

**Fire destroys property worth Tk 24 lakh in 15 days**

CHANDPUR, Apr 9: Property worth over Tk 24 lakh was completely gutted in several fire incidents in the district during the last 15 days, local people said, says UNB.

The devastating fire incidents took place at Hajiganj, Kachua and Haimchar thanas. Some 10 shops were gutted at Sreepur bazar of Hajiganj thana when a fire broke out mid night on March 25, shop owners said.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit burnt the shops and valuables worth Tk 16 lakh were charred. In another fire incident on March 23 in the village South Gohat of Kachua thana 27 dwelling houses and property worth about Tk 6 lakh was gutted, villagers claimed.

Local people said in yet another fire incident property worth over Tk two lakh was gutted at village South Algi in Haimchar thana.

**Appointment to the vacant posts of BCS-agri cadre demanded**

MYMENSINGH, Apr 9: Students of Agriculture Faculty of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) demanded immediate appointment to the vacant posts of BCS (Agri) cadre, says UNB.

In support of their various demands, the students submitted a memorandum to the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the university Dr Monajwar Ahmed on Friday.

Agriculture Faculty Dean Dr M Idris, Students Affairs Advisor Dr M Aminul Islam, Assistant Proctor Dr Nazrul Islam and Officer on Special Duty Prof Motaahar Hossain Mondol were present at this time.

In the memorandum they demanded immediate measures for giving appointment to the BCS (Agri) cadre by cancelling the 17th BCS announcement.

Other demands include inclusion of BAU representative, to the PSC, arranging employment of the unemployed agriculturists and introducing of terminal degree certificate system cancelling honours certificate in the university.

Earlier, the students held a protest rally at the Amtala. Presided over by Mohsin Habib, it was addressed, among others, by Kutubuddin Shamim and Rezaul Karim Hashu.

**Various uplift works in progress in Noakhali**

MAIJDEE COURT (Noakhali), Apr 9: Various development works including construction of roads and culverts under special relief programme are going on in full swing in six thanas of the district, says UNB.

Official sources said 1,568 metric tons (mts) of wheat have been sanctioned to implement 117 development schemes in the district under the programme.

Thana-wise break up of projects and allocation of wheat are: Sadar—390 mts for 19 schemes, Begumganj—470 mts for 47 schemes, Chatkhal—350 mts for 6 schemes, Hatiya—40 mts for 3 schemes, Senbag—280 mts for 18 schemes and Companiganj—38 mts for 24 schemes.

**One roasted alive, another receives burn injuries**

GAIBANDHA, Apr 9: A man was roasted alive and another received serious burn injuries in two separate fire incidents in Palsbari thana of the district, police said yesterday, reports UNB.

In first incident, a fire broke out at the house of Duda Mia of village Baro Shmaltala on Tuesday night. Duda suddenly entered the blazing house to save his valuables but caught fire and died on the spot. His property worth about Tk 15,000 was also gutted.

The fire originated from the kitchen of the victim. In another incident, one Sayedur Rahman 24, son of Solaiman Ali of village Hatlakampur of sadar thana, received burn injuries in a fire that broke out in his house on Wednesday.

He was rushed to the local hospital in a critical condition. The cause of the fire could not be known immediately.

Another report adds: A housewife Rabeya, 22, of village Maradateya in Palsbari thana succumbed on April 7 at Gaibandha hospital on April 2.

Rabeya received grievous injuries when the brother of her husband threw a bamboo made weapon on her body.

**Fertilizer crisis Massive IRRI-boro crop loss apprehended in Jamalpur dist**

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Apr 9: IRRI-boro crop on an estimated two lakh acres of land have been severely affected in the persisting fertilizer crisis in the district, according to official sources.

While talking to the district agriculture department officials it was learnt that farmers may suffer massive losses like during the last aman paddy season. Most of the rice plants, in its half matured stage, are said to be wilting and becoming pale, an early sign of death of the rice plants.

Thousands of farmers in the district are apprehending a massive loss of their crop. In Melandah thana of the district alone about 2,500 farmers who were supposed to receive fer-

tilizer complained that they did not receive their shipment at all. The farmers allege that wrong planning and faulty distribution system of fertilizer has caused this situation. Many of them blame the local agents for the crisis while others blame the local government officials for the crisis.

An unofficial source said that IRRI-boro crop on about 2.5 lakh areas of land have been partially or totally affected. The estimated cost of the loss may stand at about Taka 100 crore.

