



Agri-Varsity (Mymensingh): Vice Chancellor professor Dr Shah Muhammad Farouq leading a colourful rally on the occasion of tree plantation programme at the Bangladesh Agricultural University campus. — Star photo

## Massive crop losses in Pabna

# Immediate rehabilitation plan needed to rescue farmers

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Aug 11: Massive agricultural rehabilitation programme requires to be launched in Pabna district immediately — following complete recession of flood water.

While talking to an official of the Agriculture Department, this correspondent came to know that officials of the department, before getting detailed account of losses incurred in the agricultural sector, they felt for the need of emergency agricultural rehabilitation and forwarded their rehabilitation estimates to their authorities in Dhaka. This they had to do because it takes time to make final assessment of losses caused by floods from the staff working in field or at grassroot level and hence the rehabilitation scheme was prepared on the basis of the preliminary report they gathered regarding the losses incurred by the flood.

In financial terms, the necessity that was estimated for vigorously launching of the Agricultural Rehabilitation

Programme this year stands at Tk 3:54 crore.

But the government has sanctioned only Tk 12:70 lakh. Thus, it is being widely apprehended that the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme in Pabna district would badly suffer since the sanctioned amount is quite inadequate.

According to an official, the losses suffered by the prolonged drought, Pabna district suffered crop damages in the last Boro season to the tune of Tk. two crore. While due to hail-storm which lashed the district in May last, the damages reached an estimated amount of Tk 1.8 crore during the same Boro season and other crops were also damaged incurring a loss of the tune of Tk. 1.75 crore. These figures were received from an official source.

The Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme for Pabna district needs to cover the above-mentioned losses already suffered before any loss

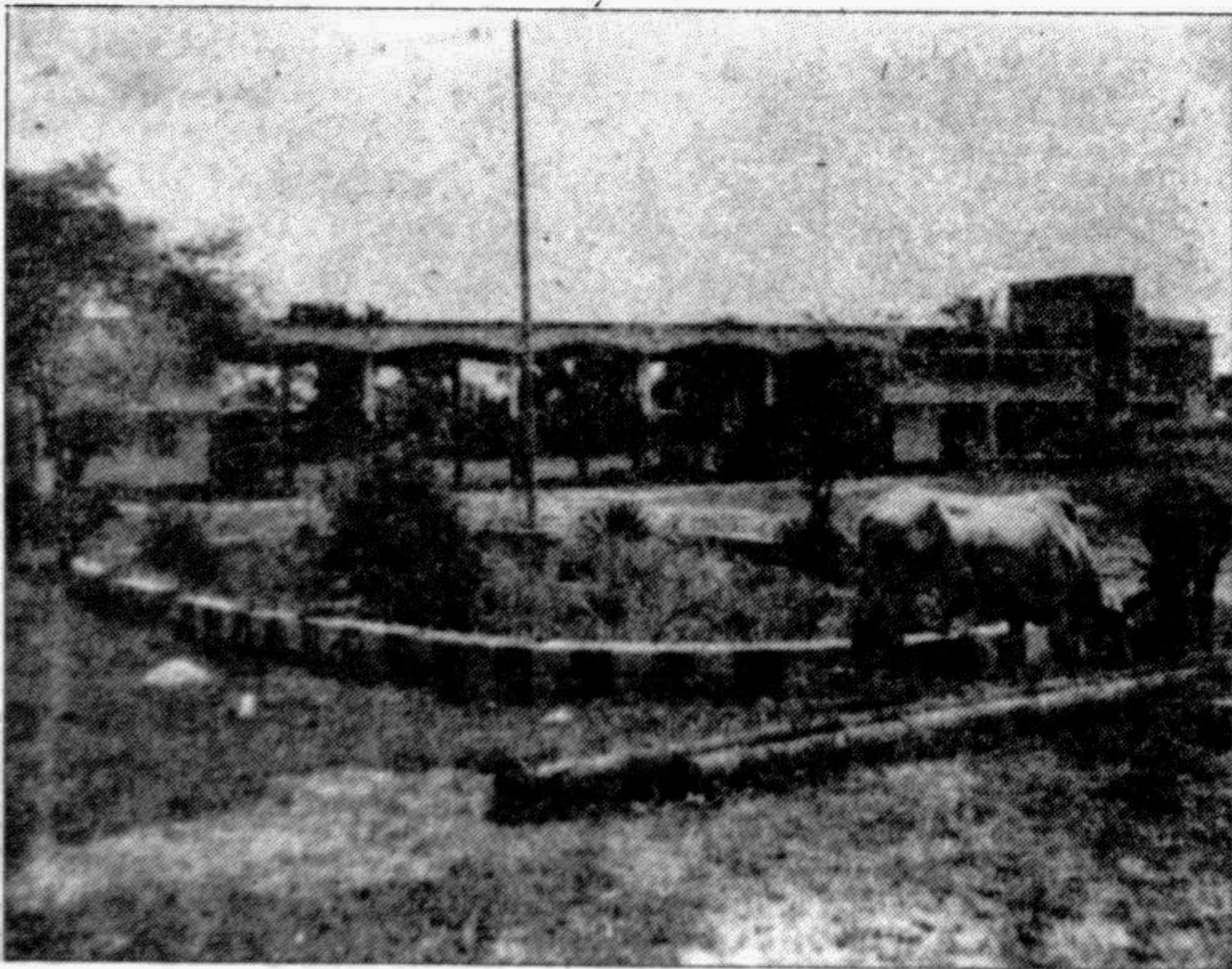
was incurred by the flood.

