

Crops worth Tk 28cr damaged in Barisal

BARISAL, Aug 7: Crops and seed-bed worth over Tk 28.40 crore on 6,619 hectares of land in 10 thanas of the district were damaged in the recent flood and incessant rainfall, reports UNB.

According to district Agriculture Extension Department (AED), 4.470 metric tons of aus worth over Tk 6.42 crore on 3,745 hectares of land, 2,200 metric tons of transplanted aman worth Tk 3.61 crore on 838 hectares of land, 240 metric tons of broadcast aman worth Tk 35 lakh on 293 hectares of land, betel leaf 'Baraj' worth Tk 6.71 crore on 200 hectares of land and 7,360 metric tons of summer vegetables worth Tk 1.50 crore on 620 hectares of land were damaged in the flood and heavy rainfall.

The sources also said, seedlings worth Tk 9.81 crore on 923 hectares land of seed-bed have been destroyed.

The massive damage of seed-beds might affect the production in the coming season, local farmers apprehended.

Seminar on mother & child health care held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Aug 7: A seminar on improvement of mother and child health care and expansion of family planning programme was held at Chamber of Commerce and Industry auditorium here on Saturday, reports UNB.

Jointly organised by Health and Family Welfare Ministry and ICDDR,B, its first session was presided over by Director of Family Planning Absar Ali Mollah while the second session by Health Director Dr Mohammad Osman Gani, said an official handout.

The main objective of the seminar was to improve the mother and child health services and create awareness and motivate the field workers and people for the expansion of family planning programmes in the locality.

Mother and Child Health care and Family Planning Extension Project (Rural) is being implemented under Health and Family Welfare Ministry and ICDDR,B in Mirersora thana with the objective to examine the innovative interventions and improve the qualitative standard of mother and child health care.

Prices of building materials go up

RAJSHAHI, Aug 7: The prices of construction materials have shot up abnormally in the district hampering the construction works, reports UNB.

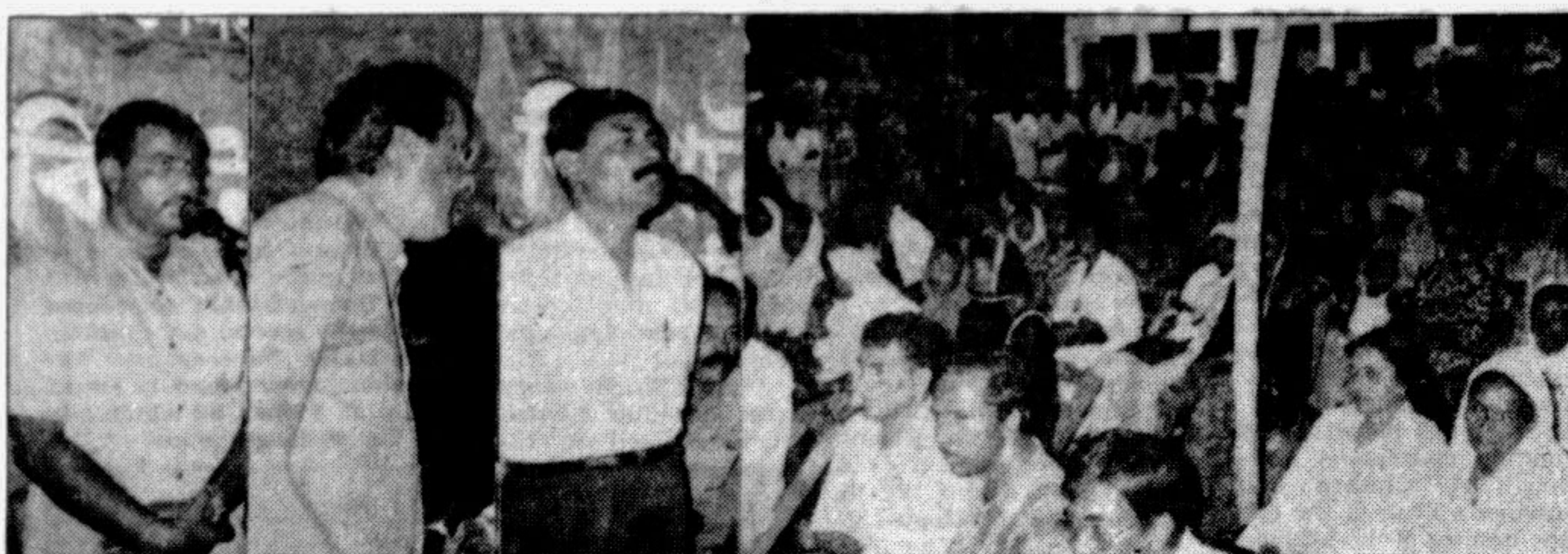
According to local people, prices of cement, rod GI sheet, bricks and sand have increased since last week.

