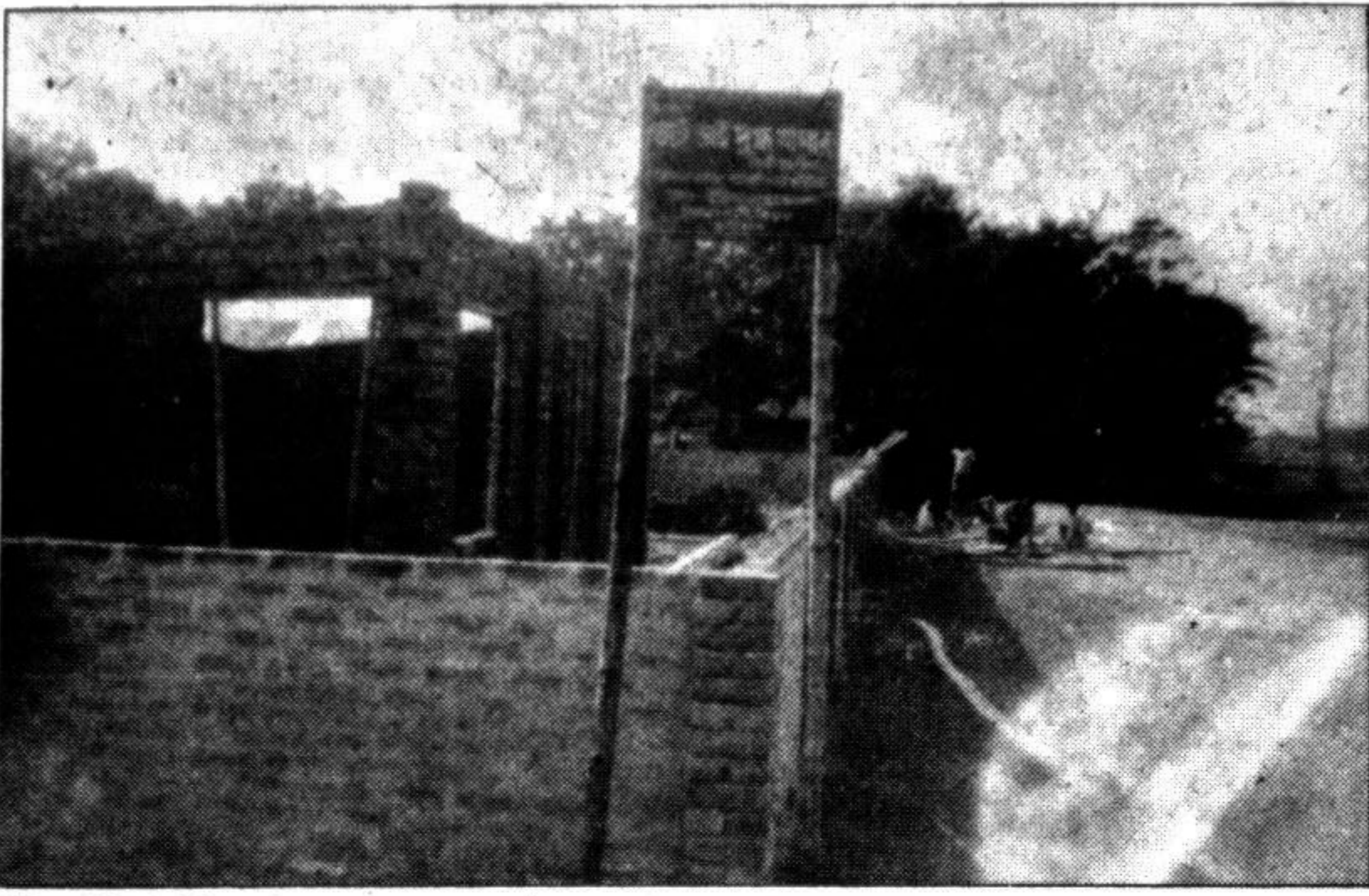


BSCIC in Kurigram

A square peg in a round hole?

From H B Khan



The 'Bhai Bhai' Dugdha Khamar building remains incomplete at the Kurigram BSCIC industrial estate. — Star photo

KURIGRAM, Jan 30: The fate of BSCIC industrial estate in Kurigram has fallen in uncertainty because of want of sponsors and wrong selection of site.

