

National

15 awarded
10 yrs RI

HABIGANJ, May 27: Fifteen people were awarded 10-year Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) for killing a minor girl in sadar thana of the district, reports UNB.

They were also directed to pay a fine of Taka 10,000 each, in default of payment to suffer six-month RI, according to the verdict given by Additional District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Amanullah on May 23.

The prosecution said the convicted people attacked the house of one Abdur Rashid of village Zhitika, reportedly a notorious dacoit and killed his 11-year daughter Jesmin, on December 31, 1992.

Bodies of a couple recovered

KHULNA, May 27: Police recovered bodies of a couple from a house at Farazipur in Monadanga thana on Wednesday morning, reports UNB.

According to police, the body of Ali Hossain, 25, was found in the room hanging, while his wife Bilkis Begum's body on the bed,

Hossain and Bilkis came to visit the house of one Abul Khair on Tuesday.

On the following morning, police on information rushed to the house, broke open the door and found Hossain hanged with the ceiling fan and his wife Bilkis lying dead on the bed.

Police, however, could not say whether they were killed or committed suicide.

The bodies were sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Betel leaf cultivation faces set-back in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, May 27: Betel leaf cultivation in Gopalganj district has received a setback due to price hike of raw materials and absence of proper marketing system.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, there are about 10,000 cultivators in Gopalganj sadar, Kasiani and Mukuspidur thanas, who cultivate betel leaves on 12,000 acres of land every year.

A recent unofficial survey revealed that during the last few years a considerable number of betel leaf field diminished in the district following the price hike of raw materials.

It is to be mentioned here that at least seven thousand Taka are required to cultivate betel leaf on one bigha of land. Besides, additional cost is required to protect the betel fields from diseases and pest attack.

It is apprehended that if the bottlenecks in betel leaf cultivation are not removed and necessary assistance are not extended to the growers, the betel leaf cultivation in the district would fail considerably which may hit foreign currency earnings.

At present prices of bamboo, jute sticks, oil cakes, rope and necessary inputs for betel leaf production have gone beyond the reach of the poor growers.

Number of child labour on increase

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, May 27: Number of child labours are on increase throughout the district. More and more children are forced to take up jobs due to acute poverty.

Generally children are employed in small and cottage industries, grocery shops, flour mills, cycle and rickshaw garages, lathe machine workshops and teatalls.

The children are mostly devoid of their due wages. Sometimes, they even are subjected to inhuman treatments and tortures, it is alleged. A survey found that 80 per cent of the workers of tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, lathe workshops, grocery shops, flour mills and rickshaw garages are children. These children are not formally employed. This gives the owner an opportunity to terminate them at will.

Anti-social activities on rise in Madaripur

MADRIPUR, May 27: Anti-social activities have increased alarmingly in different parts of the town hampering civic life, reports UNB.

Some localities — Shilpanagar, Trawler Ghat and Shahid Bachhu Sarani and Old town — have become crime zones, local people said.

Prostitutes, drug addicts and gamblers are always seen in these places who are engaged in anti-social activities openly.

Jute cultivation scheme in 10 S-dists

Only 7.24 pc area out of targeted 1,14,666 hectares cultivated

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 27: Jute cultivation in southern region of the country has been adversely affected due to drought during the current season. Jute sowing season which has already expired, started from April 15 last and lasted up to May 9. Only 7.24 per cent of the targeted cultivation area has been covered in ten districts of Khulna Division.

The districts are, Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jessor, Narail, Magura, Jhenaidah, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur.

According to official sources, Agriculture Extension Department (AED), had taken up a total of 1,14,666 hectares of land under jute cultivation scheme during the current season in these districts. The production target has been fixed at 72,23,300 maunds.

Under the jute cultivation

programme, only 1,560 tivation has so far been achieved only 7.24 per cent in these districts.