Although account of losses suffered in the agricultural sector could not be gathered from the Agriculture Department the district Relief and Rehabilitation Department has made an assessment and according to them standing crops over 13,979 acres of land have been completely damaged while the crops over another 14,067 acres of land have also been damaged. Thus, although the losses suffered in terms of money, have not estimated as yet, the losses in the agriculture sector in this district suffered due to the year-long unprecedented drought, hail-storm, heavy showers and floods would reach, according to unofficial but expert-level source, over an amount of Tk 30 crore in total.

Moreover, the situation has been further aggravated by the unprecedentedly huge unemployment in the rural areas, disposal of cattle through sale of cattle-heads by the poor peasants.

## Pabna BRTC depot remains closed from 1982

From Our Correspondent



PABNA: The BRTC bus depot at Pabna is lying closed virtually since 1982, only one and a half year after its construction. — Star photo

PABNA, Aug 11: The Pabna depot of the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC), with about 6.5 bighas of land, newly-constructed office-rooms, ticket counter, waiting rooms, parking shed, workshop, godown and a huge courtyard is lying officially closed since 1982.

Meanwhile, the depot, constructed at a cost of Tk 26 lakh in 1980 has turned into a grazing field for the cattle. The depot has turned into safe shelter for the armed mastaans for committing all sorts of crimes.

The depot which was constructed with the view of turning the Pabna depot as the main depot of the BRTC in North Bengal, was abandoned on October 8, 1982. People from all walks of life, specially the business community through than Chambers of Commerce and Industries, the lawyers through their Bar Association, and the journalists apposed the move of closing down the BRTC depot in Pabna.

Unlike many of the depots in the country Pabna depot was earning profit. But the protests went in vain due to imposition of Martial Law Administration then ruling the country.

However, with the gradual easing of the political situation, all the political parties, professional bodies and peo-

ple from all walks of life demanded immediate re-opening of the depot and resumption of BRTC bus and truck services by bringing back all the buses and trucks which were earlier shifted from Pabna to Dhaka following the closure of the depot.

Ultimately, following the general elections held in 1991, the depot was re-opened with four buses only.

Meanwhile, demands were raised for increasing the number of BRTC buses and coaches — at least to 40.

## Tk 5.1 crore tax still remain unrealised with KCC

KHULNA, Aug 11: A total of Tk 5.1 crore tax of Khulna City Corporation is not yet realised from different government, private and autonomous bodies due to various reasons including legal complications, reports UNB. Official sources said, the outstanding revenue included about Tk 2.85 crore to government institutions, Tk 44 lakh to autonomous bodies, Tk 24 lakh to sick industries, Tk 15 lakh to non-government schools and colleges and Tk 1.04 crore to institutions established on railway properties.

as it were before the closure. It was surprising to find that instead of increasing the number of buses, according to demands it was getting reduced.

