

PDB lodges 1,700 cases against illegal consumers

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 19: The Power Development Board (PDB) of Barisal zone has lodged 1,700 cases against the power consumers, both domestic and industrial, during last financial year. These cases were lodged against the consumers who were using power connections illegally. Of the total, about 1,200 cases were settled so far.

98 pc aman output target achieved in Jessore region

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Nov 19: Over ninety-eight per cent of the target fixed for cultivation of T-aman (Transplanted aman) crop has been achieved in 10 districts of south western zone of the country during current year.

Relief for VGF in Rangpur

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Nov 19: The relief and rehabilitation department has geared-up Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme all over the district to supply grains to the destitutes who are said to be worst hit due to drought.

Under the programme, at least one lakh sixteen thousand and two hundred enlisted destitutes are being supplied with 10 kilogram of wheat per head for a month.

The programme has been initiated during the current month and it would be continued upto December this year.

There are also allegations that in some areas in the district, the destitutes are not getting actual quantity of VGF wheat due to malpractices of the concerned unions chairman and members.

Kulaura Degree College bans student politics

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Nov 19: Kulaura Degree College authority has imposed an order of prohibition on student politics in college for the next two months beginning from October 25, it is learnt.

The order was given after a meeting of college managing body with guardians and leaders of different political and student organisations which was held at college auditorium recently with Principal of the college Mohammed Yousuf Ali in the chair.

CLARIFICATION

Issued in a clarification by the Railway administration on 15.11.94 in response to an item published on this page on 6.11.94.

Following is the full text of the clarification column. "Attention of the Railway administration has been drawn to a news item published in the Daily Star headlined 'Piracy of railway property rampant in Western Zone'.

As the information stated in the news item are not based on fact, the railway administration deems it necessary to remove misunderstandings among the members of the public.

It is true that age-old condemned rail engines, wagons, passenger carriages, etc. are usually kept stabled in different railway yards. These condemned rolling-stock are then put to auction. The bidders generally take delivery of the items in phases. At the time of delivery, representatives of railway stores, accounts and security departments and the stock verifiers remain present to guard any over delivery.

Despite all these precautions theft and pilferage of certain small items may occur which cannot be termed 'rampant'. The railway authority, with the help of law enforcing agencies, has taken measure to arrest such pilferage. Railway authority has also taken steps for quick and speedy disposal of scrap materials stabled in different yard. During 1993-94, Scrap materials worth Tk 12 crore 12 lakh have been sold in the Western Zone alone.

It is no denial of fact that in some particular sections of the Western Zone people travel by trains without purchasing tickets. The Railway authority is aware of the situation and has taken various measures to arrest such trend. Special magistrates and special squads are deputed to check ticketless travelling. The Daily Star, however stands by its story.

Massive winter crop cultivation scheme taken in Khulna Div

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Nov 19: An extensive programme has been taken for cultivation of winter crops including wheat, potato, mustard, grams and other pulses in 10 districts of Khulna Division in the current season.

According to Additional Director of Agriculture Extension Department of Jessore region, wheat will be cultivated on a total of 91 thousand 390 hectares of land to produce, as expected, one lakh 82 thousand 780 metric tons.

Detail information say that 10 thousand hectares of land will be brought under cultivation of wheat in Jessore, 12 thousand in Jhenidah, 12 thousand in Magura, two thousand 290 in Narail, 300 hectares in Khulna 200 in Bagerhat, 900 in Satkhira, 24 thousand 500 in Kushtia, 18 thousand in Chuadanga and 16 thousand hectares in Meherpur districts.

Another source said that arrangements are underway to ensure supply of wheat seeds to different seeds sales centres. The arrangements have been designed to enable the farmers to achieve the production target and thereby cover the deficit caused by damage to aman crop following continued drought this year.

Similarly, potato will be cultivated on a total of 10 thousand 900 hectares of land to achieve production of one lakh, 19 thousand 900 hundred metric tons, as planned.

