

Job opportunities for women shrinking

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, January 29: The unusual spurt of women labour force in Gopalganj district has been causing concern among the social welfare activists. Female labourers seek work but the opportunities for their work have been shrinking.

According to social welfare and labour leaders, thousands of the female day labourers are seen husking paddy and working in the brick fields, shrimp processing factories and taking part in earth digging. Unmarried girls and divorcees constitute the majority of the women labourer they said.

Recurring flood, cyclone and other natural calamities for the last few years have been damaging crops in the district affecting small and marginal farmers adversely.

The leaders called upon the government to create job opportunities for poor women by extending soft credit facilities for small and cottage industries in order to

make them self-reliant. There are about 9,000 female labourers in Sadar, Muktadpur, Kasiani, Kotilipara and Tongipara thanas of the district.

A large number of young women found working are either dowry victims or divorcees. The poor parents cannot provide them with food and shelter and that is why they are out to earn livelihood. The number of women labourers is increasing day by day in the district, specially in the rural areas due to cyclone and other calamities which damage crops and dwelling houses extensively.

The women labourers engage in various works including construction allegedly been paid less than their male counterparts, though they perform the same duty. The concerned authorities have been urged to look into the matter and take appropriate steps to mitigate the sufferings of the women labourers.

Water pumps, motor parts being frequently lifted in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Jan 29: Proliferation of parts and engines of shallow, deep-tubewells and low-lift pumps, has been rampant in various places in the district during the last one month adversely affecting poor farmers for their irrigation and Boro cultivation with the beginning of the season.

According to informants, a total of 80 tubewells have been stolen from different villages under eight thanas of the district.

The detailed information said that 22 shallow machines have been stolen from different villages under Monirampur thana, 16 from Shirsaha thana, 15 from Chowgacha thana, 10 from Keshabpur thana, nine from Sadar thana, 10 from Obhainagore thana and seven from Baghepara thana during the period.

According to source, an organised gang is engaged in the pilferage.

Construction work of ferry ghat severely hampered as water level in river Jamuna further falls

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, Jan 29: Due to the drying up of the river Jamuna, much earlier than expected this year, the construction of the proposed ferry ghat at Natakola with the object of shifting the existing ferry ghat of Nagarbari, the construction work is being seriously hampered.

It is further being apprehended that the construction work of the Natakola ferry ghat, taken up at an estimated cost of Tk 17 crores, might have to be abandoned as the water level of the Jamuna site at Natakola has abnormally fallen. The area might turn into a vast char area. The river has been speedily drying up and the authorities here have approached the higher authorities to abandon the idea of shifting the Nagarbari ferry ghat to the proposed site at Natakola. They have, as an alternative measure, also suggested to shift the Nagarbari ferry ghat to Natibpur ghat to make the shifting meaningful.

The Pabna District Development Co-ordination Committee, at its recent meeting held in meeting hall of Pabna Collectorate, with Mohammad Ishaque Ali in the chair, opined that the whole scheme of shifting Nagarbari ferry ghat to Natakola ghat needs to be immediately abandoned in view of the condition and other aspects of the river Jamuna at Natakola point. The meeting considered that if the Nagarbari ferry ghat was shifted to Natakola, the very purpose of shifting would be frustrated as Natakola ghat, even if turned into a ferry ghat, would not be sustainable one and within three to

five years, shifting from Natakola would be necessary.

The meeting considered that if Nagarbari ferry ghat was shifted to Natibpur, further down stream from Natakola, the shifting would be quite appropriate and meaningful from all points of view. The meeting, attended by the heads of all departments connected with development activities, after making thorough and exhaustive deliberations, recommended

Arms, ammunition recovered, three held

JHENIDAH, Jan 29: Law enforcing agencies, during the last three days till Sunday last, recovered seven firearms, seven rounds of bullets and arrested three people from different parts of the district, reports UNB.

The recovered arms included three country-made guns, one pipegun, two Indian-made revolvers and one shotgun. Besides, they also seized some spare parts of pipeguns.

During the period, police and army arrested Islamuddin and Abdul Majid from Kuallagacha village and Uttam Kumar from Kushalpur Chapatala for possessing illegal arms.

In another raid, Bangladesh Rifles seized 19 cows and 13 buffaloes worth about Tk two lakh from Satbreze in Harinakundu thana on Thursday last.

Jawans of Chuadanga BDR, while patrolling the area, seized the goods, but the smugglers managed to escape.

that in view of the strict realities, the construction of Natakola ferry ghat be stopped and the scheme abandoned and a new scheme be soon adopted for the shifting of Nagarbari ferry ghat, as it is of utmost importance, be implemented by shifting the same to Natibpur (and not to Natakola). They stressed the importance of constructing a new ferry ghat to Natibpur in the interest of improving the road communication system between the northern and eastern zones of the country.

