

Kucha markets in Noakhali in poor shape

MANJEE COURT (Noakhali). Jan 22: At least 500 hats and bazars of six thanas of the district are in deplorable condition for lack of maintenance and care, reports UNB.

The shopkeepers and small traders of these bazars have to pay enhanced taxes to the government and the local ijaradars.

These markets, set up at local initiatives long before, have been expanded in haphazard manner and the shopkeepers and vendors are forced to occupy most of the spaces meant for the buyers.

In the absence of adequate drainage system, most of these hats go under knee-deep water during the rain season, hampering the business activities.

Though a large amount of revenue is collected from the hats, no effective measures have yet been taken for its improvement, it is alleged.

Most of the bazars do not have any sheds leaving the buyers and sellers exposed to the mercy of scorching sun and showers.

On the other hand, tolls are collected at a higher rate by the ijaradars than the rate fixed by the government. They collect tolls from both buyers and sellers at their will maintain no ethics.

Most of the bazars have no urinals and latrines causing untold suffering to the buyers and sellers. Moreover, there is no arrangement for supply of drinking water in these hats.

Local elite have urged the government to look into the matter and take immediate measures to improve the condition of the markets without further delay.

Population of beggars continue to rise in Barguna town

BARGUNA, Jan 22: The influx of beggars is rising in district town day by day causing inconveniences to the dwellers, says UNB.

According to local people, recurrent floodings, cyclones, river erosion, drought and other natural calamities over the last few years have rendered a large number of people destitute in the district.

Besides, many landless farmers who used to eke out their living working on the land of other farmers, have also been rendered jobless due to crop loss in many areas as a result of drought that hit the district a few months back.

In the absence of adequate job opportunities under food for works programme, test relief programme etc, many destitute people of the district have already migrated to other districts in search of food and shelter.

Town dwellers alleged that many beggars, particularly young women are taking recourse to immoral activities causing moral degradation of the youths.

Local elite have urged the concerned authorities to take immediate schemes to rehabilitate the beggars at the outskirts of the town so that they can lead a decent life.

Distressed men, women receive aid from Islamic Foundation

From Our Correspondent
BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 22: Islamic Foundation, Brahmanbaria district unit rehabilitated 44 unemployed and distress people of the district under the programme of Jakat Board of the foundation last year.

According to the Deputy Director Md Abdul Haque of Brahmanbaria the Islamic Foundation, by establishing six projects under the said programme 44 persons were given cash and kinds for their income generation during the last fiscal year in the district.

The projects included distress women rehabilitation, poor people rehabilitation, sewing machine to poor women, rickshaw project, madrasa educational stipend, non-formal educational centre and establishment of libraries.

According to official sources, ten distress women were given Taka 1000.00 each under distress women rehabilitation project, one person was given Taka 3000.00 under poor people rehabilitation project, sewing machine was given to one Rafia Khatun, three rickshaws and two rickshaw-vans were given to five men under rickshaw project, nine madrasa students were given stipends of Taka 600.00 each, for year long education as well as 18 non-formal education centres were established in Brahmanbaria district under the paying of monthly salary basis of non-formal education programme of Islamic Foundation.

They also established three nuskhas, libraries in different places of the district.



MOULVIBAZAR Finance Minister, M Saifur Rahman handing over a cheque of Taka 50,000 to Shafiqul Wahed, President of Moulvibazar Press Club recently for development of the club building. — Star photo

From Natore region Over five lakh maunds of cotton expected this year

NATORE, Jan 22: A bumper cotton output is expected in Natore region during this cotton harvesting season as the Cotton Development Board (CDB) here has taken necessary steps to make better cotton production.

But, it is widely apprehended that the CDB may not be able to supply enough seed of cotton to the farmers comparing to the need during the coming cotton cultivation season because most of the farmers of this region are selling their produced seed-cotton to the 'Farias' and 'Jinners' (unofficial cotton dealers) rather than selling to the Board authorities.

It can be mentioned here that the CDB purchases seed-cotton from the growers with a view to collect seed which will be supplied to the farmers later.

According to official sources, about 22 thousand hectares of land had been brought under cotton cultivation in this region during the cotton cultivation season (July-August).

The CDB has fixed the cotton production target at 5 lakh 50 thousand maund of cotton which may be achieved by 100 per cent during the current cotton harvesting season.

The board has facilitated about 3,500 farmers with primary training and about 20 farmers with elaborate training on cotton farming.

An official said, a bright prospect has been prevailing for cotton cultivation extension in this region because the price of cotton has been increased in both the local markets and the international markets this year.