Since 1981, land for the BSCIC-estate was acquired at a cost of Taka one crore ten lakh out of the total estimated cost of Taka one crore sixty three lakh. In spite of the big amount of govt investment for the BSCIC establishment, not a single small scale industry has ever come into operation there. What has so far been set up at BSCIC estate, Kurigram are a cattle firm still incomplete and a house for the production of vermicelli. Apart from these two, the BSCIC estate is nothing more than a grazing pasture for rural cattle

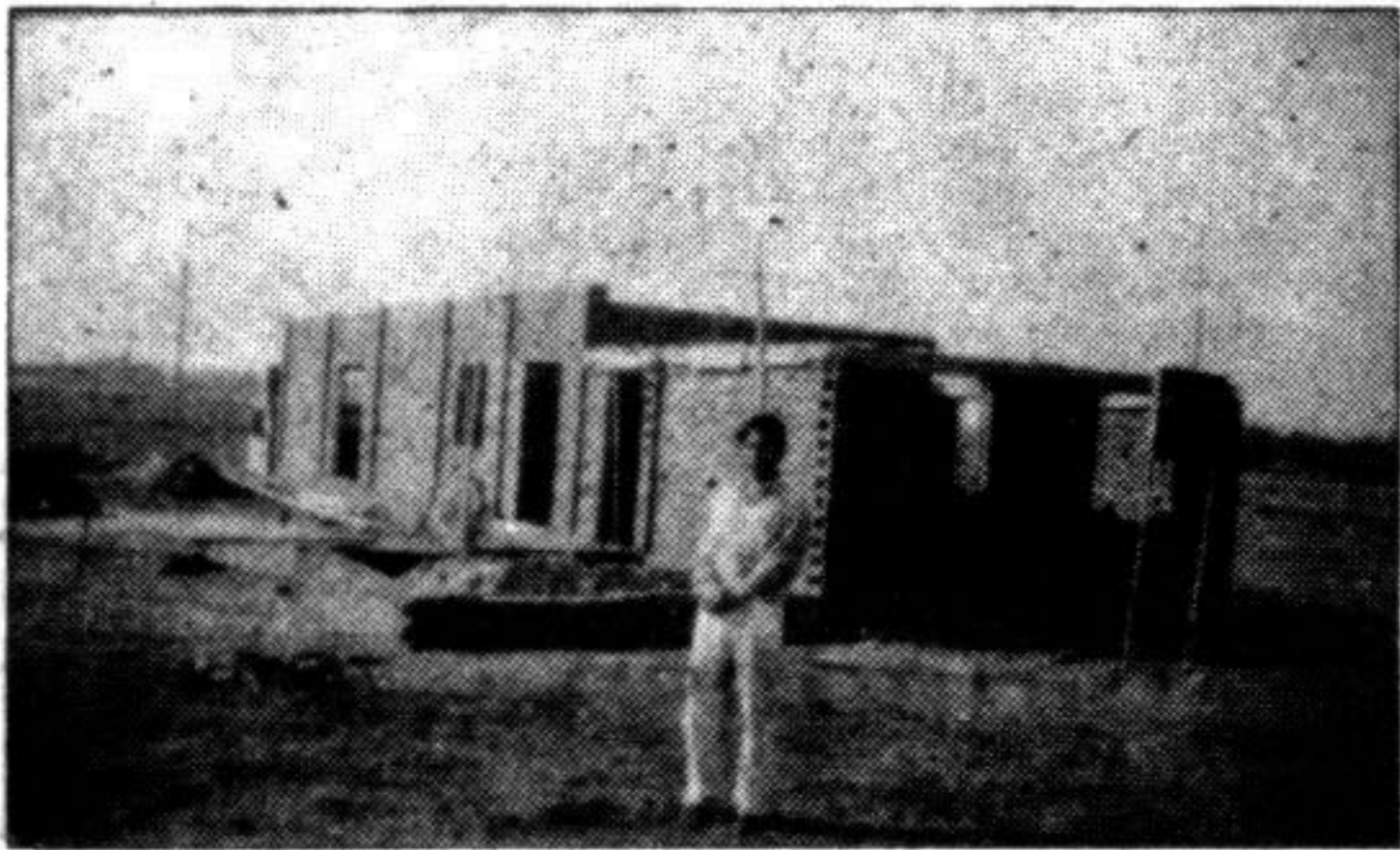
and goats. Sixty per cent of acquired land, out of total area of 20 acres, has since been developed, where total number of plots has come to 133. Eighty three plots are ready for allotment but only 29 plots have been allotted so far to 16 entrepreneurs in favour of 16 industries. The proposed industries are: auto-rice mill, welding factory, engineering workshop, cattle-firm, cold storage, char-coal from husk factory, tannery products, wooden furniture shop, food products, honey processing factory, textile (block-boutique printing), plastic pipe, plastic utensils and sponge sandels. The total investment in these 16 projects stands at Tk three crores and fifty lakh, informed, Ashraf