The existing Nagarbari ferry ghat must be abandoned and shifted to Natibpur and not to Natakola as has been decided by the government.

Various agencies of the government also decided a few years back but for reasons best known to them, they ultimately decided in favour of shifting the same to Natakola and, according to various sources, this decision in favour of Natakola arrived at not on technical and technological findings but upon the political influence exercised by a powerful quarter of the area.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that pontoon has been installed within 500 yards of Natakola ghat for the ferries. The construction of 11 kilometre long pucca road from Kazarhat to Natakola at a cost of Tk seven crores have also been progressing fast. Moreover, widening and repair, reconstruction of Nagarbari-Kashinathpur road, having a length of about six kilometres and a bridge of big size, both in length and breadth, is also rearing com-

pletion at a huge cost under the World Bank project. But all these expenses might not bring the desired result since these are all aimed at feeding the proposed Natakola ferry ghat which was now under serious question at this initial stage. Hence, the whole issue deserves a prompt and serious consideration.

It may be further recalled that if the Nagarbari ferry ghat is shifted to Natibpur, the distance from Arichaghat to Natibpur would come down from 12 nautical miles to only three miles straight west of Aricha. The water level at Natibpur being extremely deep, this ghat is the most suitable.

Besides, the distance from Aricha ferry ghat would be narrowed by long nine miles and reduced only to three miles, crossing the river Jamuna from one end to the other (Aricha-Natibpur and Natibpur-Aricha) would take only half an hour — compared to two to three hours as was being required for plying of the ferries between Aricha and Nagarbari. This would automatically and substantially reduce the fuel consumption by the ferries and reduce the plying expenses substantially. In its turn the ferry charges both for the passengers and the vehicles could also be greatly reduced.

The frequent gain of vehicles which are being noticed both at Aricha and Nagarbari ferry ghats since July, 1955 (flood season) and has still been continuing once or twice almost every month causing a terrible disruption in the road communication system between the northern and eastern zones of the country.

of thoughts and works.

According to him, Balu Dewan was a bit exceptional. He was superior to them in all respects. In respect of popularity he was on the top. His unique character and conduct evoked admiration, he added.

Amjad Hossain also informed that after centuries of his death, Pir Balu is still fresh among the new generations and his popularity is on the increase. He is familiar with every family in southwestern zone of the country.

But there is great controversy among the devotees of Pir Balu Dewan about his actual grave. They claim it at three different places.

One group claim that Balu was buried at Belamat under Shamsarupdah union of Chowgacha thana. They claim that he died there on third Tuesday in the month of Bhadra BS. Accordingly this group observe his death anniversary. But it is observed in miniature form.

It is also reported that the extension of the Shrine was done by ex-chairman of the local union Abdul Kader Mirdha. Golam Rasul of Mridha family told The Daily Star that once Kader Mridha, was attacked with severe stomach-pain. He consulted a good number of doctors but in vain. Lastly he visited the grave of Pir Balu Dewan at Belamat, sought his grace to rid the pain. Shortly after he was relieved from it and to show respect of gratitude, Kader Mridha got the extension work done. Golam Rasul added.

Another group claim that Balu passed away at Dhupadi under Kaliganj thana of Jhenidah district on last Tuesday in the same month. He was buried there. This group, since long observe his death anniversary on that day.

Third group, majority in number, claim that Balu Pir expired at Hazrakhana on last Tuesday in the month of Bhadra and was buried there. 'Disa' i.e. death anniversary of the Pir is observed here accordingly in bigger way.

The Shrine at Dhupadi is under care of Saker Ali for the last three years. He was appointed by local committee of the Shrine management.

One of his associates, Fazar Ali, who was with Abdul Jalil in the Shrine for a decade, told The Daily Star that where from he came and where was his home address, is still unknown. Abdul Jalil was buried within the compound of the Shrine. Fazar told.

Whenever visitors from outside happen to come, fall in confusion to ascertain which is the real Shrine or grave of the Pir.

It is however, a point to note that all the three Shrines look alike in design. A source on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star that many of disputes about the Shrines and Pir can go if a team of historians are assigned to investigate and find out the actual facts.

Dispute over recognition of original Shrine of legendary Pir Balu Dewan

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Jan 29: The holy shrine of legendary Pir (saint) Hazrat Shah Balu Dewan, on west bank of the river 'Kapadai' under Narayanpur union of Chowgacha thana in the district became a dispute between two rival groups in the village for long on issue of ownership adversely affecting its management, maintenance and development.