While visiting some badly affected villages in Melandah, Islampur, Dewanganj and Bakshiganj thana many farmers were found stunned at the sudden loss of their standing

IRRI-boro crops.

"We are not poor, we have house-hold, but now I am helpless", says Abdur Sattar Miah of village Mahmudpur. I could not use fertilizer at all. I had nothing to worry about if I could save my crops, adding "I never experienced such fertilizer crisis even during the last 30 years."

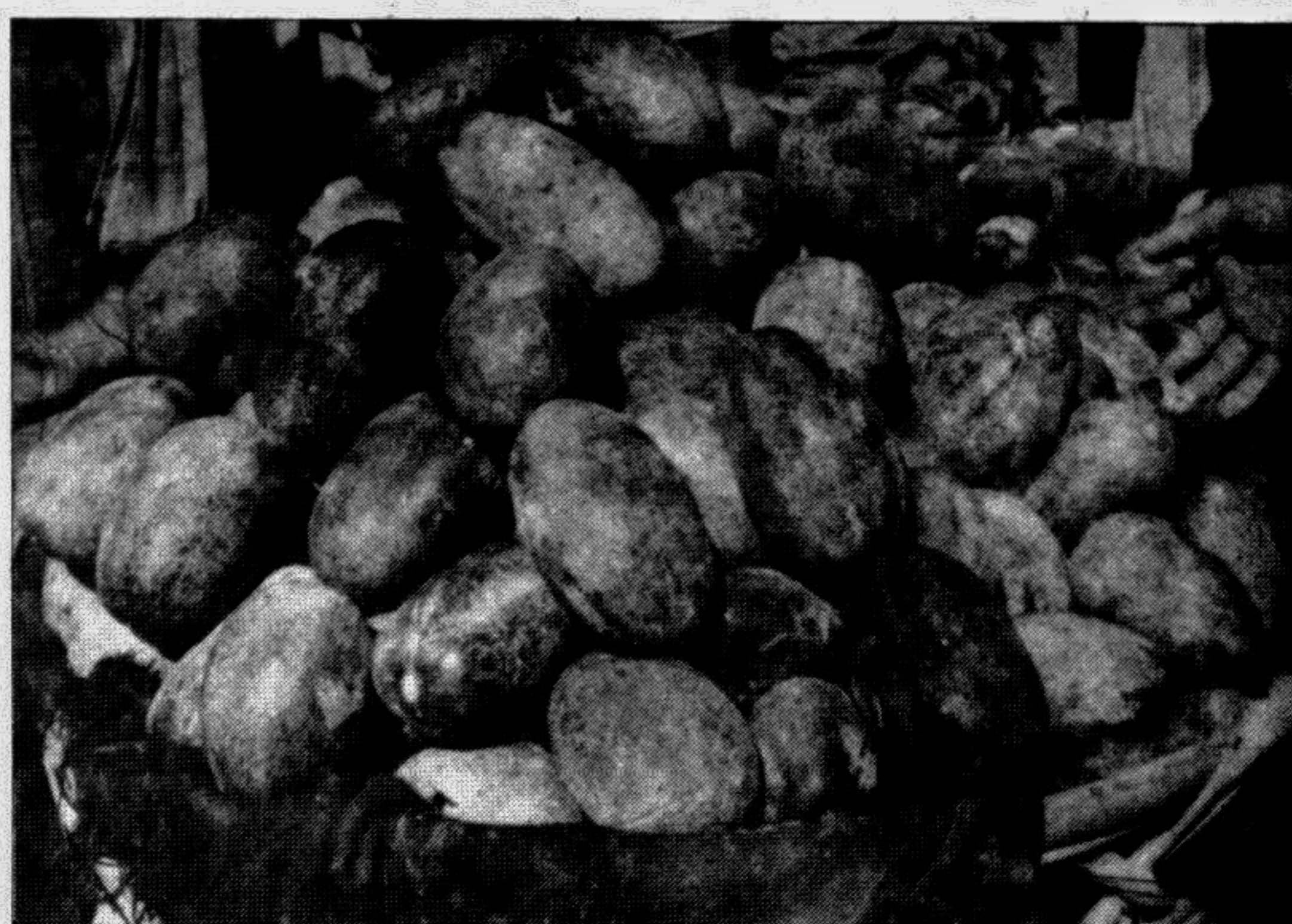
A number of villagers of Islampur thana said that boro paddy was the only cash crop of the thana. They heavily depend on this crop trade.