Ali, Deputy Manager, BSCIC, Kurigram. It is gathered that only five sponsors out of the sixteen projects industries mentioned above, have so far deposited 'down payment' in the bank. Only two out of those five have started primary installations. These two are: M/s Bhai Bhai Dugdha Khamar and M/s Badal Food Products. The cattle-firm, otherwise called, the dairy farm, has failed to complete required installation works as per estimate, and as such Taka two lakh sixty four thousands sanctioned for it has been lying undistributed in the local Agrani Bank branch.

The experienced circle of Kurigram expressed that had the site for BSCIC state been established by the side of the highway instead of five kilometers away at Chilmari road, local sponsors would have come forward in greater numbers to make it a success.

Works done so far at BSCIC estate Kurigram are: the acquiring of land, land development, electrification, the construction of overhead tank for water supply, pipe line, the sinking of deep-tubewell, culverts for the drains, the construction of the administration building, and the construction of approach roads.

Despite all such works, sponsors still feel discouraged about BSCIC industrial estate Kurigram. So, its future remains quite uncertain, which calls for attention of the concerned ministry.



Construction work of the 'Badal Food Products' building at the Kurigram BSCIC industrial estate remains incomplete. — Star photo

Price of essential commodities up in Pabna

PABNA, Jan 30: Prices of essential commodities, specially rice have shot up in different markets of the district causing much inconveniences to the limited income group and the poor, reports UNB.

Harvesting of aman paddy has been completed and new aman rice appeared in the market but the price is up by Tk 50 to 80 per maund, local people said.

Rice is being sold in local markets between Tk 500 and 580 per maund according to qualities as against Tk 450 and 500 a few days back.

Production of aman was poor this season in the district. Taking the advantage, the profit-mongering businessmen are hoarding rice to earn a windfall profit.

Atta is being sold at Tk 12 per kg as against Tk 9-10 previously. Prices of all kinds of pulses and spices have also gone up. Masur is being sold at Tk 34 per kg, about 20 per cent higher than previous rate.

Pirates attack trawler, three fishermen missing

BARISAL, Jan 30: Three fishermen were missing as pirates threw them into the bay, 75 km off Kouakata in Patuakhali, from their trawlers on Friday night, reports UNB.

One of the survivors said, a gang of pirates swooped on their three trawlers and robbed cash and machineries worth about Tk eight lakh throwing three fishermen into the deep sea.

The missing fishermen were identified as Jamal, 27, Sridam, 36 and Abdur Rahim, 30.