According to farmers, due to deteriorating drought situation, price hike of fertilizers, scarcity of high yielding variety seed and price spiral of other agri-inputs and draw backs of irrigation are the impediments in the way of achieving the target.

Meanwhile, in some places, the temperature shot up over 35 degree Celsius and underground water level also fell by 20 to 40 feet, hampering irrigation.

Agriculture experts said, the target of jute cultivation would not be achieved during the current season if the situation remains unchanged.

UNB report from Sherpur adds: The district is likely to fall to achieve target produc-

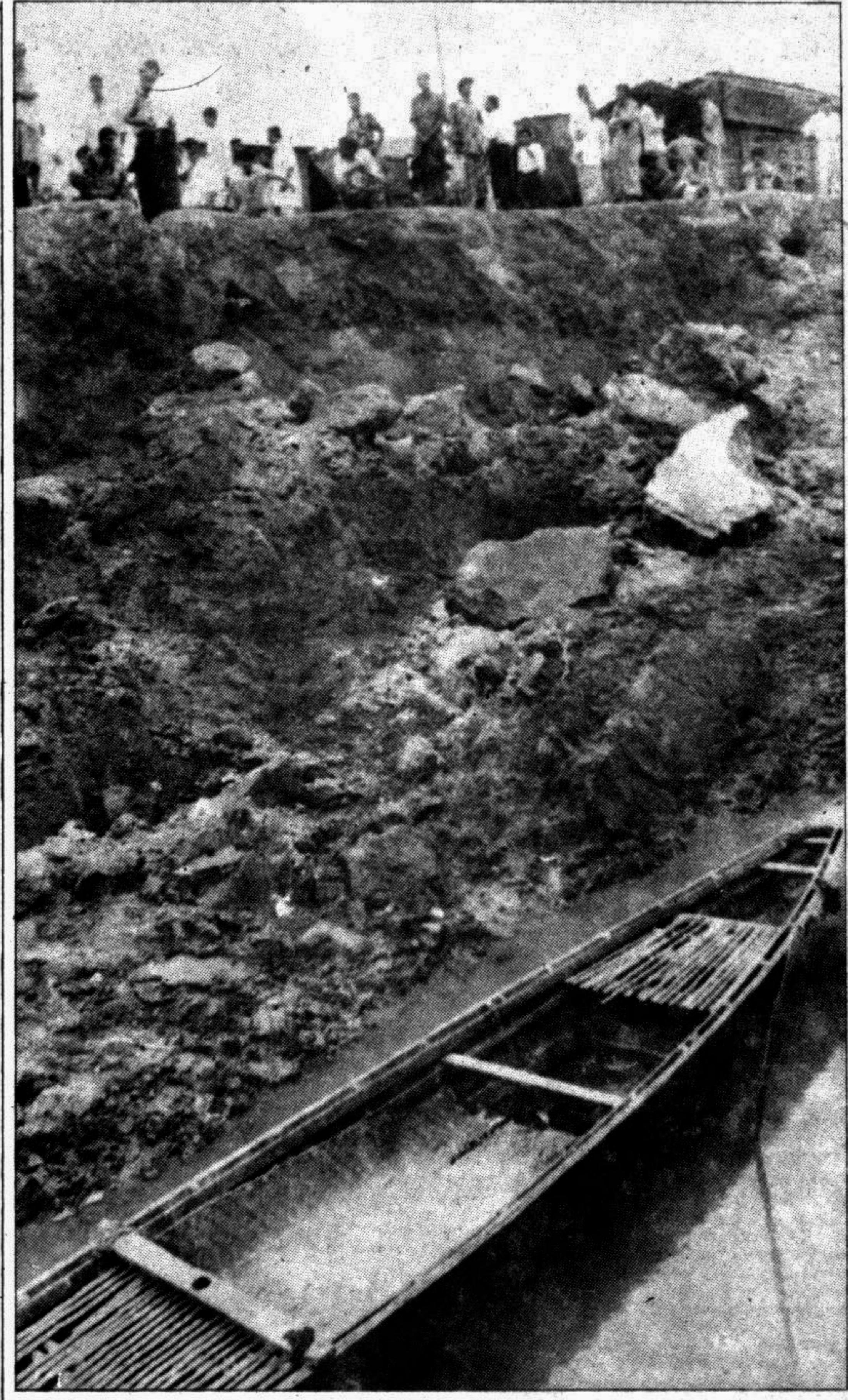
tion of jute during the current season due to unavailability of seeds, lack of rainfall and shortage of capital, farmers and agriculture officials said.

