been planned for implementation in Tarash thana with the financial assistance from a Japanese NGO.

The NGO has taken a five year plan of afforestation in the fallow land areas of primary schools in Tarash thana. For the last three months, 2,000 saplings have already been planted in 20 schools. The school students will look after the plants of respective schools.

Another 3,000 saplings will be planted upto December this year and 5,000 more saplings will be planted in 1995. The Thana Nirbahi

Officer of Tarash is conducting the plantation scheme in co-operation with the Thana Agricultural Officer, Thana Education Officer, and the country representative of the NGO, the donor agency.

When contacted, Ukamura, the country representative and Director of the NGO told this correspondent that they have selected Tarash thana as a model area in Bangladesh. He added that the primary school students will be awarded stipend, books, other educational equipment to look after the plants and will be encouraged in afforestation programmes of the government.



The US Ambassador to Bangladesh, David M Merrill recently met the Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University, Professor RI Chowdhury and the President of the Bangladesh Association for American Studies, Chittagong, Professor Abdul Mannan in a local Chittagong hotel. Standing left to right are Cornelia M Weirbach, the First Secretary, Economic and Commercial Division of the US Embassy, Professor RI Chowdhury, Professor Abdul Mannan and David M Merrill.

## Students demand cut in newsprint prices in Netrakona

From A Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Oct 29: School children of the town Thursday held a demonstration protesting the price hike of newsprint and whiteprint papers.

Thousands of students from different schools marched around the town in a procession and handed over a memorandum to the district administrator demanding immediate reduction of paper price.

The students also held a press conference at the Press Club here in the evening and said that the government's commitment for education for all would never be implemented if the price of paper was not reduced.

The students also threatened to go for further movements if the government did not implement their demands immediately.

## 300 villages of Habiganj have no electricity

From Our Correspondent

HABIGANJ, Oct 29: About 300 villages of 15 unions under Baniyachong thana of the district still have no electricity which is essential for overall development of the villages.

The IRR-boro cultivation, the main crop of the thana, need continuous irrigation.

Local people said, due to absence of power supply they are to use fuel for running their shallow and deep tube wells.

The farmers informed that shortage of oil and its exorbitant prices have affecting irrigation greatly.

Local people have urged the Rural Electrification Board (REB) to take necessary steps in extending power supply for increasing agricultural output.

## Dull jute markets

RAJBARI, Oct 29: Jute traders of the district have stopped selling jute as the main jute procurement centre of the district could not pay their bills worth about Tk three crore, says UNB.

Local people said, the traders are selling jute to the private companies due to higher price.

They alleged that government has fixed the price of per bale of jute at Tk 220-290 while they could sell it to the private companies at Tk 290-400. Trading of jute has severely been hampered due to non-conformity of the price, they added.