According to latest reports, both parties, one led by Abdul Halim and other led by Golam Hossain are contesting each other in court for legal decision.

Information said that during mid-eighties, a case was filed in the court of Assistant Judge, Chowgacha thana by a group of local people against the Shah family, who are in possession of the Shrine.

Abdul Halim along with some other people of the village being the plaintiff while Ghulam Hossain, son of Shah Abdul Ghani, on behalf of his father and other members of the family, appeared as defendants. It may be noted here that this family is in possession of the Shrine from time immemorial.

In the court of Assistant Judge, Chowgacha, plaintiff lost the case and claim of the defendant, was proved valid.

But the appeal was preferred to the court of District and Sessions Judge, Jessore shortly after the decision of lower court was reversed on full hearing of the case.

Defendants, then moved in the High Court, that ordered stay of all further proceedings of the case pending High Court's decision.

Meanwhile, the plaintiff group in connivance with local thana administration formed a committee, headed by local union Chairman and set-up a madrasa named, 'Pir Balu Dewan Madrasa' in the village.

They met the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) demanding lion's share from the annual income of the Shrine to run the madrasa.

Accordingly TNO called both the parties in a meeting and offered the proposal to the owners' group. But they refused. This refusal of the defendants, provoked bitter displeasure of the TNO who took it as prestige issue. Later, he got the total fund of the Shrine distributed equally between the madrasa committee and family members of the Shrine.

A devotee of the Holy Shrine and noted personality in the village Rafiuddin termed the new plan of the plaintiff in the name of madrasas as conspiracy to damage the Shrine and kick out the Shah family out of possession from the Shrine.

When contacted, Rafiuddin told The Daily Star that the land on which the holy Shrine now stands, belonged to Hattar Shah. From him, it was handed down to his present generation through inheritance.

Detailing the generation-chart, Rafiuddin told that Hattar Shah was the maternal uncle of Balu Dewan. Golapdi Shah, son of Hattar Shah owned the property after death of his father. Moslem Shah son of Golapdi Shah and Abdul Ghani Shah, son of Moslem Shah, inherited the property.

Ghani Shah, an old age man now hardly able to move about has given all responsibilities to his son Golam Hossain to look after the Shrine. He is in fact, the virtual caretaker of the holy Shrine. Rafiuddin also informed that

told that the Shrine was ancestral property of the Ghani Shah family based on legal documents. He accused some local vested interests for their criminal intention to destroy the family out of malice and party rivalry.

When contacted Ghani Shah, told that his knowledge and information about the legendary Pir, are based on hearsays and miracles, from different sources, which are still prevailing.

According to the sources Balu Dewan was born at Jatrapur under Hakimpur union of Chowgacha thana centuries