The CDB has settled the cotton purchasing rate at Taka 875.20 per maund of cotton this year while the rate was Taka 771.60 per maund of cotton in the last year.

But, a reliable source said that the cotton production has been falling in the main cotton-producing countries during this year, the price of cotton has also increased in the international markets and following the price-hike of cotton in international markets, 'Farias' and 'Jinners' (unofficial cotton dealers) of this region have also increased their cotton purchasing price.

The source said, the 'farias' and 'jinners' are purchasing cotton directly from the farmers between Taka 900 and Taka 950 per maund of cotton that are more than the board fixed purchasing rate.

It is reported that most of the cotton growers are more eager to sell their seed-cotton to farias and jinners than to the board due to fair price.

As a result, the seed-cotton purchasing target of the CDB may not be achieved this year.

The board has fixed its seed-cotton purchasing target at 2,50 thousand maund of cotton during this year.

It is also reported that if the board can not achieve its seed-cotton purchasing target this year, they may not be able to supply necessary seeds of cotton to the cotton growers during the coming season.

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Robbers killed in mass beating

PABNA, Jan 22: Two dacoits were killed in mass beating at a village in Chatmohar thana Saturday morning, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Rabul Islam, 25, and Amin Uddin, 30.

According to local people, a gang of five dacoits demanded Tk 2 lakh from one Radha Madhab Kundu failing of which they threatened to kidnap his son.

On information, local people gheraoed the dacoits and caught them red-handed. In a mass beating two of them died on the spot, one managed to flee and the rest two — Dianot Akhand, 25, and Habibur Rahman, 28, were handed over to the police.

A case was filed with the police.

Young man murdered in front of family members

JHENIDAH, Jan 22: A young man was brutally killed on Friday night at village Jheghati in Kaliganj thana following past enmity, family and police sources said, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Dudu, 30.

Police said a gang of miscreants numbering seven to eight forcibly took out Dudu from his house and beat him mercilessly in front of the family members. As a result, most of the bones of Dudu were smashed, family sources said.

The body was sent to morgue for autopsy. A case was filed. Police arrested two people in this connection.

Man-eater tiger creates panic

KHULNA, Jan 22: Three people were killed and another one was injured by man-eater tigers at Sundarbans in the last week, local people said, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Kalam (35), Abdul Haque and Rafiquddin 40.

According to local people, a tiger caught hold of Kalam and went away into the jungle while he was fishing at a canal in Sharankhola thana on January 18. Later his mutilated body was recovered by the local people.

In another incident on the previous day a tiger attacked Abdul Haque and Altaf at Kakramaree area while they were collecting firewood. After two days of hectic search local people recovered the several parts of Haque's body and rescued Altaf with grievous injuries. His condition was stated to be critical.

Earlier on January 12, Rafiquddin was killed by a tiger at the same place.

Contraband worth Tk 2 lakh recovered

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 22: Bangladesh Rifles seized Indian smuggled goods worth Tk 2 lakh from Dhaka-bound Joyantika inter-city express train at Ashuganj railway station recently, reports UNB.

During their routine checking of train, the jawans recovered Indian goods including printed sarees, phenasidyl syrup and spare parts of vehicles.

All the goods were deposited with the Akhaura Customs office.

Besides in another drive, BDR jawans recovered Indian smuggled goods worth Tk 1.50 lakh from a roadside shop near Shanker bazar on January 5.

Following a tip off they raided the place and seized the goods including insulin injection, electric switch and socket.

Cases were filed with the police.

100-bed Natore hospital awaits inauguration

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Jan 22: After a long time, one of the cherished dreams of the people of Natore — the 100 bed modern Natore sadar hospital is coming to reality soon.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia may inaugurate the new hospital located near the sadar police station. But the scheduled date of the inauguration has not been fixed yet.

According to the Public Works Department, the construction work of the hospital bhaban has been completed at a cost of Taka three crore and they have handed over the bhaban to the Health Department of January 10 '95.

At the primary stage, treatment of 50 bed will be started at the hospital, the sources added.

It can be mentioned here that PM Khaleda Zia had laid the foundation stone of this hospital on December 16 '91.

Natore — a neglected district

From M A Ali Himu
for agricultural development in Chalan beel area. But the project plan failed to get economic approval from any donor agency yet. For this reason, people of this region have been deprived of extra amount of crops worth about Taka 10 crore.

The five year long 3rd Fisheries Project for releasing fish into the open Haldi beel of this region has been closed after two years of its approval.

The work of the Gas-lifting project in Shingra thana was closed suddenly in 1980-81 year after spending lakhs of taka.