Md Serajul Haque, Deputy Minister for health and family welfare has recently visited some affected areas in Jamalpur sadar thana in. While talking to the affected farmers

the minister assured them of taking necessary steps. He distributed some bags of fertilizer among the farmers in the area.

A meeting was held at the Melandah Girls' High School ground with local leaders of all political parties. The speakers called upon the government to declare the district as 'distressed zone' immediately saying lakhs of farmers in the district have become helpless as they had lost the only cash crop due to the artificial fertilizer price hike.

Meanwhile, price of fertilizer bags still remain high in different remote areas of the district according to different sources. A 50 kg bag of fertilizer is now sold at as high as Tk 900.



SIRAJGANJ: Plenty of cucumber found available in the markets of Shahzadpur thana of the district. Cucumber has high demand in the local markets especially in these hot-humid days of the season. — Star photo

**One held with phensidyl bottles**

SATKHIRA, Apr 9: Police arrested one person along with 20 bottles of phensidyl from the local bus terminal Wednesday, reports UNB.

Rafiqul Islam of Kutya under Debhata thana was carrying the drugs from Bhomra to Damuary.

Tipped off, a contingent of police of Itagacha camp in sadar thana challenged Rafiqul at the district bus terminal and recovered the items from his possession.

Rafiq was sent to jail hazat. A case was filed with sadar thana in this connection.

**Continuous drought affects standing crop, vegetable**

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Apr 9: Continuous drought for last five months in Kushtia and its adjoining areas has caused widespread damage to standing crops and vegetables.

Sharp fall in ground water level has also rendered most of the deep and shallow tubewells unserviceable by about 50 per cent while non-availability of surface water rendered power pumps ineffective in more than 50 per cent areas which made irrigation extremely difficult. Thus cultivation of summer and rainy season vegetable is also being hampered by impact of the same reason and this is noticeable in various markets where vegetable supply fell short abnormally.

**Drinking water crisis in Kushtia**

KUSHTIA, Apr 9: Acute scarcity of drinking water in most parts of the Kushtia municipal area has been prevailing for a long time causing untold sufferings to the town-dwellers, reports UNB.

According to the dwellers, of the total 15 lakh gallons requirement, only 9.25 lakh gallons of water are being supplied for 1.60 lakh population of the town.

Besides, of the total seven deep tubewells engaged in lifting water to supply to the residents, five have been working with half capacity while the rest two have gone out of order for a long time.

There are more than 1,600 residential water connections and 350 hand tubewells spread over in the town but most of the hand tubewells are not working because of abnormal fall in ground water level.

Meanwhile, some of the tubewells which are located by the side of the river bank are practically not working giving rise to serious scarcity of water in the town.

Local people alleged that despite of repeated appeals no step has yet been taken to ensure smooth supply of water by the pura authorities.

**Huge quantity of wood being used in brickfields**

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Apr 9: Huge quantities of wood is being used in different brickfields of the district affecting the afforestation programme.

According to a report, 30 metric tons of coal at a cost of taka one lakh is required for burning one lakh bricks. But if it is burnt using firewood it will cost maximum 60 thousand taka for two thousand maunds of firewood. According to this, a large size of brick manufacturing factory which makes about 20 lakh bricks a year consumes 40 thousand maunds of firewood and can save at least taka eighty thousand. For this convenience price of firewoods, the brickfield owners are compelled to use firewoods instead of coal.

Another source alleged that almost all the brickfield owners are depriving the government from huge amount of Tax for years together as they do not show the actual account of production. Talking to an administrative officer of district administration, he said that no action was taken against brickfield owners for illegal use of wood as fuel.

The people urged the authorities to take necessary action against the brickfield owners who have been using wood as fuel violating the government rule.

of coal. The brickfield owners have engaged some people as brokers who purchase all types of trees from the rural areas.

Brickfield owners it is alleged, place a small quantity of coal in front of the fire chimneys and secretly use woods as fuel, source said. Talking to some brickfield owners it was learnt that coal is costly and it is not available at all places. That is why they are compelled to use wood.

According to sources, there are more than one hundred of brickfields in all six thanas of Jhenidah sadar, Saikupa, Harinakundu, Kaliganj, Kotechandpur and Mohespur in the district and almost all the brickfield owners have been using firewood as fuel instead

of coal. The brickfield owners have engaged some people as brokers who purchase all types of trees from the rural areas.