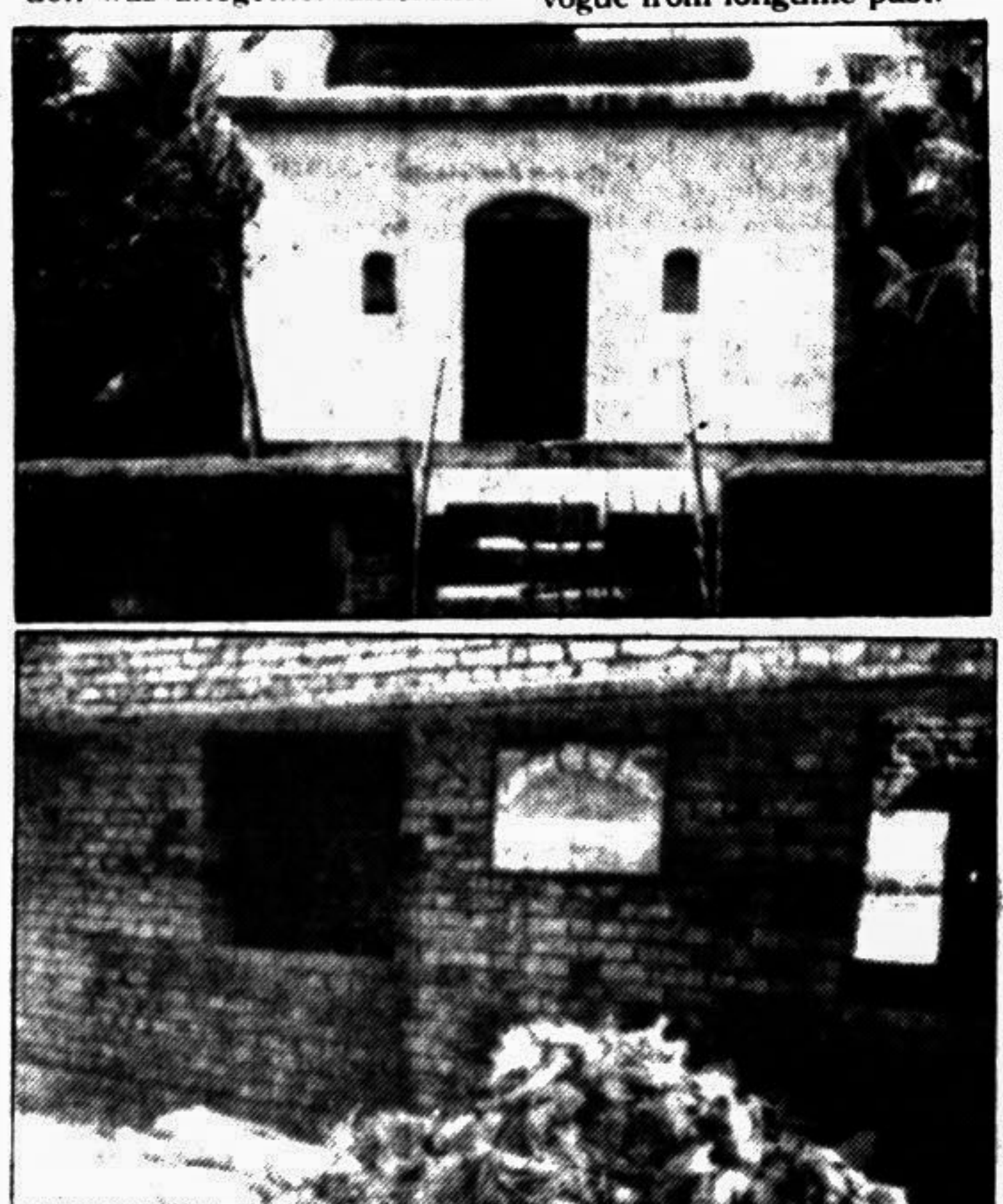
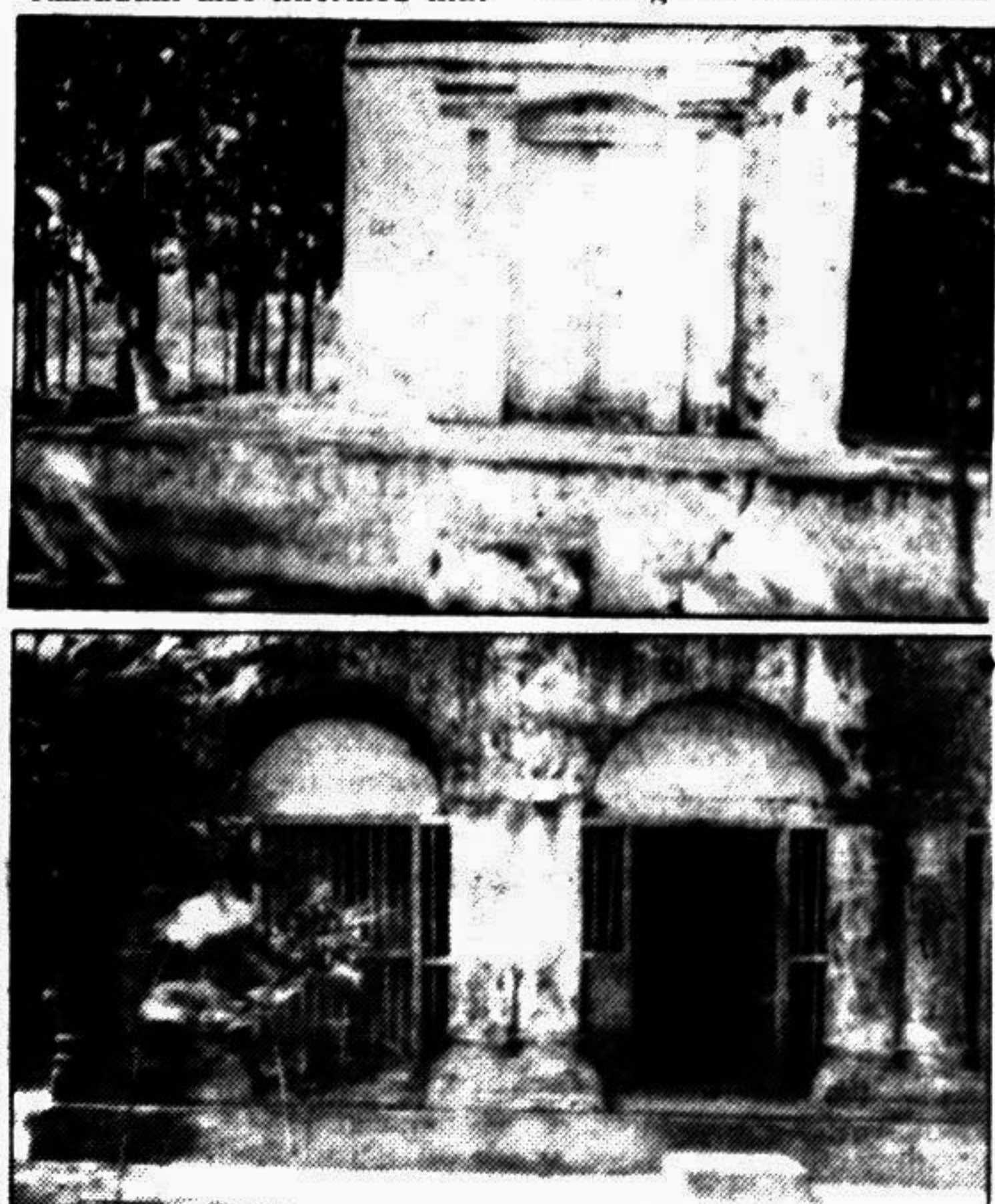
ulious incidents, displayed by him during his life time have been depicted in the book. He was highly spoken of for his spiritual power, the author said.

