

## 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 Zhitka, 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 Farazipara 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 to 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 hanging 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 Mukshudpur 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 fall 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, lather machine workshops and tea stalls.

The children are mostly devoid their due wages. Sometimes, they even are subjected to inhumane treatments and tortures, it is alleged. A survey found that 80 per cent of the workers of tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, lather 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

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

Some localities — Shilpanagari, 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, Jessore, 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 cultivation 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 fail 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.

hectares of land out of targeted 9,650 hectares have been achieved in Satkhira, 18 hectares of land out of targeted 2,300 hectares in Khulna, 110 hectares of land out of targeted 900 hectares in Bagerhat, 4,200 hectares of land out of targeted 24,330 hectares in Jessore, 400 hectares out of targeted 15,350 hectares in Jhenaidah, 15 hectares out of targeted 16,310 hectares in Magura, 88 hectares of land out of targeted 13,350 hectares in Narail, 353 hectares of land out of targeted 10,630 hectares in Kushtia, 435 hectares of land out of targeted 11,330 hectares in Chuadanga and 1125 hectares of land out of targeted 10,516 hectares in Meherpur district during the period (i.e. up to May 9). The total cultivated area stood at 8,304 hectares. The percentage of jute cul-

## On national economy Significant progress achieved: Mosharraf

DAUDKANDI (Comilla), May 27: Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Khondaker 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 Bakatkhail Bridge, Katakhal bridge newly constructed.

Kalari-Goubindapur Primary School and Akali Primary School under the thana.

The Energy Minister said, Bangladesh, once known as the land of 'bottomless basket', has now been known as an 'emerging tiger' in the South-East Asia.

Dr 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".

## "Prosperous future can be ensured through sustained social dev"

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, Sk Khoda Tofan Rawjan thana BNP president Mohiuddin Ahmed, and general secretary Abdul Halim and Chittagong north

district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) president Jasimuddin Sikdar.

Noman assured to provide necessary wheat for filling the field of Gujra High School field, a sheet for local social welfare sangsad, 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.

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 Ramajura Nahin High School and visited Rawjan College.



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

## Constructive plan needed to preserve Monipuri culture

From R K Goswami

In the age of the 'Mohavara' — 'Arjuna' the third Pandab of 'Pancha Pandab' made his visit to Monipuri state, when King 'Chitrabahan' ancestor of the Vishnupurians was in power. Third Pandab Arjuna married the princess of the Monipuri — 'Chitrangada'. A child of 'Chitrangada', 'Babhrubahan'. Later came to the power of the Monipuri state. The Vishnupurians are the descendant of the King Babhrubahan.

The Monipuri community came here from the Monipuri

Monipuri King — Joy Singha fought against a attack led by Burmese King Allaung Paya. The Monipuris suffered defeat in this 10 years long war and King Joy Singha fled to Assam state of India. During that period, a considerable number of Monipuri people also fled for want of security and peace.

Some of them came to this part of Bangladesh. However, with the help of the British armed force, King Joy Singha liberated the Monipuri again.

In 1812, a fratricidal war took place in the Monipuri

The Monipuris are always different from other tribals. 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.



Weaving in handlooms — a traditional profession of Monipuri women

state of India in the 18th and 19th century.

The Monipuri state was an independent state until 1891. In that very year, Monipuri state went under the British rule. In August-15, 1947 Monipuri was again liberated. But only after two years of liberation, it was merged with India with a provincial status.

During the independent period till 1891, Monipuri had suffered war several times. Sometimes neighbouring state of 'Burma' attacked Monipuri and sometimes fratricidal conflict developed among the members of the 'Royal family' of the Monipuri Kingdom.

During 1765 to 1775, the

'Royal Family'. It was 'Chourajit Singha', younger brother of the then King 'Harsha Chandra Singha' with the help of Burmese King, defeated Harsha Chandra and took over power. In that situation people of Monipuri started to leave Monipuri again to escape from the civil war.

The Monipuris, who came to this part of Bangladesh (the then India) found this area very peaceful and harmony. So, when the Monipuri King liberated the Monipuri in 1923, and occasional conflicts came to an end, Monipuris who had taken shelter here, refused to go back and decided to live here for good.

where female members are engaged with productive activities. These machines are simple in design and cheap as well. About 20 thousand Monipuris are dependent on weaving to earn their livelihood.

The Monipuris have a rich culture. Music and dance oriented culture of the community earned name and fame nation-wide. Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was a patron of this rich culture. 'Chitrangoda' is a famous dance-drama composed by Tagore on the history of Monipuri.