The sudden price-hike has been attributed to the massive development works undertaken by the various departments of the government in the district.

Per bag cement is now being sold at Tk 280 as against Tk 180, one kg rod at Tk 21 as against Tk 16 and one bundle CI sheet at Tk 1900 as against the previous price of Tk 1600.

Similarly, price of bricks has increased manifold as large quantities of bricks are being used in reconstruction and repair works.

Contractors of the city corporation brought out a procession on Thursday demanding immediate measures to check the price hike of construction materials.



JHENIDAH: (From left to right) Al-haj MA Wahab, MP, Mian Sultan Ahmed, Deputy Director, Family Planning, Jhenidah and Nazrul Islam, Chairman, Umedpur, UP addressing a mass motivation programme on Maternity, Child Health and Family Planning (MCHFP) arranged by Information, Education and Motivation (IEM) unit at Royarah bazar in Saikupa thana of the district recently.

BRDB to give Tk29cr for Rural Poor Cooperative Project

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 7: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) has undertaken massive programme to distribute loans amounting Taka 29 crore among its members in 82 thanas of 13 districts of the northern and southern regions of the country during the current fiscal year, official sources said.

Under this programme of 'Palli Daridra Samabai Prokhalpa' (Rural Poor Cooperative Project), the Board will organise 2,448 cooperative associations with 61,200 of distressed members. The above-mentioned amount of loan will be distributed among these members through the cooperative associations.

A total of 8,000 feet of pucca irrigation drains will also be constructed in the areas of 100 cooperative association in the current fiscal year. More than 5,000 farmers will get irrigation facilities from the drains, it is expected. As a result production of crops will increase. Some employment opportunities will also be created for the farm-hands.

Meanwhile, BRDB dis-

tributed more than Taka 16.53 crore as loans in last two fiscal years in 82 thanas of 13 districts of the northern and southern regions under the same programme of Rural Poor Cooperative Project. In 1993-94, the Board disbursed Taka four crore and in 1994-95 Taka 12.50 crore as loans. These loans were distributed among 82,000 members of 3,984 Rural Poor Cooperative Societies.

It is learnt that each co-operative society was formed by a number of poor people taking one from each family. The members of the cooperative societies were trained in different income-generating professions like animal husbandry, poultry farming, tailoring and bamboo-trade. After training they were sanctioned loans against the concerned trades. The loans bear only a small interest.

It is to be mentioned here that any poor person can be a member of the cooperative societies formed in his/her area but widows divorcees and the women driven away by their husbands get the priority to be a member of the societies. The project

was launched in 1993 with view a to empower the poor people of the rural areas to achieve self sufficiency.

Official sources said that 67,200 feet pucca irrigation drains have been built in last two years at a cost of Taka one crore 21 lakh. Four thousand farmers are getting irrigation facilities from these drains and an additional amount of 50 thousand maunds of crops are being produced every year. During the period 20 khas (government-owned) ponds were also re-excavated and are now being used for fish farming.

Meanwhile, more than Taka 7.03 crore loans of different terms were realised in last two years. The rate of loan recovery is 100 per cent. The loans were realised in instalments on a weekly basis. This is the only instance of 100 per cent loan recovery in any government loan programmes launched so far in the country. The official sources claimed. They further claimed that the project had attracted the poor people as it had already proved its success.

Alarming increase in child, female labourers in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Aug 7: Child and female labourers are increasing alarmingly due to bad shape economy of the poor families of vast areas of Natore district.

According to an unofficial survey conducted by social welfare activists, about 20 thousand child labourers aged between 8 and 12 years are engaged in different jobs for earning their livelihood at Lalpur, Bagatpara, Baraigram, Gurudaspur, Shingra and sadar thana.

Recurrent drought, hail-storm, floods and other natural calamities have made the marginal and landless farmers destitute. The children of these poor families are

compelled to work in their tender age instead of going to school.

It is also learnt from the survey report that of the total, about 12 thousand are female child labourers.