To facilitate achievement of the target, it will be cultivated on three thousand hectares in

Jessore, 800 hectares in Jhenidah, 200 hectares in Magura, 100 hectares in Narail, 500 hectares in Khulna, 300 hectares in BAGERHAT, three thousand hectares in Satkhira, one thousand three hundred hectares in Kushtia, 700 hectares in Chuadanga and one thousand hectares of land in Meherpur districts.

Mustard-seeds will be cultivated on a total of 62 thousand 315 hectares of land in 10 districts. District-wise cultivation list is as follows: 12 thousand 710 hectares in Jessore, seven thousand 900 in Jhenidah, seven thousand 680 hectares in Magura, five thousand 400 in Narail, three thousand 250 in Khulna, two thousand 675 in Bagerhat, six thousand 400 in Satkhira, five thousand 840 in Kushtia, five thousand 850 in Chuadanga and four thousand 400 hectares of land in Meherpur districts.

This programme has been taken up to achieve the production of 44 thousand 500 metric tons of Mustard seeds, said the Additional Director, Agriculture Extension Department of Jessore region.

According to another source, grains will be cultivated on 61 thousand 300 hectares of land, in a bid to achieve production of 43 thousand 520 metric tons of grams.

Detailed information say that it will be cultivated on 900 hectares in Jessore, 15000 hectares in Jhenidah, nine thousand in Magura, one thousand five hundred in Narail, 400 in Khulna, 400 in

Bagerhat, one thousand 500 in Satkhira, seven thousand in Kushtia, 14 thousand in Chuadanga and three thousand 500 hectares of land in Meherpur districts.

Pulses will be cultivated on a total of 94 thousand 400 hectares land in 10 districts of the division.

It will be cultivated on 22 thousand 500 hectares in Jessore, 11 thousand in Jhenidah, 11 hectares in Magura, 400 in Narail, 800 in Khulna, 600 in Bagerhat, two thousand 500 in Satkhira, one thousand seven hundred in Kushtia, 16 thousand in Chuadanga and nine thousand hectares of land in Meherpur district.

Target for achievement of production has been fixed at 69 thousand 856 metric tons, the source added.

An UNB report from Bhola says About 3.75 lakh hectares of land have been brought under different rabi crop cultivation programme in 11 southern districts of Barisal region.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, the districts are Barisal, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Rajbari, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

About 1.95 lakh hectares of land have been earmarked for boro and 53,180 hectares for wheat cultivation programme, the sources said.

Of the rest, 4,000 hectares have been brought under potato, 350 hectares under

maize, 8,900 hectares under gram, 8,700 hectares under pulses, 2,200 hectares under maskalai and 68,000 hectares under ground nut cultivation.

Boro production target has been fixed at 5.66 lakh tons and wheat 1.06 lakh tons.

Another report from Kishoreganj adds: A massive scheme has been taken up for wheat and potato cultivation in seven districts under Comilla Agriculture Zone during the current rabi season.

According to Agriculture Extension Department sources, 52, 500 hectares of land have been brought under wheat cultivation while 25,100 hectares under potato cultivation.

The districts are Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sunamganj.

The production target of wheat has been fixed at 1.05 lakh tons and potato at 2.76 lakh tons.

For the successful implementation of the scheme, Bangladesh Krishi Bank and other commercial banks will provide necessary loans to the growers.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation will supply high yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other necessary inputs to the growers.

Meanwhile, Agri Extension Department has set up several demonstration plots to acquaint the farmers with the modern methods of cultivation.

Fire destroys property worth Tk 10 lakh in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Nov 19: Property worth about Taka ten lakh including twelve shops and two offices of student organization were gutted by fire that broke out at Amtali point of Sundarganj thana in the district recently.

Observers say 20 persons received injury during the incident.

One awarded 10 yrs RI for keeping illegal arms

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 19: The Additional District and Sessions Judge and Special Tribunal, Sunamganj, A K M Ishtiaque Hossain while passing his judgement in a case found one person guilty and sentenced him to suffer rigorous imprisonment for ten years on charge of keeping illegal arms recently.

The Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocations

BRDB's credit schemes help improve rural lives

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 19: With a view to develop the socio-economic conditions of the poor people of the vast rural areas of the country, Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) has undertaken a massive programme for disbursement of loan to the poor through its different development projects.

The BRDB has proposed to distribute Tk 139.50 crore for its development projects during the current 1994-95 financial year the sources said.

It is informed, that the proposed disbursement target if loan of BRDB during this financial year is about 60 per cent more than the that of 1993-94 financial year.

Thirteen development projects were under implementation by the board during '93-'94. Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) could utilise about 90 per cent of the ADP allocations for the year which is Tk 52.50 crore against allocation of Tk 58.60 crore.

The Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocations

for BRDB's development projects in 1994-95 financial year has been set at Taka 76.05 crore which is 45 per cent more than the earlier ADP allocation for 1993-94 financial year.

Of the 13 on going development projects — six have a credit component.

More than Tk 87 crore were distributed on credit programmes through these six projects during '93-'94 financial year. Realisation of credit was more than Tk 70 crore.

Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) normally operates its development projects through the KSS, TCCA organisations.

BRDB has also jointly financed programmes in different districts with foreign donors like the SIDA and NO-RAD.

BRDB disbursed loans to boost income generating projects, small trade, livestock rearing, pisciculture, rickshaw van pulling, paddy husking including many other activities for the assetless mass of the villages.

Large-scale corruption in a leading school in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 19: Large-scale irregularities and corruption have been going on at the Blue Bird High School of Sylhet town according to allegations from guardians and students of the school.

A cold relationship is continuing centring the issue between the school managing committee and the Headmistress, it is alleged.

A written complaint had already been lodged with the higher authorities, the Education Secretary and other education department officials, last week.

According to the allegations, the headmistress temporarily appointed three teachers reportedly her relations including her daughter few months back, and arranged for appointment through interviews last month. But, on receiving complaints the Deputy Commissioner sent a team of six magistrates for holding the written interviews in which all three failed to fulfill requirements as teachers. As per board regulations, the Headmistress is to take at least eight classes a week. But, the Headmistress never takes any class it is also alleged. There are dispute among the teachers regarding distribution of classes. Some of the teachers take only five to six classes while some are compelled to take 22 to 24 classes a week, it is alleged.

On getting complaints, the Deputy Commissioner had formed a two-member committee to look into the matters. The school authorities had been realising huge amount of money in the name of different fees from the students. Though the government provides 80 per cent of the salary of the teachers, the fees are exorbitant here, a number of guardians alleged. Monthly tuition fees for a student from Nursery to Class X is fixed at Taka one hundred only. Each of the students has to pay Taka 300 as annual fee, Taka 500 for admission, Taka one hundred for electricity/telephone, Taka 400 as sports fee, Taka 100 for result sheets, library fee, Taka 10, tuition fee card fee, Taka 20, science laboratory fee Taka 10, gratuity fee for teachers Taka 30. Besides, each student has to pay Taka 400 as development fee and Taka 150 as miscellaneous fee per year. Though the students up to class VIII do not have to use the science laboratory.

The school has two sections. The junior section is situated in a separate building which is 200 yards from the main school building. Though there is no telephone connection there, the nursery students also have to pay the fees for telephone, it is alleged. Huge amount of money had been misappropriated during construction of the new building last year using Taka 20 lakh. There are allegations that, it cost only Taka ten lakh to build the buildings. Enquiry into the construction project has been demanded. There is no clear accounts of the sale proceeds of several thousand admission forms sold every year. The Headmistress herself maintains the account, it is alleged. A clerk working in the school, reportedly a relation of the Headmistress had been entrusted with the task of taking the classes of class IX and class X.

No action was taken against the office clerk Abul Quasem, who fled away after grabbing several lakhs of taka from the school account mysteriously, years ago. The school canteen had been leased out to a relative of the Headmistress without any tender or quotation, it is alleged.