One enquiry, the local BRTC authorities informed, as no new buses were sent to Pabna, the old vehicles that were put into service were not rendering proper service and frequently getting out of order. Ultimately, all four buses were not even fit for repair. Gradually, the staff were taken back to Dhaka, unofficially abandoning the Pabna depot once again. Since then, the depot remain closed, for about two and a half years.

The Deputy Commissioner of Pabna, when contacted, could not say anything optimistic about re-opening the BRTC Pabna Depot. Meanwhile, the private bus truck owners and their employees are running a monopoly business. Since there is no rail river or air-link with Pabna town, road communication is the only sources of communication.

The people here, belonging to all sections, beliefs and affiliations helplessly watch as the private bus and truck-owners frequently resort to strikes — even for weeks together and turn the helpless passengers into their captives.

## Shortage of seeds likely to hamper aman output

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 11: Acute crisis of aman seed has been prevailing in seven thanas of Satkhira district. The thanas are Kalaroa, Tala, Assasuni, Debhata, Kaligonj Shyam-nagar and Sadar.

It is feared that transplanted aman cultivation will be hampered due to the seed crisis during the current season. The buying and selling of aman seed per maund at present ranges from Taka 560 to 580 in place of Taka 480.

The production of aman was hampered last year because of drought, this year too there has been heavy loss in the IRRI yield due to unprecedented drought and shortage of urea fertilizer. Hence, in order to compensate the loss incurred an extensive plan has been taken for aman cultivation in the district.

The Agriculture Extension Department said, a total of one lakh twenty seven thousand hectares of land under seven thanas of the district has been fixed as target for the aman cultivation this season.

Of them 23 thousand 5 hundred hectares in sadar thana, 22 thousand hectares in Assasuni, 19 thousand hectares in Kaligonj, 22 thousand 5 hundred hectares

in Shyamnagar, 7 thousand 5 hundred hectares in Debhata, 19 thousand 5 hundred hectares in Tala and 12 thousand 5 hundred hectares in Kalaroa thana.

For this about 3 thousand metric tons of aman seed is needed. It was learnt that the Deputy Director (sales) Agriculture Extension Department has supplied only two thousand kgs of aman seed for the district. The farmers of the district have no aman seed. Because of drought and poverty they sold all the paddy they produced last year. Obviously there has been a crisis of aman seed in the open market. So the farmers have become fully dependent on the government seed stores. Seeds are supplied from the thana sale centres of the district irregularities in the supply of seed to the dealers have created another problem.

The Agricultural Extension Department said, there has been no shortage of agricultural inputs like the necessary seed, fertilizer, irrigation facilities. This year the yield of aman would be to the tune of 14 lakh 19 thousand 6 hundred 90 metric tons, the source added.

## Dacoits become active in Daulatpur thana of Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 11: Cases of dacoities are on increase in Daulatpur thana as police has failed to cope with the situation.

On August 1, dacoits looted 10 houses, killing one and looting valuables worth over Tk one lakh people and police said.

It is reported that in village Mathurapur, Chardiar and Sadipur, dacoits swooped on ten houses and several shops one after another. They terrorised the villagers by exploding bombs and firing shots from cut rifles. Villagers however, tried to resist them. Abdul Bari, 28, died on the spot while Amirul Islam, 30, Dulal, 27, Sabiruddin, 32, Hamu, 25, Alfaz, 35, were injured.

Dacoits also attacked house of Basiruddin of Sadipur and five other houses and looted valuables worth Tk 30,000. On the same night dacoits attacked houses of Oil Dewan and Ritai Malitha of Chardiar village and looted valuables worth Tk 50 thousand. Dacoits also

kidnapped an assistant teacher, Manik Ali of a private primary school of Futani bazar in village Chora Mallikpara. Police however could not trace the kidnapped teacher local people alleged.

A case has been registered with Daulatpur thana in this connection. Dead body of Abdul Bari has been sent to Kushtia General Hospital for post mortem.

On August 3 dacoits attacked the house of Golam Sarwar of village Tekala under Adabaria union of Daulatpur thana but the inmates resisted the miscreants dacoits hurled bombs and fired shots from Rifle and as a result Golam Sarwar and his younger brother Ruhul Amin, 42, received bullet wounds while Hilari Khatun was injured by sharp weapons. The injured were sent to Kushtia General Hospital.