These child labourers work in hotels, restaurants, motor garages, workshops and houses as maid servants. Some even are found pulling rickshaws, selling bidi and newspapers.

Taking advantage, some unscrupulous businessmen and smugglers engage them in unlawful activities.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), no child below the age of 15 years is allowed to be

engage in any hard work. But in Bangladesh children below that age work for more than 10 hours a day at a nominal salary.

The same survey report added that there are about 30 thousand female labourers in the district and the number is increasing rapidly. Over 50 per cent of these female labourers are unmarried. Heavy demand for dowry which their parents are unable to meet is the main reason for the situation.

These female workers earn their livelihood by husking paddy, working in brick-fields or work as day labourers and serving in different houses as maid servants.



JHENIDAH, Fish fry are being released in a local pond under third fish project in the district.

NGO implements literacy programme in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: Swamirbhar Bangladesh, a local NGO, has taken up a literacy programme to make 364 villages in nine thanas of Kushtia and Chuadanga districts free from illiteracy, reports UNB.

Under the programme, 45 villages have already been declared from illiteracy and 8,131 people of these villages have become literate.

The programme will cover sadar, Mirpur, Bheramara, Kumarkhali and Khoksha thanas of Kushtia district and sadar, Damurhuda and Alamdanga thanas of Chuadanga district.

The NGO is expected to set up 314 mass education centres to implement the programme which is completed within this month. All 364 villages will be declared literate on September 8, the National Literacy Day.

Cattle disease breaks out in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Cattle disease has broken out in an epidemic form in sadar thana in the last month hampering cultivation greatly, reports UNB.

The disease known as Anthrax, claimed at least 50 animals since mid-July creating panic among the farmers. The worst-affected areas are, Parami, Putia, Durgapur and the adjacent areas.

Farmers informed after attack of the disease the cattle appear to be restless and then die within a few hours.

They alleged that the local Livestock Department did not take any measures to save the animals and in the absence of effective control the disease is spreading day by day.

When contacted, livestock officials admitted the outbreak of the disease and said they have sent their men to Dhaka for to bring medicine.

20 MT of fish fry to be released in water bodies in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: District Fisheries Department has taken an ambitious plan to release 20 metric tons of fish fry in Khaiya Shitabidya beel in Harinakundu thana of the district under third fish project in current fiscal year, it is learnt.

According to district fisheries office sources, they have already released eleven metric tons of fish fry which was started on July 22 this year under the financial assistance from the World Bank (WB).

Sources said that in last fiscal year (FY) they released 8.2 metric tons of fish fry like Rupi, Katla, Mrigal, Grass Carp, Silver Carp, Common Carp and Thai Sarpati in different water bodies of river Kumar in Saikupa and Harinakundu thana.

One killed in road mishap

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Rahmat Ali, 25, of village Dakkhin Marua in Chougachha thana was crushed under the wheels of a stone carrying truck near Mashhati depot of Barobazar in Kalliganj thana of the district recently, it is learnt.

According to reports, Rahmat Ali was crushed when a truck dashed him from behind. Rahmat was rushed to Jessore sadar hospital immediately and the doctors declared him dead. But no case was filed in this connection so far, it was also learnt.

Another report says, three dacoits were committed at three shops at Raghunathpur Bazar near Barobazar on same night recently.

According to reports, some unknown dacoits broke the doors of the said three shops and looted goods worth at least Taka one lakh and fled, it is learnt.

Body of an abducted person found

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Body of an abducted person was recovered by police after three days of abduction, it is learnt.

According to reports, Anwar Hossain, 23, of village Baliaadangi in sadar thana of the district was abducted on July 31 from Arappur bus stand of the town.

Police said, Hossain received bullet injuries in his head and was left near Baliaadangi primary school. The deceased was an activist of outlawed Sarbahara Party, police said.

A case was filed with Jhenidah thana in this connection and the body was sent to morgue for autopsy, it was learnt.

Recent flood in B'baria damages crops worth Tk 55 crore

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 7:

Standing crops on 27,652 hectares of land worth of Tk 55.53 crore were damaged in the recent flood and heavy rainfall in seven thanas of the district, reports UNB.

According to official sources, aus on 9,875 hectares, aman on 15,294 hectares, jute on 1,447 hectares, seed-beds on 232 hectares and other crops on 884 hectares of land were damaged.

The sources also said, farmers of the district may face difficulties in cultivation of transplanting aman as a large number of farmers could not transplant the seedlings on their fields due to large scale damage of seed-beds.