Superstition can be removed through education

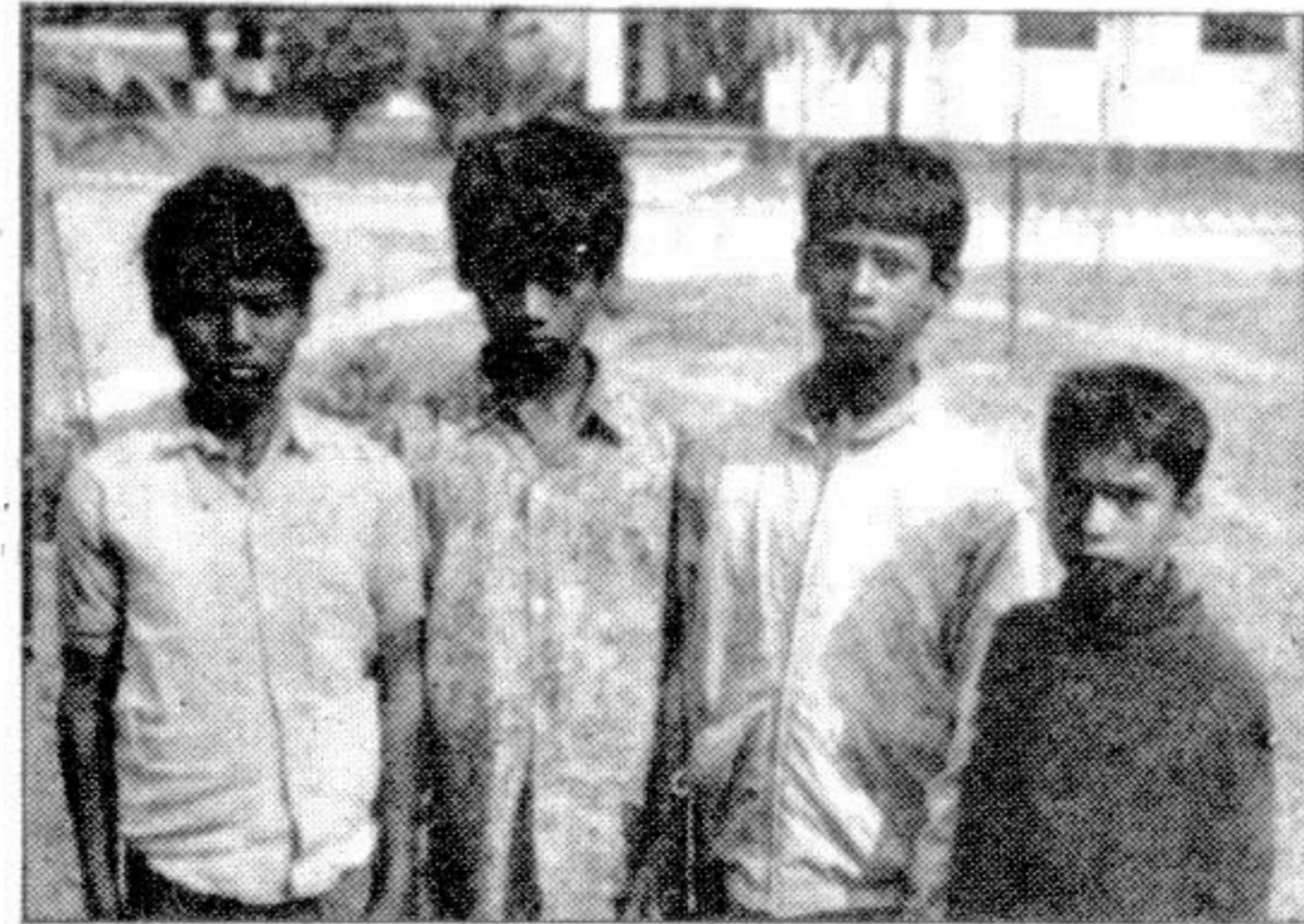
RANGAMATI, Jan 30: Communications Minister Oli Ahmad has said that flourish of education has no alternative to social development and social problems like poverty, illiteracy and superstition can be solved through education, reports UNB.

The Minister was addressing a public meeting after opening the new building of Rangamati Mahila College on Thursday.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner M Hasan, it was also addressed by Chairman of the Local Government Council Parjati Kusum Chakma, Paurashava Chairman Moniswapan Dewan and Principal of the college Harun Chowdhury.

Women, child traffickers active in border areas of Jhenidah, Jessore

From Our Correspondent



JESSORE: These children (L to R): Rafiq, Nazrul, Sultan and Arif, belonging to poor families, were being smuggled across the border to India recently. They were rescued by the BDR, who handed them to the police. — Star photo

JESSORE, Jan 30: Women trafficking is rampant along border areas of Jessore and Jhenidah districts for quite sometime.

According to police and BDR sources, batches of women are being trafficked to India through different routes of these borders in broad daylight without valid travel documents.

It is reported that organised gangs are engaged all over the country with the duty to collect women and hand over them to their counterparts in India. These people who collect women are appointed by the traffickers having chain between both the countries.

Gangs select target group and pick them up by assuring them of prospective jobs with attractive salary, and better life.