An office clerk had to resign when he was blamed for publishing some 'benami' leaflets against the acts of Headmistress.

When contacted, the Headmistress denied such allegations brought against her, but said, some influential quarters had been engaged with baseless propaganda against the school.

However, a number of guardians have demanded a high-level enquiry into the allegations.

Acute food crisis in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Nov 19: Seven thanas of Satkhira district are in the grip of acute food crisis and there is little job opportunity for day labourers. A large number of jobless villagers have been flocking to the district town as beggars, it is observed.

A prolonged draught and other natural calamities have created acute food crisis in seven thanas of the district. High prices of essentials have been prevailing for a long time.

Prices of grains and other essential commodities have gone beyond the purchasing capacity of about 60 per cent of the people. The situation has further worsened due to disappearance of some essentials from the local markets.

At present rice is selling between Taka 520 and Taka 580 per maund. Coconut and mustard oil are selling at Taka 70 and Taka 60 per kg respectively. Despite moderate supply of fish the price still shows higher trend. The minimum prices of ordinary lungi and saree are Taka 80 and Taka 150 respectively.

Every day hundreds of people have been arriving in the town in search of job. But there are little job opportunities here.

A large number of able-bodied beggars, mostly women, are now seen in the town. Besides, young women have resorted to immoral activities as the suitable substitute for

begging. About five lakh agricultural labourers of the seven thanas of the district have been passing hard days for want of work.

A large number of minor boys are working in restaurants in Satkhira. These boys work from dawn to dusk for a small remuneration. Almost all of them belong to poverty stricken families. Finding no other alternatives they are compelled to do such petty jobs.

It is widely felt that the

New method

applied in potato

farming

BARISAL, Nov 19: Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department of Barisal region has introduced a new method of potato cultivation under zero-tillage in seven districts under agricultural projects in southern districts during the current season, reports BSS.

The districts to be brought under this projects are Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna and Gopalganj.

According to an official source, government has sanctioned Tk 4.12.800 for the implementation of this projects this season.

Government has already become alert about the situation and allotted grains to cope with the situation at Jamalpur and has taken measures to provide jobs to the hundreds of unemployed people.

Food for work programme has already been started and VGD programme is also going on. The cultivators of the district requested the government to provide long-term agri loans to enable them to cultivate their land in the next season. Supply of seedlings and grains and other agricultural inputs should also be ensured, it is demanded.

Believe it or not!

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Nov 19: Uttam Kumar Biswas, a college student drew world map on a single piece of mustard seed, wrote the name of American President Bill Clinton 56 times on a single piece of grain and 20 songs of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Gitanjali" on a 17 mm x 19 mm British Postage stamp.



Uttam Kumar Biswas Biswas, from village Shimulia in Salikha thana of Magura district, appeared in HSC examination this year. Talking to the Daily Star Biswas informed that he sent 4 samples said mustard seeds to Ripley's. "Believe it or not" an American television entertainment programme. The programme authority assured Biswas that they were interested in his fabulous work of art.

Biswas uses pencils of sizes .03 and .05 and ball pens along with magnifying glass. Biswas also wishes to send samples of his works to Guinness Book of Records. He claims that no such record was written in Guinness Book of Records from Bangladesh earlier.

Railway ferry services at Bahadurabad face closure

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Nov 19: Railway ferry service between Teestamuk ghat and Bahadurabad ghat is facing closure due to sharp decrease in water level in Brahmaputra basin.

With the closure of all available routes, ferry boats had to be moved 40 kilometres away to Balashi through a narrow channel at Kalasona char which might be declared abandoned at any time. Besides, hundreds of small and big shoals have appeared paralysing the normal movement of ferry boats. The ferries need additional three to four hours to cross the river from Teestamuk ghat to Bahadurabad ghat. Ferry boats could not maintain its time schedule, for which connecting trains in both the sides of river are running in late hours.

