

### Scarcity of seedlings, boro paddy sowing affected

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 5: The cultivation target of boro paddy fixed in the district for the current season might not be achieved due to high price of fertilizer and scarcity of seedlings, the farmers apprehended, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said a target of cultivating boro paddy in 1.4 lakh hectares of land in nine thanas of the district has been fixed during the current season.

But the continued drought before the advent of the winter season caused acute shortage of water in the area and affected the seed beds of the paddy. As a result, the seedlings grew half of the target, agr. office sources said.

Farmers alleged that prices of all types of fertilizers have gone beyond their purchasing capacity. Urea is being sold at Tk 250 per bag as against the government rate Tk 195.

They also alleged that the local traders were hoarding fertilizers to create artificial scarcity in district to earn a windfall profit.

### Postal services in Netrakona in poor shape

NETRAKONA, Feb 5: Postal services of the district have been facing difficulties due to want of Postal Division at the district town, reports UNB.

According to official sources, at present Netrakona Head Post Office with all its sub-post offices have been working under Mymensingh Postal Division since the time of British rule. And establishment of Postal Division here is a long cherished demand of the people of the district.

The sources also said, thousands of letters are dispatched every day from here and a large number of people of the district living abroad make regular remittances and purchase saving certificates worth several crores of taka from these post office.

But the head post office in Netrakona with its scanty staff has been functioning as the second grade post office although it was supposed to work as grade one.

Local leaders alleged that nothing has been done to ameliorate the sufferings of the people and to improve the postal services of the district.

To ensure efficient management of the postal services, the creation of Netrakona Postal Division, upgradation of the existing Head Post Office and some branch offices were the need of the hour, they added.

### Day labourer stabbed to death in Sylhet

SYLHET, Feb 5: A labourer of Ballaghat stone quarry of Gowainghat thana was stabbed to death in the hands of unknown assailants recently.

Abdul Hannan, 35, was attacked at a place near Assampara Mosque while returning home from the quarry. The miscreants stabbed him severely causing instantaneous death. Police recovered the body later and sent it to the Sylhet MAG Osmany morgue for post-mortem.

### One killed in road mishap

KUSHIA, Feb 5: A young man was killed and three others were injured in a road mishap at Kumarkhali thana on Saturday, hospital sources said, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the incident occurred at about 2 pm when two buses collided head on killing Abdul Rauf (32) on the spot. His body was sent to morgue for autopsy.

The injured were admitted to local hospital where the condition of Ashraf (13), a school student, was stated to be critical.

Both the drivers and helpers of the two buses managed to escape with their vehicles.

### Office bearers of Sirajganj Bar Assoc

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 5: Polls of Sirajganj district Bar Association was held on January 27.

Two panels contested the polls. Advocate Amanullah-Lebu panel secured 13 posts including posts of President, General Secretary and Treasurer.

Advocates Amanullah, Mahbulul Islam Lebu and Fazlul Hoque Bulbul were elected President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively of Sirajganj Bar for the year 1995.



TANGAIL: The rivers of the country have already started to develop shoals (chars) affecting navigational routes. At many place especially in the northern part of the country many river routes had to be relocated one to emergence of charland. The picture shows a huge charland in the middle of river Jamuna near Bhuapur Channel. —Star photo by Enamul Huq

## Wide allegation of corruption at Benapole land check-post

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Feb 5: Benapole land port, country's largest land port has become a place of reign of corruption, nepotism and other misdeeds, according to allegations from a number of importers, passport bearing travellers and concerned people.

According to reports, imported goods worth crores of Taka remain stocked under open sky around the port area for want of proper space. Everyday thousands of Indian trucks loaded with goods remain by roadsides without maintaining serial. Some importers said that Benapole land customs releases imported garments raw materials on 'back to back' system through LC. But the importers face troubles as they cannot export goods to buyer countries. As a result, the importers of garments industry are incurring losses as they fail to export the goods. The government has to suffer losses for crores of Taka as revenue. Further, some-

A section of dishonest employees of store section of Benapole land port authorities have created the port as a reign of corruption and nepotism, some importers alleged. They have been doing these misdeeds with the help of a section of outcomers like "mastans" who are very influential in the area. They are engaged for looting imported goods especially garments, clothing. It has pushed the importer into great trouble.