They urged the agriculture extension officials to arrange seedlings from their demonstration plots to overcome the shortfall.

They also urged the concerned officials to supply quality seeds, necessary fertilisers and other necessary inputs to them at fair prices to boost agri production in the district.

BTC distributes saplings for afforestation programme

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Bangladesh Tobacco Company Limited (BTC) has distributed 5,50,000 saplings of lpl lpl free of cost from their Jhenidah leaf depot this year, it is learnt.

According to BTC sources, they have distributed the saplings as a part of nationwide afforestation programme. At least 30,000 lpl lpl saplings were planted by the both sides of high way from Bhatoy Bazar to Chandpur Road. Further, about 4,000 lpl lpl saplings were distributed among the people of Jhenidah free of cost from their stall on July 30 which was arranged at DC office premises recently sources added.

According to another report, 105 schemes were implemented against 1,000 metric tons of wheat at a cost of Taka one crore in six thanas of the district recently.

Sources said, they implemented 25 schemes in Jhenidah thana, 17 schemes in Saikupa thana, 17 schemes in Harinakundu thana, 12 schemes in Kalliganj thana, 11 schemes in Kotchandpur thana and 23 schemes in Mohepur thana of the district. Reconstruction of kuncha roads, development of educational and religious institutions were brought under the schemes, sources said.

News from Kushtia

Protest against irregular power supply

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: The town dwellers and business community here have been protesting the mismanagement of power distribution by the local electricity supply officials.

Erratic power supply and voltage fluctuation have been creating difficulties and sufferings to both the domestic and commercial consumers.

Power distribution is disrupted almost every day for over two to four hours on average, said some affected community members.

Trader owners of small business and industries, patients and students are incurring irreparable losses due to frequent power breakdown.

Anti-social activities have increased to a great extent as many parts of the town remain under darkness at night. Local people have urged the authorities to look into the matter and take immediate measures.

6845 applications filed for post of assistant teachers

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: Six thousand 845 applications for assistant teachers of government primary school of Kushtia district have been submitted through bank draft of Tk 3 lakh 42 thousand 250 as each applicant deposited 50 taka bank draft as per order of employer.

July 31 was the last date for depositing applications. In sadar thana 2070, in Daulatpur thana 1420, in Kumarkhali 1376, in Mirpur thana 867, in Bheramara 650 applications were filed.

Meanwhile, Banks have earned Taka one lakh two thousand six hundred seventy-five as commission.

According to reliable source nine post, of assistant teachers and nine posts of Head Masters remain vacant. If the posts of Head Masters are filled with promotion then there remains 18 post vacant. Besides, another 12 posts are likely to fall vacant due to retirement of teachers. Another source said that new posts are being created but number of such posts could not be known.

Letters for written examination for the applicants are likely to be issued within two months, the source said.

BSCIC gives Tk 22 lakh loan among 649 female members

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: In 1994-95 fiscal year Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) Kushtia Zone has distributed Taka 22 lakh 49 thousand as loan among 649 female small and cottage industries entrepreneurs. BSCIC source said that the target for distribution was among 431 people but it has extended the target and another 218 entrepreneurs have been provided with the loan.

Recovery of loan was stated to be 92.50 per cent. BSCIC has also imparted training among the 57 loan receivers in two groups.

Besides training has also been imparted to increase skill development for rearing poultry birds. In all BSCIC Kushtia Zone has arranged for income generation among 690 female entrepreneurs.

Revenue collection exceeds target

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: Revenue collection by Kushtia Road Transport authority was more than expected, according to official source.

Kushtia office of BRTA has collected Taka Two crore 70 lakh 51 thousand by way of Road Tax, Route permit tax and driving license fees during last 5 years.

Revenue collected in 1991-92 was Tk. 59 lakh 83 thousand 3 hundred seventy-nine. In 1992-93 revenue collected was 60 lakh 33 thousand 4 hundred twenty-two. In 1993-94 revenue collected increased to Tk. 72,02,462. In 1994-95 revenue collection increased to Taka 88,31,883.

College clerk misappropriates money

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 7: Head clerk of Mathurapur Peoples College has reportedly misappropriated huge sum of money and is now absconding.

It is reported that many students willing to appear in HSC examination deposited money with him for filling up in form but when the clerk failed to do so he disappeared with the money but the victim students are in search for him.