Very often ferry boats remain stranded for hours mid-stream causing additional miseries to the passengers.

Ten years ago it needed only half an hour to cross river from Teestamuk ghat to Bahadurabad ghat due to its navigable channel but now it requires three to four hours time to cross the river.

12 students hurt over teasing of a girl student in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Nov 19: A total of 12 students of Navaran College under Sharsha thana in the district were injured, three of them seriously, in a clash between two groups of students centring teasing of a girl student recently.

Reports received here say that JCD and BCL students attacked each other involved in counter chases on the college campus blaming each other for teasing of a girl student of the same college.

Principal of the college, Shafiuddin Ahmed decided to close down the college for indefinite period.

Robbers active in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Nov 19: A dacoity was committed on a Dhaka-bound night coach recently.

Report says, some armed dacoits in the guise of passengers numbering 7 to 8 started looting on the coach of Doordoranto Parbaban.

The dacoits stabbed the driver of the coach and took control over the vehicle. They looted away valuables from the passengers worth Taka about 50 thousand and got off near Hatgopalpur.

A case was filed with Jhenidah thana in this connection.

3 dacoits held Another report says, three dacoits were nabbed by a bridal

party near a village, Pakhimara in Harinakunda thana of the district recently.

Naziruddin, bridegroom of village Pakhimara, was going to marry in village Bhaina of the same thana at about 10 pm. While the bridal party reached near the village, a gang of dacoits numbering 10 to 12 attacked them. The bridal party members managed to get hold of three dacoits namely Babu Khan, Mukul and Aminul and handed them over to police.

A sword and dagger were recovered from the alleged dacoits, police said.

Another report says: Six dacoits were committed at Kalliganj thana and Bangladesh Power Development Board colony, recently.

They certainly deserve it

Nov 19: Nijera Shikhi, a social organisation, started a mass movement involving 170,000 people in 50 out of Bangladesh's 64 districts. There are up to 20 Nijera Shikhi Organisers in each of 129 thanas, and all thana education officers and district primary education officers know of the potential of this grassroots level self-help movement. It is working to implement the government programme for 'Education For All'.

The movement has already gained substantial success in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Sherpur, Jamalpur

Jhenidah, Patuakhali, Chandpur and Chittagong districts closely followed by Rangamati, Lakshmipur, Moulvibazar, Mymensingh, Tangail, Bhola, Jhalokhati, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jessore, Gopalganj, Rajbari, Natore, Naogaon, Bogra, Joypurhat and Dinajpur.

Organisers and their helpers work voluntarily through existing samities and clubs, or form new local committees, planning their local programmes for bringing the right to be educated to the illiterate adults and adolescents in their neighbourhood. In seven areas commitments have been declared to make the lo-