Further, while the goods are unloaded at Benapole land port the dishonest store keepers or employees collect at least Taka eighty per consignment and while it is delivered to the importers they collect Taka 50 at the gates. Moreover, additional of Taka 80 is collected from the importers while collecting "gate pass" against each consignment. The importers also alleged that if they take delivery of goods

customs has reached to an extreme point. The clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents and some importers alleged.

Everyday about 100 bills of entry are placed before Benapole land customs authorities. After thorough checking and collecting taxes 80 documents are submitted for execution. But the importers who import cosmetics, machineries, chemicals, raw-materials, garments yearn, tires and tubes of motor vehicles, baby taxi parts, cycle and cycle parts, various types of papers, imitations jewellery, trouts, onion, garlic and other goods, stone bolder, ceramics, mosaic stones or tiles, cement, electronics and other items are worst sufferers. They had to pay at least Taka one hundred for entry of their names in the list and to give as bribe, between Tk one thousand and five thousands for selective goods. Same amount of money is taken from them in another section of the customs. Taka five hundred to fifty thousand in verification section. Taka between five hundred and thirty thousand for verification from the superintendent and Taka between one thousand and fifty thousand in appraiser section is collected against each document, some C&F agents and importers alleged.

Further some officials like PA to joint collectors are allegedly engaged to collect at least Taka between fifty and five thousand against each consignment. Some employees to joint collector also collect money from the C&F agents.

A reliable source said that Taka 2 lakh to 3 lakh that is 30 lakh to 36 lakh is collected from Benapole customs from the importers and C&F agents as bribe everyday. The source also informed that a section of some law enforcing agencies are involved for collecting bribe which is distributed among concerned corrupted persons by the selected cashier. It was alleged.

The source also informed that some dishonest employees namely Mohammed Farooque and Sayed both Inspector, Rowshan Ali Superintendent and some after were terminated on charge of corruption earlier.

Corruption of land customs of Benapole land port is not lesser than the customs. Some C&F agents and importers alleged that some inspectors of land customs authorities are collecting Taka 5 hundred to one thousand against per con-

signment. The same amount is demanded by the superintendents. If some one refuses to give bribe to them they threat that the section of taxation would be closed and if the section of taxation is closed, the importers have to suffer losses.

When this correspondent visited Benapole land port are a good number of C&F agents and importers said that the volume of corruption, bribery and other misdeeds are increasing day by day. If someone protests it, he is harassed later. This correspondent came to know that from land port godowns thousand yards of imported clothing are collected in the name of sample. Some private servants of influential officials are also involved with theft and collection of sample. As a result, the agents can not open their lips. On January 15, Sharsha police arrested one Delwar Hossain with three packets of clothings at gate no 1 at 4.30 pm. While interrogating he was identified himself as the servant of customs Superintendent Giasuddin. Talking to the superintendent, Giasuddin he said, the man (Delwar Hossain) is the servant of his resident. But Giasuddin was in-charge of checking the section. At that moment a three reporters were present there. After tearing the packets about one hundred yards of clothings, sixty shirt pieces and ten pieces of jeans pants were founds. Local people said that stolen of clothings are openly sold in many shops and also available with hawkers of Benapole.

A C&F agent alleged that to pass a bill of entry, at least fifty yards of jeans pant clothings is must for the concerned officer. Another C&F agent was seen with about 25 yards of jeans clothings in his hand for passing bill of entry. When asked about the matter to the superintendent, Giasuddin he said, was just a sample.

When contacted the joint collector of Benapole, Abdul Mannan said that he would look into all the matters.

Another book agent of Khulna said that he received books worth Taka 36 thousand instead of Taka (imported) 50 thousand. Books worth Taka 16 thousand was taken aware from his consignment as sample and the said consignment was declared as auction, he alleged.

Some political leaders C&F agents and importers expressed that these types of evildoings must be stopped.

### AGM of Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha

From Our Correspondent

Participation of women should be ensured in any sort of development activities particularly in the rural development, this was stated by Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, the Director General of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) as the chief guest at the annual general meeting of a NGO, the Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha held recently at its office premises in Belabo of the Narshingdi district.