According to the sources, a total of 8,085 hectares of land were earmarked for jute cultivation in the district during the season while 3,200 hectares of land could be brought under the cultivation so far.

Moreover, many farmers could not prepare their land for want of seeds and failed to manage adequate capital to cultivate jute in their lands.

However, a local agriculture extension official said lack of necessary irrigation facilities and inadequate rainfall are the main reasons behind the inability of the farmers to cultivate the required amount of jute.

The percentage of jute cul-



BAHADURABAD GHAT (Jamalpur): Erosion of Jamuna has caused serious difficulty for the train passengers as the rail ferry ghat is being shifted. Besides, the erosion has robbed the local farmers of their land.

— Star photo

On national economy

Significant progress achieved: Mosharraf

DAUDKANDI (Comilla), May 27: Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Khander Mosharraf Hossain on Friday said the country had made significant breakthrough in all the key sectors of national economy over the last four years, reports BSS.

In this respect, he referred to the reports of World Bank and Asian Development Bank published recently and said both the reports had commended the progress the country achieved in education, health, communication, agriculture, industry, commerce and trade sectors during the period.

We are all now sanguine of the bright future of Bangladesh, he said while addressing several public meetings organised in connection with inauguration of Batakanji-Raipur Bridge, Katakhail newly constructed

district. Mosharraf Hossain outlined some significant progress and achievements made in different sectors and said the present government has rejuvenated the economy which was badly shattered by the previous government. It is now marching towards self-reliance, he said. The country was not able to provide even one per cent from its own resources for its annual development budget before 1991-92, he said adding, "It is now providing over 38 per cent from its own resources during the current fiscal year".

Earlier, the minister visited north Gujra Baitul Ulum Senior Madrasa, and laid the foundation stones of west Gujra Health and Family Welfare Centre and new building of Nandipara SM Girls High School. He also inaugurated the new building of Shyamcharan High School unveiled the plaque of Ranajiraa Nahin High School and Visited Rawjan College.

RAWJAN (Chittagong), May 27: Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah al-Noman said on Friday a happy and prosperous future could only be ensured through sustained socio-economic development, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing a public meeting at Kadalpur High School premises on the occasion of the foundation laying ceremony of the new building of the school, according to an official handout.

Presided over by the president of the school committee Muhammad Shafi, the meeting was addressed, among others by central economic affairs secretary of BNP Gulam Akbar Khandokar, eminent political leader Zainul Abedin Jamal, Sh. Khoda Tofan Rawjan thana BNP president Mohiuddin Ahmed, and general secretary Abdul Halim and Chittagong north

"Prosperous future can be ensured through sustained social dev"

district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) president Jasimuddin Sikdar.

Noman assured to provide necessary wheat for filling the field of Gujra High School field, c i sheet for local social welfare sangsads, Taka fifteen thousand from his special fund for Nabayan Club. He also assured to provide Taka twenty thousand for Nandipara SM Girls High School science building development.

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The Monipuris are always different from other tribal. They are the only tribal of the country, who are living in plain lands.

Though, agriculture is the main source of their income, they have specialised on hand knitting.

Women of the community have a speciality on 'hand loom product'. Different types of cloths like — bed-sheet, napkins, sarees, lungis and wrappers are in great demand. Most of the Monipuri family have a hand-loom machine.

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