Police action in this respect could not be known immediately.

## Private dairy farm owners get incentive

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 11: To promote dairy farming the government has sanctioned more than Taka 7.3 lakh as incentive bonus for the private dairy farm owners Satkhira district.

Professor Farida Rahman MP has distributed cheques of incentive bonus to 22 private dairy farm owners in seven thanas of Satkhira district at a simple ceremony recently.

Dr Ainul Haq District Live Stock Officer presided over the ceremony while Samsun-nahar Ahmed MP Muhammad Abdus Salam Deputy Commissioner, Satkhira, Dr Hasan Imam, GM Rahman Manager Krishi Bank, Satkhira and Nazrul Islam President Private Dairy Farm Owners Association, Satkhira spoke on the occasion.

In her speech Prof Farida

Rahman underscored the need for establishing more dairy farms so that the country can meet the deficit of milk. "If we establish more dairy farms in private initiatives, it will also create job opportunities to the unemployed people of the country," she added.

When contacted Dr Nazrul Islam President Private Dairy Farm Owners Association, Satkhira told The Daily Star that 12 more farms are under active consideration of the authority concern for incentive bonus during the current financial year. He added that about 52 farm owners of Satkhira district are facing great troubles due to acute scarcity of fodder. He also urged upon the government to supply quality cows and to provide adequate medical facilities for cattle heads.

## Ctg CMM court badly needs more room, magistrates

CHITTAGONG, Aug 11: Judicial activities in the Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate Court are being hampered severely for lack of accommodation and adequate number of magistrates, reports UNB.

Court sources said that the number of pending cases in the CMM court stood at 12,000 till June 30, 1995. Of the pending cases, 9,000 are in general file and the rest in trial file.

Besides the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, only five other magistrates are working in the court in this busy metropolitan city of 30 lakh people, they said.

The hill-top court, built on November 30, 1979, as yet has no conference room and a special chamber for the CMM.

In the absence of CMM, emergency judicial activities in the court come to a halt as there is no additional CMM to officiate in his place. In contrast, the Dhaka CMM has

two additional CMMs. Magistrates of the Chittagong CMM court have to work under tremendous pressure as each of them are to dispose around 550 cases every month instead of the usual 250.

The prisoners are seen standing in the court corridor due to lack of accommodation in its lack-up.

Since its inception 15 years back, the court has no record room and as such important documents and records of the court cannot be preserved properly. Even there is no library and store room, the sources said.

"There is no congenial atmosphere in the court to perform judicial activities. It is painful for all — magistrate, lawyer and client," said an aggrieved lawyer.

The concerned lawyers and senior CMM officials suggested that the open space adjacent to the Court building be used to extend the court.

## No market for selling milk

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 11: The Dairy farm owners of Saikupa thana of the district are facing troubles due to fodder crisis. It's high price, want of marketing facilities of milk and negligence of live stock department authorities, it is learnt.

According to reports, there are 22 registered dairy farms in Saikupa thana. Out of total, only seven dairy farms received government incentives in 1992-93. Since then no dairy farm received the incentives. As a result, the dairy farm owners are losing interest every day, it was learnt.

Talking to some dairy farm owners it was gathered that an improved variety of cow requires about 10kg of fodder daily which costs at least Taka 30. But it cost between Taka 22 and 25 a few months back.

Further, there is no market at Saikupa which can ensure fair price of milk, they added. As a result dairy farm

owners are compelled to sell milk at a lower rate between Taka 8 and 10. The rate is even lower in rural areas, they also informed.