**Bumper mango output expected this season**

NATORE, Apr 9: Bumper mango production is expected in the northern districts including Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Natore due to favourable climate in the current season, reports UNB.

Chief Scientific Officer of Mango Research Institute said, he is optimistic of good harvest if no heavy rainfall and dense fog occur in the next few days. The recent moderate rainfall and fog could not hamper the blossoming, he said.

Nearly 80 to 90 per cent of

the trees had budding in December and January of this season which shows a bright prospect of bumper production, he added.

In the last year, mango production was greatly hampered due to unfavourable climate, late budding and fluctuation of temperature.

Local experts said, excessive rainfall, fluctuation of temperature, attack by pests and nor-wester hamper mango production greatly almost every year.

**IRRI-boro output target in Chuadanga may fail**

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Apr 9: IRRI-boro cultivation target in Chuadanga district may fail this year due to acute scarcity of fertilizer, high price of pesticides, absence of proper irrigation facility and other problems.

It may be noted here that this year a total of over 17 thousand hectares of land have been targeted for Boro cultivation in four thanas of Chuadanga district and it was expected that about 18 lakh maunds of Boro paddy would be produced from the area this year, but it is apprehended that the scarcity of fertilizer, high price of insecticides, absence of proper irrigation

facilities and irregularities in disbursement of loan the target of boro production might fail this year.

For the last few years the farmers of four thanas of Chuadanga district are depending heavily for cash on boro paddy production.

Large-scale irregularities in irrigation of the cultivable land have also been causing much sufferings for the farmers in general during this season.

A good number of deep tubewells, power pumps and shallow tubewells have reportedly been lying unused and gone out of order due to negligence of the concerned authorities.



RANGPUR: A huge mob is seen laying a human barricade at Mithapukur in the Rangpur-Dhaka national highway recently in demand of supply of fertilizers. — Star photo

**Road mishaps, murders, suicides claim 39 lives in greater Sylhet**

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 9: The number of unnatural deaths have increased in the greater Sylhet region in the last few weeks. According to the reports, unnatural deaths have claimed at least 39 lives in four districts of the region during the month of March this year. The total number of seriously injured persons stood at 255. The incidents include, murders, road accidents, suicides and similar other incidents.

Of the total, 20 persons died in Sylhet, six in Habiganj, eight in Moulvibazar and the rest 5 were in the district of Sunamganj. Out of the total of 255 injured, 61 were in the different thanas of Sylhet, 42 in Habiganj, 32 in Moulvibazar and 106 were in Sunamganj.

One person was killed and 15 others were injured in a road accident on Habiganj-Lakhal Road on March 2.

On the night following March 5, Abdul Mutalib, 55, an ex-member was killed in the hands of armed dacoits while Nur Hossain, at village Daukerul in Kanaighat thana, was chopped to death by the same gang. A pedestrian named Jainullah, 55, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Lalabazar of Sylhet sadar thana. On the same day, another person named Tota

Miah was run over by a minibus near Sarighat of Jaintapur thana. Truck driver Ajit Kumar Das, 65, and Manohar Ali, 35, were killed on the spot when the truck hit a road side tree on Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Kamachhera in Bahubal thana of Habiganj district on the same day. Seven others were also injured in the incident.

On March 5 the body of one Rahimuddin, 20, was recovered from village Kasha Rayterilla under Beanbazar. It was found hanging, police said.

In another incident, seven others were injured when a minibus hit a roadside tree near Damri bridge on Jaintapur Road. Akbar Hossain, 17, was killed in a road accident on Habiganj-Lakhal Road. Twenty others were also hurt in the incident as a microbus turned turtle. On March 8, a young man of age 26 named Abur Rouf was killed in a road accident at a place near Pargana bazar under Sylhet sadar thana. Sylhet Kotwali police recovered the body of a young woman from Shibbari Lalmatia on March 4.

On the same day, 20 persons were hurt in clash at Borna in Biswanath PS, Pira Begum, 10, was crushed under the wheels of a minibus near Hilalpur on Sylhet-Golapganj road on March. On the same day Tuti Miah, 55, of village Pakhbil under Jaintapur thana was killed in another accident on Sylhet Tamabil road. At least 70 villagers were injured in a clash between two groups over fasting at village Rauli under Jauwa union of Chhatak thana in Sunamganj district on the same day.