The director general of the BARD highly praised the different development oriented and employment generating activities of the organisation and assured of all sorts of help and cooperation in carrying forward its activities. He asked the organisers and the persons connected with its activities to be self reliant and thus be lesser dependence on others. Efforts of being self reliant is always praiseworthy and benefit thus achieved is undoubtedly great and laudable, he added.

In the annual report a list of different activities for the year 1995 also presented. A new committee with AZM Obaidullah Khan, former minister and Bangladesh Ambassador to US as president was also approved by the members of the NGO.

### Student killed in road accident

KUSHIA, Feb 5: An admission-seeker to the Islamic University (IU) was crushed under the wheels of a bus today when its helper allegedly pushed him, reports UNB.

Shamsul Islam of Kumarkhali thana of the district was going to submit his application for admission to the university when the tragedy occurred, police said.

He was pushed from his back while trying to get down from the running bus at about 11 am in front of the university.

After the accident, students of the university brought out a procession to protest the killing. They damaged several vehicles on the road.

Road communication in the Kushia-Jhenidah-Khulna route snapped after the incident and the protests.

The body of Shamsul Islam was sent to his village after post-mortem at Kushiata General Hospital.

Police seized the bus but could not arrest the driver and the conductor.

### Strong protest against decision to withdraw BC from Rajshahi

From RU correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Feb 5: Prof M Aminul Islam, President and Prof Mizan Uddin, General Secretary of Rajshahi University in a joint statement to local media strongly protested the bid to withdraw the British Council library of Rajshahi from March from Rajshahi.

"It would be a great loss for teachers, students of Engineering College, Medical College, Polytechnic Institute and University located in Northern Division city of the country, if it withdrawn from Rajshahi, they added. They urged the concerned authority to continue operation of British Council library facility at Rajshahi.

## Food poisoning claims 15, attacks 3000

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Feb 5: More than 3000 villagers were attacked and atleast 15 persons died by food poisoning at village Tepakuti in Ballaverkhas union under Nageswari thana of Kurigram district during the last three days.

It is reported that one Abdul Aziz Mondol of the village had invited the poor villagers from surrounding villages on the occasion of his father's 40th day of death. On this occasion he cooked food on the previous night and kept those food in two old abandoned boats.

On the following day the villagers ate those food who ultimately became ill. Six of them died on the spot. They are Mukul 2, Shahina Begum 9 of village Tepakuti, Shah Alam 10 of village Balabari, Hashem Ali 15, Abed Ali 14, of village Char Dhartapar, and Abul Hossain 9 of village Kuti. Three thousand others were seriously ill due to food poisoning. The conditions of 250 persons is stated to be critical.

When contacted, the TNO of Nageswari thana, Mobarak Hossain confirmed the death of 6 persons due to food poisoning and said that a medical team has been working in the village day and night.

## The historic 'Salanga Day' observed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 5: Historic 'Salanga Genocide Day' was observed in the district on January 28. On this day in 1922, the then British police killed more than 2000 people by opening fire at Salanga hat in Raiganj thana under Sirajganj district.

It is gathered from different sources that the weekly hat of Salanga was the then biggest business centre of north Bengal which sat on every Mondays and Fridays. It was also the famous market of cattle-heads.

In 1922, the movement of boycotting British goods was at the peak. The movement initiated by Gandhiji also spread in the rural areas. Volunteer teams were formed in each area to intensify the movement. In Sirajganj, a big volunteer team was formed under the leadership of the then young leader, Moulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish.