In 1974, when the TV sub-station was set up at Natore, a decision was taken to change the first TV sub-station outside Dhaka into a full-fledged TV studio. But the decision of the then government has not been implemented yet.

It is learnt that different programmes including news were broadcasted from the then TV sub-centre in Natore during 1974-75 year. However, the system is closed now. People of the district could not draw the kind attention of the present government about the full-fledged TV studio at Natore.

A project was taken in 1977

In Narail district T&T staff accused of offering illegal phone lines

NARAIL, Jan 22: The telephone subscribers of the district have been facing untold difficulties due to the malpractice by some dishonest staff of the T & T department, reports UNB.

Subscribers alleged that some dishonest staff have been giving illegal facilities like overseas call, bill reduction, illegal connections to some people by taking bribe.

They further alleged that in case of emergency the operators do not give connection on some plea and take time intentionally due to mysterious reason but the dishonest subscribers who have underhand dealing get connection easily.

One such subscriber on condition of anonymity told this correspondent that he pays bribe monthly to the operators to get overseas connection as early as possible. He also said he pays nominal bills every month out of this contract.

Other subscribers complained that their sets remain dead for hours together as the operators keep their sets operative for a few hours only.

It is further alleged that the dishonest telephone operators linking with some high officials fix the rate of telephone bill and overseas call in advance. They mutually fix 10 per cent Taka of the total internal call bill and Tk 100 for overseas call.

The subscribers said the government is being deprived of lakhs of Taka every year due to malpractices by some corrupted employees of the department.

The subscribers urged to the higher authorities to probe into the matter and take immediate measures against the dishonest staff members.

Shortage of fertilizers Winter crop cultivation schemes affected

NATORE, Jan 22: The cultivation of rabi crops in Natore and other districts of northern region has been facing set back due to inadequate supply of TSP and MP fertilizers, says an UNB report.

According to official sources, the total demand of TSP (Triple Super Phosphate) and MP (Murate of Potash) in the country is met by locally produced and imported fertilizers. But acute scarcity of fertilizers has been persisting since long.

The annual demand of TSP in the country is five lakh tons of which Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) produces only 1.5 lakh tons. Chittagong TSP Complex produces 400 tons every day and 1.44 lakh tons annually, the sources said.

During the rabi farming season, the demand for TSP is 1.5 lakh tons. But BCIC has produced only 32,000 tons of TSP and 25,000 tons of SSP till October 31, last year.

On the other hand, the annual demand of MP in the country is 1.5 lakh tons of which 65 per cent is to be imported from abroad every year, the sources added.

Meanwhile, the demand for the fertilizers has decreased by 35 to 50 per cent compared with the year 93 and 94 as government withdrew the subsidy on it to discourage use of chemical fertilizers in the field.

But high demand for the fertilizers in the region is still persisting, the sources said. As a result, for the existing gap between demand and supply especially during the rabi farming season, some unscrupulous fertilizer traders are selling the same at exorbitant rate.

However, farmers of remote areas of this region alleged that they were not even getting the fertilizers at high prices.

They said rate of imported TSP is Tk 310 per bag and the factory rate of locally produced TSP is Tk 186.25 per bag which is being sold between Tk 400 and 500 per bag. Recently the government has fixed prices of fertilizers but the impact is little in the markets, they added.

Locally produced MP is being sold between Tk 350 and 400 per bag and the rate of imported MP is Tk 230 per bag.

According to a high official, production of TSP in the BCIC is normal as per its production target which could only meet about 25 to 30 per cent out of the total requirement.

The farmers have urged the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take immediate measures to solve the present fertilizer crisis.

Besides, the rate of divorce has increased alarmingly in the remote areas of the district as many guardians who committed to give dowry during the marriage could not keep their promise due to abject poverty.

Local elite have urged the government and non-government organisations to take up income generating schemes for the newly married couples.

As a result, the historic and traditional district — Natore which has a cultural heritage, has been gradually missing in the bottomless hollow of our memory.

Fish virtually begin to disappear from Natore

NATORE, Jan 21: Scarcity of fish has become acute throughout the district during the current winter season due to massive siltation in different waterbodies and use of chemical fertilizers in the croplands, says UNB.

According to local sources, the district was once famous for its fish output and the supply was abundant. Prices were cheaper too during the winter seasons. But this year, the supply is extremely low and its prices are also high.

The sources said, fish virtually began to disappear due to unplanned canal digging programmes taken after the post liberation.

The fishermen alleged that water of Chalan Beel, Beel Chakhla, other small beels and branch rivers were flushed to the fields and thus these original sources of surface water got silted causing irreparable damage to these waterbodies.