The 'Meithei-Pangon' culture is quite different as this

faction of the Monipuris are the followers of Islam. But they cover only eight per cent of the Monipuri population.

However, dance is the main attraction of their culture. 'Ras-Nritya' is the most popular dance.

The musical instruments which are being used by them are, 'mridanga', 'karatal', 'mon-dira', 'sembung', 'mankang', 'meibung', 'dhakki', 'pakhwaj', 'flute', 'jhalori', 'sanai', 'rasa-monjuri', 'kangchi', and 'esraj'.

Three 'Handloom Training and Production Centre' (HTPC) were established at Adampur, Tilakpur and Madhobpur under Kamalganj thana, by government initiative. But after establishment of these three HTPC, there was no further arrangement. Even fund allocation from the government to provide financial assistance was stopped. Social organisations of the Monipuris like The Monipuri Samaj Kalyan Samity (MSKS) and the 'Probin Sangha' has been maintaining the normal activities of these three HTPC, which are playing a vital role to develop Monipuri hand looms.

A group of the Monipuri weaver told this correspondent that, unless some positive steps were not taken by the authorities to supply adequate yarn and other materials to the Monipuri weavers directly, the present condition of the weavers would not improve and they would have no alternative but to close down their factories.

They further added that, if the financial assistance like — soft loans, adequate supply of yarn and market facility are provided, the Monipuri weavers will be able to earn foreign exchange by exporting these attractive hand-loom items.

Besides this, loan facilities for the Monipuri agricultural sector is also demanded. The Monipuri farmers are efficient especially in 'robi-crop farming', it was also learned.

Not only the Monipuri people, but also the people of Moulvibazar district demanded a separate banking services to the Monipuri people from where they can get easy loan facilities with out any trouble.

## In Sylhet, Sunamganj DDT sprayed to control malaria in affected areas

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 27: Spraying of DDT has begun in the malaria affected areas of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts on Thursday.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia gave an order for spraying DDT in the wake of deteriorating situation, an official source said.

Health officials said that they began spraying the DDT in Jaintapur thana Thursday while the programme has started in Gowainghat and Companyganj thanas on Friday.

The programme will begin in the villages of Duarabazar, Dharanpasha, Biswambharpur and sadar thanas in Sunamganj district from Saturday.

Meanwhile, the overall malaria situation in these two districts has taken a serious turn during the last few days. At least 150 people were attacked by cerebral malaria during the last 36 hours in five villages of Sunamganj district, according to hospital sources.

According to unofficial

sources the disease has already claimed over 700 lives in 10 thanas under Sylhet and Sunamganj districts. However, official sources confirmed only 310 deaths.

District health department has set up a control room. Thirteen medical teams are working while 14 medical camps has been set up in the affected areas.

## 20 injured as miscreants loot house in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, May 27: Twenty people were injured, five of them seriously, when a group of armed youngsters attacked a house at Kallani Maholla in the town today, reports UNB.

The attackers ransacked the house and looted valuables worth about Tk one lakh, police said.

## 25 cases recorded on average a day

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 27: A total of 2500 different crimes were committed in ten districts under Khulna Division during the period of first three months of the current year. Everyday on average, 25 cases have been registered in each thana of the region.

According to police sources, during the period from January '95 to March '95 a total of 30 dacoity cases were registered in different police stations of these districts. Of them 2 dacoity cases were registered in Khulna, 4 cases in Bagerhat, 8 cases in Satkhira, 4 cases in Jessore, 2 cases each in Narail, Kushtia and Chuadanga and one case each in Jhenaidah and Meherpur.

On the other hand, a total of 2061 cases of riots, political clashes were also registered in these districts.

329 cases registered in Satkhira, 212 cases in Khulna, 337 cases in Bagerhat, 802 cases in Jessore, 153 cases in Jhenaidah, 161 cases in Magura, 107 cases in Narail.

214 cases in Kushtia, 110 cases in Chuadanga and 36 cases in Meherpur.

Besides, a total of 165 cases of robbery and burglary were also registered in different police stations in these districts.

## 5 dacoits caught red-handed in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 27: Local people of Shyamnagar thana caught five dacoits red-handed from village Jhapali and recovered four pipe guns, six rounds of cartridges, a knife from their possessions recently.

According to police sources, acting on a secret information, local villagers led by Kashmiri UP chairman Abdul Hamid and union VDP leader Lutfor Rahman raided the house of Mofazzel at Jhapali of the thana where the miscreants were preparing to commit dacoity at nearby villages and were able to catch them.