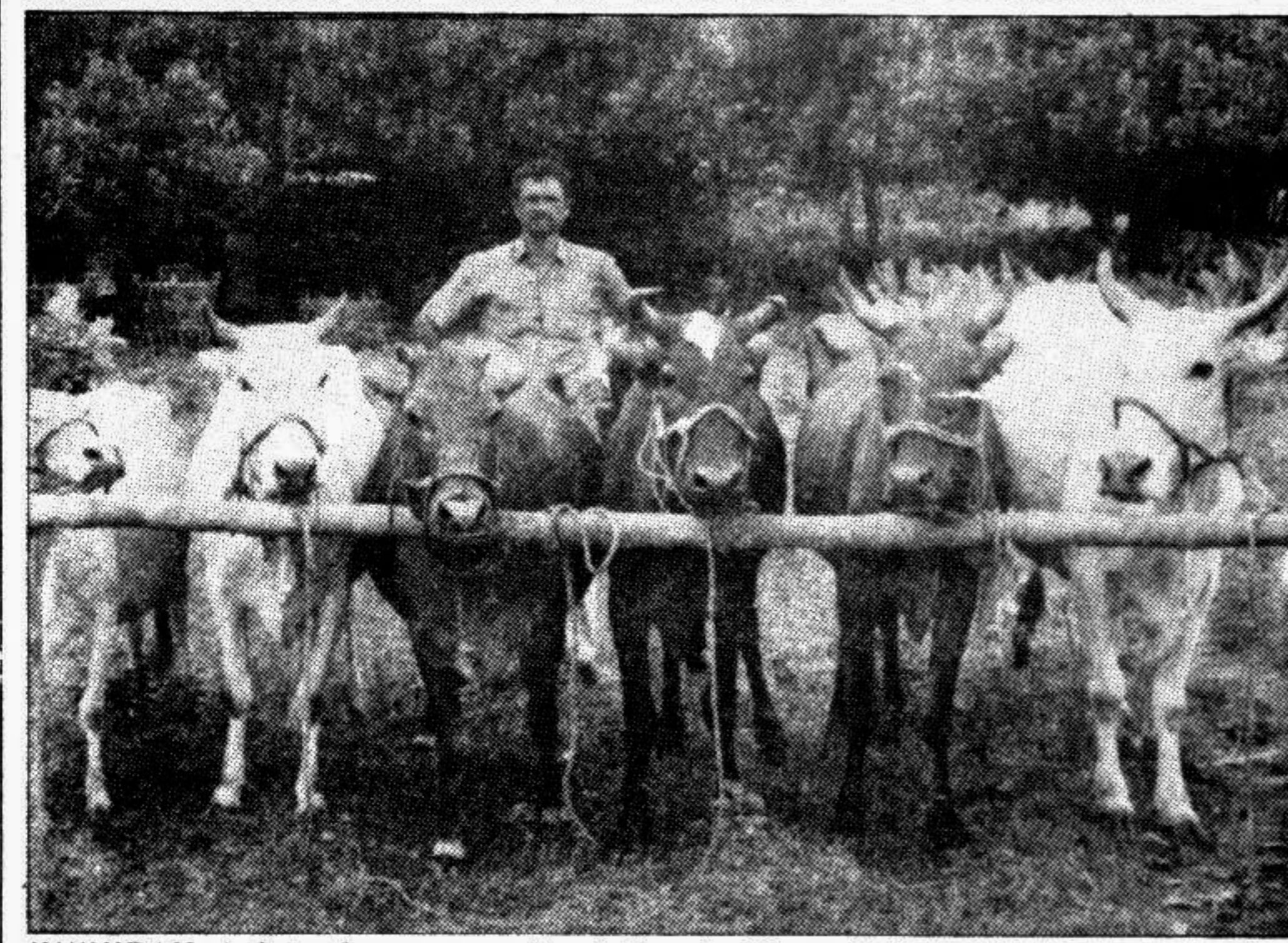
Afzal Hossain Khan, a dairy farm owner of village Dehtala in Saikupa thana, who is also a headmaster of a government primary school told that his dairy farm did not received any government incentives for his five improved variety cows. Khan told that many dairy farm owners like him may decide closing their business. He expressed his opinion that the authorities have failed to create any market for selling milk in the localities. As a result the dairy farm owners are facing troubles with their milk. The condition in rural areas are even worse, he added.

Another dairy farm owner, Nayeab Ali of village Gobindapur in Saikupa thana gave a different opinion. He said, that he established his dairy farm with only three cows in 1990. Now the number of

cows in his farm stands at eight including two calves. He is earning at least Taka 6,000 out of selling milk excluding fodder for the animals, he added. To meet the fodder crisis, Nayeab Ali said, he is cultivating nappier and maize on his one bigha of land adjacent to his house. Selling cow's milk he can easily run his seven member family and he even purchased small pieces of land, said Nayeab Ali.