It is learnt, young, pretty and healthy women coming from poorer families in remote corner of the country, are the target group. These people are easy prey for the purpose since they are offered handsome amount of money.

Similarly, children trafficking is also going on side by side the women trafficking by the same group of people in the region.

According to unofficial re-

ports, over 2000 women and equal number of children from different parts of the country were trafficked to India through these borders during the last year.

In an exclusive interview with the commanding officer of BDR, Jessore, Lt Col Nazur-Rahim, informed The Daily Star that a total of 228 women and seventy nine children

were caught while being trafficked to India. He added that in Jan '94, a total of 59 persons were held, 46 of them were women and 13 were children. In March, number of total held was 12. Six were women and rest were children.

In April, 5 women and 5 children were held. In May, 13 including 12 women and one

child were held. In June, 28 women and 8 children were held while in July, 28 women and 14 children were caught.

In September, a total of 24 persons were held, 21 of them were women and three were children. In October, out of a total 58, 40 were women and 18 were children held. In November, the total number of people held was 65. Of them 33 were women and 32 children. He also said that all these arrests were made from Navaran check-post, Benapole check-post, Benapole Border Observation Post (BOP), Roghunnath BOP of Sharsha thana, Borni BOP, Mandartala special camp, Jadabpur BOP, Daulatpur BOP, Shahjadpur BOP, Mushila BOP of Chowgaora thana in Jessore district during the same period.

He added that another 381 persons were arrested while trying to escort the women and children during border crossing.

Survey reports conducted unofficially on the target groups reveal that acute poverty, unemployment, destitution and inhuman torture by husbands and social insecurity are common causes behind these circumstances.

Extension work of Ctg rail station in progress

CHITTAGONG, Jan 30: The extension work of Chittagong Rail Station at a cost of Tk 728 crore is progressing fast and is expected to be completed by this year, reports UNB.

Under the project, a terminal building, parking area, rickshaw stand, medical centre, bank, restaurant, VIP lounge, and attached-bath waiting rooms for AC, First class, Second class, Shovan and Shulov categories of passengers.

There will be a tourist booth, 14 retiring rooms and space for luggage of the passengers at the terminal building.

The project also includes construction of railway tracks, a platform with shed and a link road, and upgrading of signalling system.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmad visited the project area on Friday to see the progress of the work.

He gave directives to the concerned engineers and officials to complete the work within the scheduled time at the estimated cost, said an official handout.



JESSORE: A group of men along with five women were held by the BDR from the border area recently. The men are believed to belong to a gang which smuggles women to India. The innocent women, mostly from poor families, are lured with offers of attractive jobs in India. — Star photo

Sharp fall in land fertility in N-dists

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Jan 30: Land fertility in the northern districts including Sirajganj decreases alarmingly due to shortage of green fertilizer, sulphur and zinc in soil. Unbated use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides have caused such situation, comments a source of Agriculture Extension Department (AED).

It is learnt that green and animal elements are needed at least three per cent but at present only 1.5 to two per cent is available. Only 10 years ago, the soil possessed six per cent of such element. Cow-dung, Khesari wastages, rotten straw are not at all used now-a-days. Dried cow-dung is widely used as fuel in the rural areas and one kg. of 'khesari' pulse is sold at Tk 16 in the market. 'Dhuncha' plants are not also used to increase fertility of land as these are sold as valuable fuel in the winter.

It is learnt from a source of AED that five tons of cow-dung are necessary to keep normal fertility of one hectare of land. But cow-dung is not at all used in soil.

Rampant use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides have been causing adverse affect to public health. Tubewell water and vegetables contain the remainings of pesticides. After rainfall the wastages of chemical fertilizer and pesticides pollute the ponds and water-bodies affecting normal production of fishes.

It is gathered that in 1980 2.5 lakh ton of chemical fertilizer and three thousand ton of pesticides were used in the northern zone. At present 21 lakh tons chemical fertilizer and 8,000 tons of pesticides are used in same land. The farmers at grassroot level even do not know the system of using chemical fertilizer and pesticides.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), 'Nitrate' found in the water of northern zone is more than the acceptable rate which is injurious to health. Illegal use of DDT causes such situation.