They should have been in schools

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Aug 7: Nazrul, Saifuddin and Khokan never went to schools due to extreme poverty and the perpetual poverty threw them to work as day labourers. Nazrul and Saifuddin are rickshaw-pullers and Khokan work as a helper at a gas welding shop.

Nazrul, 10, and Saifuddin alias Bush, 8, of village Gobindapur in Saikupa thana lost their father about seven years back. Out of four brothers and three sisters two brothers were separated from the family and Nazrul and Saifuddin both are living with their mother and sisters.

Two of the brothers when asked said that their father Abdul Hakim who was a small trader died a long time ago. Having no other alternative both the brothers started pulling rickshaw-van instead of begging. Now they pull the van on Saikupa-Royera road

down to dusk earning Taka said Saifuddin who is more or less known as Bush.

Bush asked who would send them to school? Bush informed that they hand their earning over to their mother daily. He also informed that with their little income they had completed marriage of their two sisters earlier.

Another similar victim is Khokan, a 10-year-old boy of village Kabirpur in same thana of the district. Khokan lost his father about three years back. Since the death of his father Khokan came to his uncle house and was engaged in a gas welding shop at Kabirpur baby taxi stand where he has been working as a trainee. After completion of the training period for one year Khokan is expecting Taka 200 per month as salary.



JHENIDAH: Nazrul and Bush pulling their rickshaw-van on Saikupa-Royera road.

Improved varieties of pulse seeds developed

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Aug 7: The Pulses Research Institute, set up at Ishurdi in Pabna district about four years back, with the efforts of the agricultural scientists working there, has quite successfully been able to develop several improved varieties of pulse-seeds.

Among them are three new varieties of gram-seeds, two varieties of masur, two varieties of mug and one variety of mashkai. These researches were conducted until 1994.

The Pulses Research Institute — the only such institute of its kind in Bangladesh, has named the new gram seeds as Nabin Barichhola-I, Barichhola-II and Barichhola-III. Musur seeds have been named as Ufola Barimasur-I and Barimasur-II, mug seeds have been named as Mubarik and Kantik while newly de-

veloped mashkai seeds have been named as BARI Mashkai-I. These names have recently been approved by the National Seed Board under the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Ishurdi Pulses Research Centre, however, expects that their young scientists, through further researches, would be able to develop within 1995. Two more improved varieties of gram seeds, two more varieties of musur, two more varieties of mug and two more varieties of mashkai are expected to be in the new invention list.

The Pulses Research Institute was initially financed by IDRC, a Canadian organisation and then CIDA came forward with financial aid for conducting such research work.

It was learnt that in 33

demonstration plots, covering 33 bighas of land, in the districts of Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Dinajpur, 1,564 kilograms of gram seeds were grown per hectare of land and the ordinary farmers could produce 1036 kilograms of grams by using the newly-developed seeds. Besides 20 demonstration plots for improved musur seeds were set up in Rajshahi and five other demonstration plots in Rangpur districts by the Agriculture Extension Department and it was found that in the Demonstration Plots, 1,144 kilograms of musur were grown per hectare of land while the farmers in the same areas could grow 684 kilograms of musur.

The Agriculture Extension Department set up 26 demonstration plots in

Dinajpur, 14 in Gaibandha, 10 in Bogra, five each in Jaipurhat and Naogaon and in the result, on an average 855 kilograms of mug could be produced per hectare of land while the ordinary farmers succeeded in growing 626 kilograms of mug seeds through use of the newly developed improved varieties of seeds from the Ishurdi Institutes.

So far as mashkai is concerned, three demonstration plots were set up in Rajshahi, 39 in Dinajpur and two in Rangpur districts and from these demonstration plots, 1143 kilograms of mashkai seeds were produced per hectare of land.

The ordinary farmers, in their farms, could produce 628 kilogram of mashkai per hectare of land they cultivated.

A scientist working in the Ishurdi Pulse Research Institute said that land in the areas of North Bengal like Pabna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Lalpur, Charghat, Bagatpara, Baraigram, Chatmohar, Nawabganj, Bagha, Bogra, Gaibandha, Jaipurhat and in the south, the land in Faridpur, Kushtia, Pangsha, Barisal and Patuakhali were initially found highly suitable for large-scale production of pulses and, according to him, prospects were high for producing huge quantity of pulses of different varieties in these places if improved varieties of seeds were made, available by replacing the old and out-dated ones. If proper technology and inputs required could be made available with the cultivators, they would find pulse production economically highly viable.