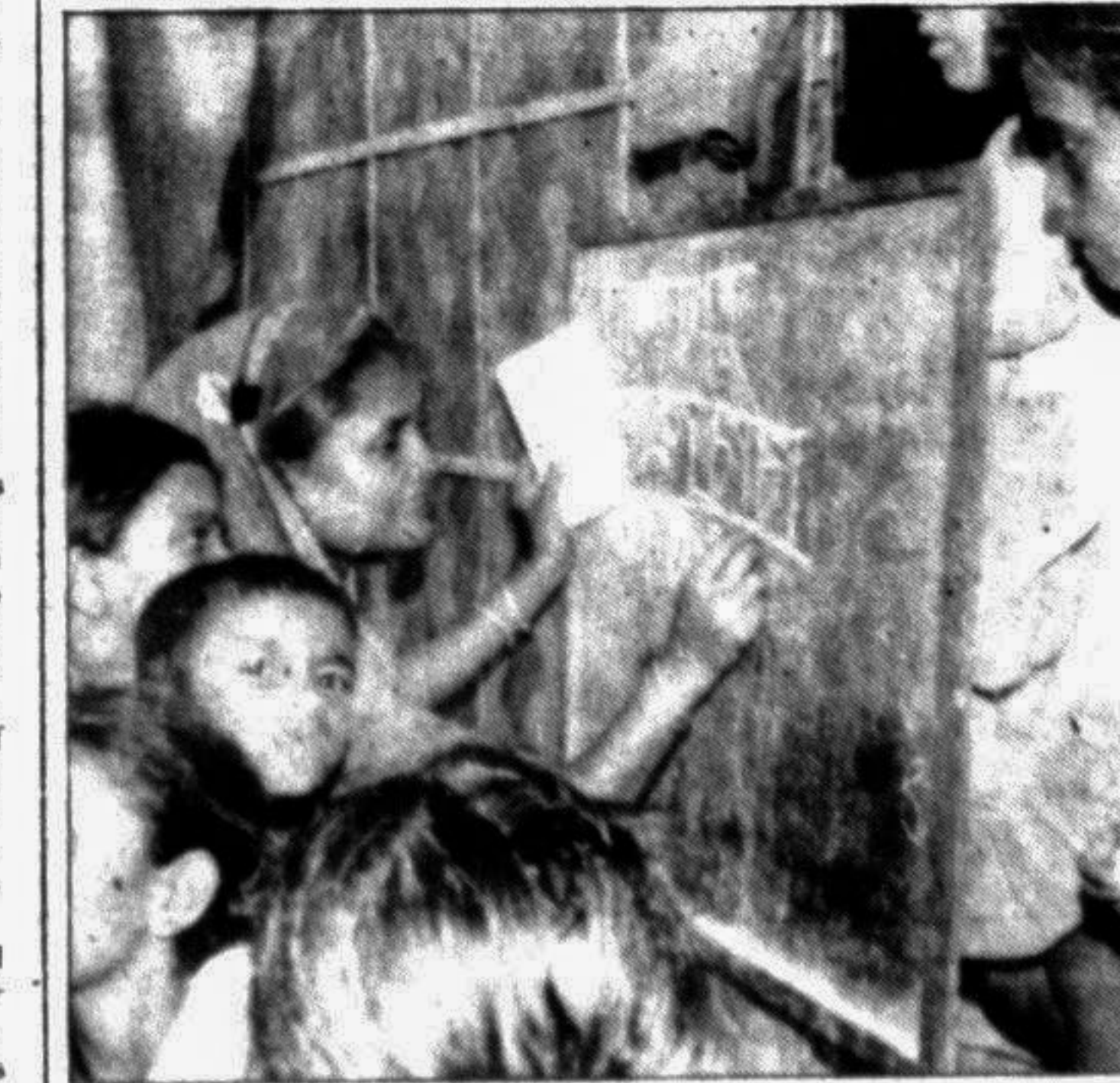
cality free of illiteracy through Nijera Shikhi methods.

By local fund-raising, the local committees raise around Tk 100 per learner to cover the cost of the literacy classes, with cooperation from union boards and local education officers. Nijera Shikhi provides training in creative self-learning methods, and supplies high-quality, low-cost materials to carry out mass education in fast and effective ways. All classes have to be followed by the establishment of mini-libraries for the use of newly qualified literates.

Over 4,800 people have volunteered to promote this new people's movement which can revolutionise development in Bangladesh. For Tk 25 Nijera Shikhi registers volunteer organisers, supplies the organiser's manual and assists the local committees to carry out an effective mass education programme.

Nijera Shikhi also appeals for volunteers to come forward as Children's Education Promoters. A guidebook is available for Tk 15 which enables the CEPs to be of maximum assistance to school staff managing committees, the education authorities and union boards for the implementation of universal primary education and primary school reform.

Nijera Shikhi has launched a new appeal for volunteers to come forward to extend this people's movement to every thana and union, with the intention of establishing 'Education For All' by the year 2000. It can provide assistance immediately to another 14,000 organisers, 100,000 helpers and 1,000 children's education promoters, CEPs.



The never ending challenge: Women learn how to write in rural areas of northern districts.