Institute of Biological Sciences of RU: Problems and Prospects

From Tareq Chowdhury

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 30: Institute of Biological Sciences (IBSc), the only national centre for advanced research on biological sciences in Bangladesh situated at Rajshahi University. In view of the tremendous development of research on biological sciences in advanced countries and under the pressing demand of coordinated research on different aspects of biological fields, the National Planning Commission, the country feels it necessary to establish the IBSc to promote and provide facilities of higher studies and coordinated research on biological fields under Rajshahi University and accordingly the institute was established in 1989 under the Sixth State.

The objectives of the institute is (a) to develop biological organisms, systems and processes for utilization in Food and Agriculture, Health and Medicine, Industry and Energy through scientific researches, (b) to develop research activities in modern biological sciences in cooperation with other departments of the university viz, the Departments of Botany, Zoology, Biochemistry and Pharmacy, (c) to apply science and technology for socio-economic development of the country and to undertake research projects in cooperation with public and private organizations, (d) to promote and provide facilities for advanced studies and research on biological sciences for both M Phil (2 years course) and Ph D (3 years course) degrees, and (e) to invite eminent scholars or scientists from home and abroad to the institute as visiting professor or fellow either to do research or teaching of to do both.

The research field of the IBSc is (a) Flora and Faunal Survey (Systematic survey of plants and animals of Bangladesh), (b) Molecular Biology (Genetical Engineering and Biotechnology, Tissue culture, Protein and Enzyme Chemistry), (c) Environment and Pollution (Pesticidal hazards, Pollution and Environmental Biology) (d) Crop Protection (Integrated Pest Management, Plant Pathology, Insect Pathology, Nematology, Toxicology), (e) Breeding and Genetics (Plant breeding and Cyto-genetics, Animal Breeding and Genetics), (f) Fisheries (Fish culture and Management, Fisheries technology), (g) Clinical Researches (Clinical

class room, seminar room, library and office room in the third floor of Third Science Building of the varsity.

Three Ph D and two M Phil degrees have already been awarded from this institute. Another four M Phil and Ph D fellows are due to receive their degrees. Its present number of M Phil fellows is 23 and Ph D fellow is 19. Moreover, another 10 applicants are waiting for the approval of this admission by the next Academic Council and Syndicate.

As part of the research programme the IBSc has recently undertaken a Collaborative Research Project with the London Guildhall University on 'Movement and Degradation behaviour of organopesticides in surface waters in relation to the impact of water pollution on fish, water quality for crop irrigation and human consumption' and seeking financial support from the Overseas Department Agency (ODA), United Kingdom. The IBSc has selected three water bodies viz. 'Beel Hilna', 'Uturai' — 25 miles north of Rajshahi City

towards Naogaon, and 'Beel Chalon' — 35 miles north east of Rajshahi towards Natore, where river water is used for the domestic purposes and crop irrigation and regularly polluted by insecticides, agro-chemicals and industrial pollutants. 'We are optimistic in having the financial support from ODA' — said the Director of the institute. In addition, the IBSc has started its 'Post-doctoral Fellowship programme' for the first time in Rajshahi University from January, 1995.

The institute has its own library with books and journals of relevant subjects including Biotechnology, Tissue culture, Environment and Crop Protection. It has also its own computing facilities. The IBSc has published a yearly journal named, 'Journal of Bio-Science'.

The IBSc conducted about 15 seminars on different aspects inviting experts from home and abroad. The higher research on medicine (Clinical) under IBSc remain suspended from the very beginning due to an objection from the relevant authorities concerning the syllabus. However, Dr M Badruddin, an Assistant Professor of Sylhet M A G Medical College has submitted application for admission to the Ph D course doing research on molecular characterisation of goitre — a predominant iodine deficiency disease of northern part of Bangladesh. The application has been recommended by the Board of Governors of the institute and waiting for the approval of the Academic Council and Syndicate. At present the research on Medical Sciences in related topic is being done in the Institute of Postgraduate Medicine and Research (IPGMR) at Dhaka.

A 13 member 'Board of Governors' headed by the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University govern the administration and management of IBSc while seven members 'Board of Studies' headed by the Director is responsible for preparing courses of study, syllabi, panel of examiners, frame rules and regulations for admission and examinations.