Besides, due to massive cultivation of quick growing crops like IRRI-boro paddy in these beels, rivers and other waterbodies during dry season and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers have

negated the pisciculture in the district.

On the other hand, the main source of water of traditional rainfalls in the rainy season has virtually reduced due to shortfall of rain water throughout the year and artificial barriers caused by construction of flood control embankments.

The fishermen said, fish cultivation has been rendered virtually impossible during the dry season as extra water is not coming down from the hilly areas.

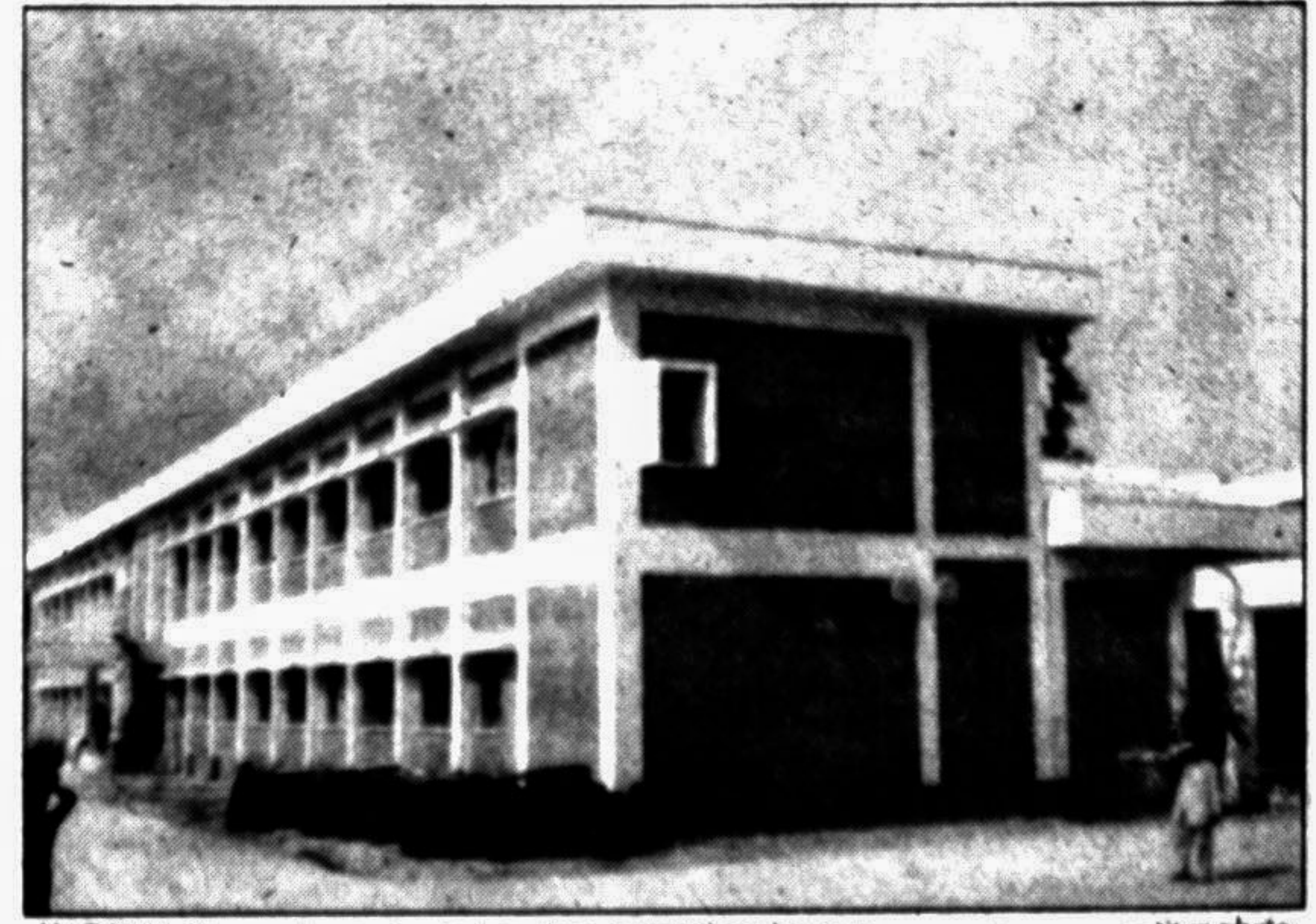
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BRAHMANBARIA: The Islamic Foundation of the district unit recently arranged to distribute hens among the distress women of the district. The Deputy Commissioner, Md Abdul Matin, of the district distributing a cage of hens to a woman. — Star photo



NATORE: The newly constructed modern hospital in the town. — Star photo