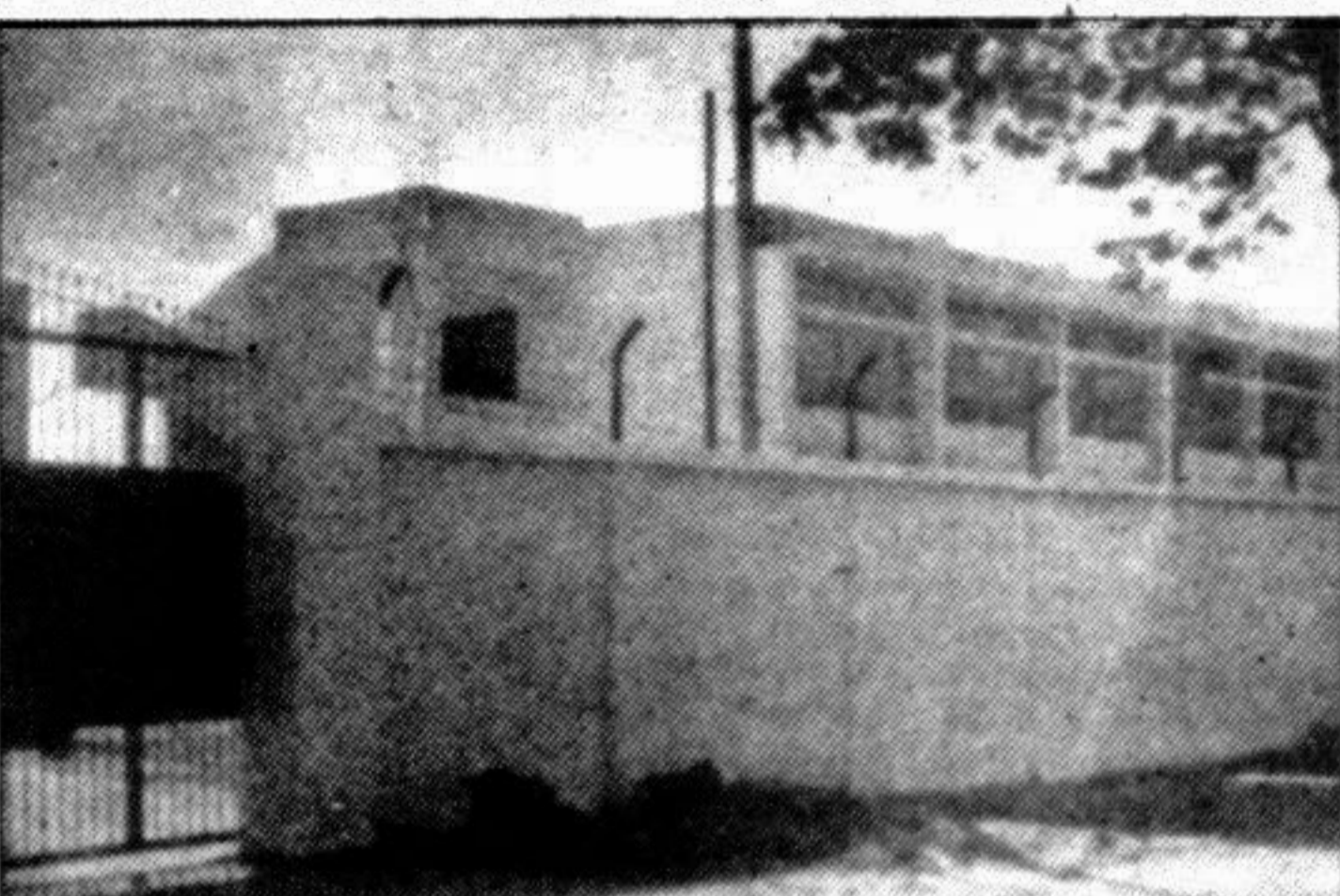
In the second week of January, 1922, when some policemen created hindrance in movement at Chandaikona hat in Raiganj thana, the agitating volunteers snatched the rifles and threw those in the Fulzor river. The incident created rage among the then district administration of Pabna.

On January 28, 1922, during weekly hatday on Friday, about 300 volunteers under the leadership of Tarkabagish were mobilising the people to boycott British goods. RN Das, the then district magistrate of Pabna, Sunil Kumar Singha

Roy, SDO of Sirajganj, and the Police Super Pabna along with 40 armed police raided the hat and arrested Moulana Tarkabagish from the local Congress office. Police began to beat the leader mercilessly.

On information, thousands of agitating people assembled near the cattle market of Salanga and one of the Congress workers charged lathi to the police super. The furious armed police opened fire on the crowd and did not stop until the bullets were finished. During firing about 2000 people were killed, 2500 were injured and several thousands of cattleheads were also killed. When police stopped firing and bullets were finished, more than 5000 people from the neighbouring villages cordoned the police with lethal weapons. The helpless administrative officers released Tarkabagish. Moulana Tarkabagish controlled the agitating people and let the killers leave the hat unhurt.