Twenty five others were also hurt as a passenger coach from Srimangal hit a road side tree when the driver lost his control over the vehicle. Nital Das, a tailor master was knocked down and run over by a speeding truck near the Sylhet bus terminal on the same morning. In another incident, a passenger Shaiful Islam, 50, was killed as a coach hit a roadside tree on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Habiganj.

Fifty others also sustained injuries in the incident. Kutubuddin, 25, and Jamu Miah, 17, were killed as they were hit by a speeding bus near the T&T office at Madhabpur thana headquarters on March 5. Ten others were also injured. There, Another person named Touhid Miah also died of heart

failure when he went to see those victims. A minor girl named Saleha, 10, was killed as she was run over by a speeding truck near Sadipur Ghat on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Balaganj thana on March 10.

Sub-inspector Nurul Islam Chowdhury of Balaganj thana went to visit the spot and while returning, he also met his tragic end of life as his baby taxi faced a head on collision with a speeding truck near Ilashpur. Asia Begum, neighbour of Balaganj Upazila Parishad was kidnapped in broad day light.

On March 9 her body was found on the bank of the river. On March 13, one person was killed and 12 others were injured on Barlekha-Shahboppur and Chengerkhal of sadar thana on March 14.

In a road accident Ponki Miah, 30, of village Sheola under Beanbazar thana was killed in the hands of his rival group on March 17. A college student was beaten to death in Sylhet on March 17. One person was seriously injured in a road accident near Karikona on Biswanath road on the same day. A rickshawpuller was killed as he was run over by a speeding night coach near Lauwai under sadar thana on March 19. Arab Ali was killed in the hands of his son, at a stage of family feuds at village Baglakara under Sunamganj sadar thana. A young man of age 20 was electrocuted when he was flying kite at village Kaskanakpur under Moulvibazar thana. A minor girl, Hosna was runover by a speeding minibus near Lalabazar under Sylhet sadar thana.

Two minor sisters named Tahmina Sultana, 7, and Poly, 5, and their uncle Selim Ahmed were killed on the spot when they were on way to school in the morning of March 12 on Baraigram-Barlekha road. The accident occurred as their motor cycle had a head on collision with a speeding truck. Three persons sustained injuries in a clash over a torn lung at Sunamganj town. The body of a class IV employee of Dewanbazar Union Health Centre of Balaganj thana was found in a gunny bag on Sylhet-Sunamganj road on March 20. Three activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) were injured when they were attacked in a procession in the Sunamganj Government

College campus on March 22.

Eleven persons received dog bites at village Pirergaon under Jagannathpur thana of Sunamganj district on the same day. Of the injured, three succumbed to their injuries and the rests were admitted into the hospital. One Alim Uddin was killed in the hands of his opponent group while digging a pond in Baniachang thana of Habiganj on the same day. Sixty-year old Kanori Bibi was killed and 25 others were injured in an incident at village Goyiagram under Balaganj thana on March 23.

Three activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) were injured as a rally of Awami League came under attack from a rebel group of Chhatra League at the Court Point area of Sylhet town on March 26. Abdul Hannan, 26, correspondent of the Banglar Baani and Sunil Kumar Das, 40, were killed when a microbus turned turtle as it driver lost his control over the vehicle near Deorgachh in Bahubal thana on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway on March 29. Six others also sustained injuries in the accident. On the same day Mostakin Ali was killed in another accident on March 27 when a tempo turned turtle there on Barlekha-Dakshinbhar Road in Moulvibazar district.

**Acid thrown on teen-age girl**

PABNA, Apr 9: A teen-age girl was seriously injured when two young men threw acid on her body early Saturday at the village Jagannathpur of Chhatmohor thana, police and family sources said, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mabiya Khatun, 14, a class seven student of Sharatganj High School. She was admitted to Pabna Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Mabiya's family sources said one Toufizuddin of the same village has been trying to marry her for a long time. But his proposal was turned down time and again.

Police said following the refusal, Toufizuddin along with his accomplice threw acid on Mabiya when she was asleep at her home at about 4:00 am.

A case was lodged with the police but none was arrested so far.



RANGPUR: The executive members of the Dhaka down town Rotary Club are seen distributing some 22 sets of sanitary latrines among the poor people at free of cost at Bahar Katchna in Rangpur sadar thana area recently, in a bid to help improve the village sanitation in the area. — Star photo