Ali also informed that dairy farm business is least risky and most profitable.

When the correspondent tried to contact the thana Live stock Officer at Saikupa it was learnt that the post of thana Live stock Officer (TLO) is lying vacant for long, which has created the troubles of the dairy farm owners and people. District Live Stock Officer sources Jhenidah informed that one Veterinary Assistant Surgeon (VSA) was posted in Saikupa but he did not join as yet.



JHENIDAH: A dairy farm owner, Ajmal Hossain Khan of village Dehtala in Saikupa thana is seen with his cattle. — Star photo

## Massive plan for aman cultivation in greater Rangpur region

RANGPUR, Aug 11: Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has taken up a massive programme to bring a total of 10 lakh hectares of land under aman cultivation in eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur region during the current season, reports UNB.

According to official sources, AED has fixed a target to produce 21.59 lakh metric tons of aman paddy in the districts.

Officials said of the total, 6.74 lakh hectares will be brought under high yielding variety while the rest under local variety.

Another news added: Cotton Development Board has brought as many as 3,250 hectares of land under cotton cultivation in four districts of greater Rangpur during the current season.

Officials estimated about 6,520 bales of cotton will be produced in Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur districts.

They said necessary seeds, fertilizer, loans and other inputs were already provided to the farmers for successful implementation of the programme.

## In PDB's western zone Power bills worth Tk 120 cr remain unrealised

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Aug 11: Power bills amounting 120 crore has been lying unrealised with different government, semi government and autonomous institutions including 23 pourasavas in the western zone of the Power Development Board (PDB), it was learnt.

For realising the outstanding electricity bills, the PDB authority has already started snapping the defaulter's power connection.

Of the total amount of outstanding bill, Taka 17 crore is lying unrealised with Khulna City Corporation. Besides a total of Taka 15 crore has been lying unrealised with 23 pourasavas including Satkhira, Bagerhat, Jessore, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Barisal, Jhalokati, Potuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Pirojpur, Faridpur, Shariatpur, Bhanga, Kaligonj, Maheshpur, Kotchandpur, Kalia Kalaroa and Mongla pourasava under Khulna zone of the PDB.

Even after repeated appeal by the PDB authorities to pay the outstanding electricity bills, the Khulna City Corporation and pourasava

authorities are not paying the electricity bills regularly it was alleged. The PDB authority has taken up a programme to snap the water and emergency department's electricity connections of these pourasavas.

On the other hand, a total amount of Taka 20.50 crore is lying unrealised with 26 departments under various ministries in 21 districts of Khulna zone of the PDB. Of the total amount, Taka 5.50 crore is lying unrealised with different department of various ministries functioning in Khulna city, corporation. Taka 6.50 crore with government and non-government jute mills, Taka 25 crore with middle and small size industrial units, and Taka 40 crore lying unrealised with general consumers of the zone.

## Breast feeding day

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Aug 11: World Breast Feeding Week was observed here in a befitting manner. To mark the occasion, seminars and discussion meetings on the benefit of breast feeding were held.

On August 5, the fifth day of the week, a discussion meeting was held at the office of women affairs department at Kamalapur in the town with Rushema Begum, Headmistress of Ishan Girl's High School in the chair.

Police Super, Fazlur Rahman attended the function as chief guest while doctor Shah-A-alam and doctor Khan Anwar Faruq were the special guests.

Among others Abdul Ali Sikder, President, Faridpur Press Club, Mamtaz Ali and Dr Zakir Hossain spoke on the occasion.

The speakers stressed the need of breast feeding for healthy growth of babies.

## Two killed in separate incidents in Khulna

KHULNA, Aug 11: Two people were killed by armed miscreants in separate incidents in remote areas of the district last week, police and hospital sources said, reports UNB.

One Khan Ekhas, 35, was killed by his rival when two groups of people entangled in violent skirmish over the ownership of a disputed shrimp farm at Kashipur-Alipur area in Rampal thana on Monday.



JHENIDAH: Police personnel with arrested Mokam Ali and Moksed Ali with 2200 grams of seized ganja.