On the following day, the national dailies of Calcutta including Ananda Bazar and Amrita Bazar published the news with banner headlines. Since then the 'Day' is observed at Salanga to recall memories of the victims of genocide. This year also two-day programme was organised by Salanga Tarkabagish Smriti Committee and the hat committee which include Quirankhani, Milad Mohfil, feeding the destitutes and discussion meetings.



BENAPOLE (Jessor): The administrative building of the Benapole land customs department. —Star photo

times thousands of goods are compelled to delay for clearance with imported goods from Haridaspur Check-Post to Bongaon border in India covering about six kilometres of area as they can not enter into Bangladesh for space problem. The importers said that often imported goods worth crores of Taka are damaged and they had to give compensation money to the exporters from whom they are importing goods. An importer informed that Benapole land port is losing its fame day by day as a section of importer have been importing goods through Hilli border in Dinajpur, Burimari border in Rangpur, Darshana in Chandanga, Sonamosjid border in Rajshahi and other borders instead of Benapole border to avoid troubles. For these reasons import and export business may likely fall through Benapole border though recently import-export business increased through this border, the importer said.

Another source said, for negligence of Benapole Port authority about Tk 12 crore is remaining unused which was sanctioned for development work of the port area.

The source informed that there are only eight godowns for storage of imported goods which can not fulfil the increasing demand. There is no separate godown at Benapole land port to preserve explosive goods. As a result imported explosives are kept with other imported materials without proper protection for months together which may cause great losses and claim of lives and property worth thousand of crores of Taka at any time, it was alleged. The importers are compelled to maintain these explosives at their own risks, the source said.

after 4 pm they had to pay between Taka three hundred to six hundred as so called "overtime" bill. Though port authorities declared that they would deliver goods upto 8pm everyday to avoid unnecessary harassments. The importers also alleged that if it is 6 pm while passing loaded trucks, they had to pay between Taka 50 and 60 per truck. If the clearing and forwarding agents of concerned importers protest they had to suffer in many ways.

There is no traffic control system at Benapole land port. As a result, imported goods and trucks, and other vehicles are placed in odd manner causing much inconveniences. Sometimes it takes hours to pass a vehicle, it was noticed.

Corruption at Benapole land



BENAPOLE (Jessor): Trucks loaded with Indian goods are awaiting for clearance at the Benapole customs check post. These trucks remain here for days without any security. —Star photo



KURIGRAM: Veteran educationist and retired Principal of Carmichael University College Professor Dr Rezaul Haque speaking at the meeting. —Star photo

## 'Combat violence in educational institutions'

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, Feb 5: A farewell and reception meeting was held at Rangpur Govt. College hall room recently. The meeting was held on the occasion of the farewell of the outgoing Principal of Rangpur Govt College, Professor Rizia Khatun, and reception of the incoming Principal Prof Md Shahjahan.

Presided over by M A Samad Pramanik, Vice-Principal of the College, the meeting was attended by a host of professors, intellectuals and local elites.

Although it was a meeting of college teachers and thoughts of Rangpur Govt College, it assumed the shape of an avenue for the ventilation of opinions by the noted educationists and professors of Rangpur who included retired Principal Dr Rezaul Haque of Carmichael University College, Professor Ansarul Hossain, retired principal of Rangpur Govt College, Abdul Wahab Khan retired Principal of Rangpur College, Principal Mohammad Shahjahan and outgoing Principal of Rangpur Govt College Professor Rizia Khatun.

In his speech, Professor Dr Rezaul Haque was outspoken about his notions on the degradation of the standard of

education in recent times. He expressed his deep concern over the declining moral values prevailing among students folk. He pointed out that the students violence and terrorism threatening not only the academic atmospheres like colleges and universities, but the society as a whole. He said that unless there was united efforts to combat such social and moral ills, an early remedy for it would prove a cry in the wilderness. He added that the pace of national development would be barricaded step by step, if there were no united venture to combat violence in the educational institutions. Violence and terrorism he said, was eating into the vitals of the society.

In his speech, Professor Mohammad Shahjahan, the incoming principal of Rangpur Govt College said that for a particular institution to run smoothly, devotion to duty by all the employees from the principal down to the sweeper was essential. If such dutifulness from all and sundry could be ensured peaceful and smooth management would become quite possible. He concluded his speech by seeking cooperation from all concerned.