The IBSc has developed three research laboratories viz. Tissue Culture laboratory, Biotechnology laboratory and IMP and Environmental Biology laboratory. The research on the possible role of microbial pesticides (Bacillus thuringiensis), indigenous plant materials (neem, custard), synergist, IGRs, hormones and pheromones in the control of insect pest, grain production and water use of wheat as affected by water stress, tolerance in wheat and barley and their introduction in Bangladesh for sustainable agriculture, high yielding varieties of silkworm, genes in wheat varieties, diseases of banana plant are being conducted. Research activities in the tissue culture laboratory includes the in vitro induction of callus and somatic embryogenesis of neem and rubber plants, and also somaclonal variations of mulberry plants. Moreover, efforts are being made to develop the micro-propagation technique of some

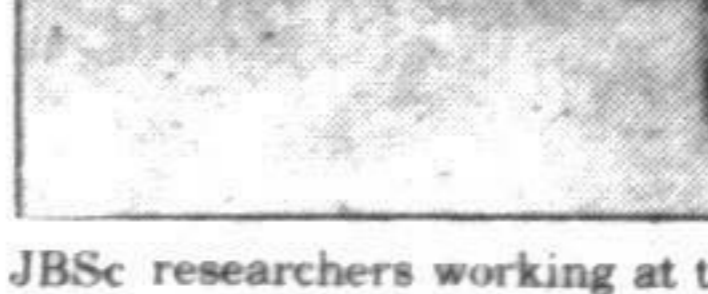
endangered species of medicinal plants and seasonal flowers.

At present Professor K A M Shahadat Hossain Mondal, a reputed academician and researcher who received Ph D degree on 'Pheromones of Stored Product Pest' from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom in 1984 and post-doctoral training in Japan and United Kingdom is holding the post of director of IBSc since 1st December 1993. So far 48 research papers have been published by Professor Mondal in scientific journals at home and abroad including India, Pakistan, UK and USA.

The IBSc is suffering a lot for acute fund shortages, sufficient modern equipment, instruments, chemicals, books and journals — the director regretted. Due to lack of funds necessary items like foreign journals are not available at the institute. As a result there is no coordination and communication among the researchers of the IBSc and other research organizations and universities at home and abroad. Being a higher institute, IBSc could not subscribe the foreign journals regularly. Only three foreign journals, AMBIO, INTERNATIONAL PEST CONTROL and TRIBOLIUM INFORMATION BULLETIN are being received regularly as complementary copies.

The chief executive of the institute also said that the institute faces acute accommodation problem both academic and residential. The institute faces problem in undertaking the research projects in collaboration with the different national research organisations due to the lack of vehicle. The institute also faces a problem regarding the fellows. Many fellows leave the research project as soon as they get a better job opportunity. Thus the main objective of the institute does not end up with success.

Professor Mondal informed that the IBSc has recently acquired 10 acres of land in north-west corner of the varsity as Research Field. The university authority has already sanctioned Tk 2.5 lakh for the development of the research field.



IBSc researchers working at the laboratory. — Star photo

'Food for edn programme to be implemented in more areas'

DAUDKANDI (Comilla), Jan 30: Four thousand unions of the country will be brought under the Food for Education Programme within next four years to ensure education for all, reports BBS.

Four hundred sixty union in equal number of thanas initially were brought under this programme in 1993-94 which had increased to one thousand unions during the current fiscal. The rate of success in the covered unions is over 91 per cent.

This was disclosed by Education Minister, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar while addressing as the chief guest at Daudkandi Thana Teachers Conference-95 her Sunday. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain was present as special guest.

The education minister said, education has no alternative to transform vast manpower to human resources. He said, teaching is not only a profession but a mission. He urged the teachers to work with missionary zeal ensuring proper supervision and accountability in the educational institutions to make education for all a success.

Energy minister said, present government has given highest priority to education sector to free the country from the curse of illiteracy. That is why, the government has allocated ever highest amount of Taka 3432 crore this year.

Mosharrar Hossain said, the present government has taken some epoch-making steps to ensure education for all by 2000. He listed various short-term and long-term programmes of the government for building a sound infrastructure in education. He also outlined some measures taken by the present government for the welfare of teachers.

Later, the ministers distributed prizes among the best teachers, students and education institutions for outstanding performances.