Balu Dewan, as learnt from various hearsays, was non-communal free, and frank. His deep affection for mankind and love for all endeared him. He was opposed to social injustice and discriminations. Mysticism was the philosophy that guided his life.

Balu was a great physician but nature of his prescription was altogether different.

They hold musical soiree, discussion on the life and activities, philosophy and code of ethics of the Pir.

Massive turn-out at the Shrine on the occasion of 'Disa', is a measure of popularity of the Pir Balu Dewan. On the day, hundreds of men, women offer green vegetable including fish, birds, goat, rice and banana at the Shrine. Mostly these are tokens of their gratitude for either recovery of diseases or from any sort of trouble. The source told that these were the conventional practices, in vogue from longtime past.



Outer view (top left) of holy shrine of legendary Hazrat Pir Balu Dewan at Belamat under Sharupdah union of Chowgacha thana in Jessore. Outer view (top right) of holy shrine of legendary Hazrat Pir Balu Dewan at Hazrakhana under Narayanpur union of Chowgacha thana in Jessore. Outer view (bottom left) of Hazrat Pir Balu Dewan at Dhupadi under Kaliganj thana in Jhenidah. The outer view (bottom right) of Hazrat Pir Balu Dewan Madrasa at Hazrakhana.

the land measuring 24 decimals, on which the Shrine was built originally belonged to Dighi-Krishnanagar Madaraj Estate in the district of Nadia during British rule.

This plot of land was donated to Golapdi Shah by Maharaja Produtt Kumar Thakur Bahadur KT through executing 'Heba nama' or deed — in 1225 BS to protect the holy Shrine from erosion of mighty Kapadai. Shah family by generation, is maintaining managing and developing it since then without dispute or protest from any corner.

Rafiuddin mentioned three other names as reference in this connection. They were Sonu Mia of Chandpara and Abdul Hossain Mollik of Bade-Khanpur under the same union and Sarafat Ali of Ikterpur under Mohehpur thana in Jhenidah. Sonu Mia and Sarafat Ali died a decade ago.

Abul Hossain Mollik is alive. He is a dedicated social worker and valiant Freedom Fighter (FF).

When contacted Mollik

ago. His exact date of birth is unknown. He said that Balu lost his parents during his early childhood and had none to look after him. He was helpless and homeless.

Hattar Shah brought him to his home where he began to grow up. Under his personal care. But he did not live long. Balu plunged into sea of miseries. His early life was full of sorrow and sufferings, misery and hardship. He remained unfed and unclothed all the time roaming about in the open street.

But despite all odds, he found shelter among the villagers due to certain rare qualities of his personal character and conduct. He was liked by most for charming behaviour, simple manner, politeness. These, subsequently, helped him to attain social eminence in course of time.

Balu was illiterate, orphan and unmarried. In the book 'Legends of Jessore' author Hossain Uddin Hossain, has discussed in details various aspects of his eventful career. Lot of mirac-

incidents that are in prevalence, tell that he never offered medicine or prescription but any patients whoever he or she might be and whatever complicated disease he or she had, got speedy recovery after its coming to his ears. Still lot of patients, including men, women and children visit his Shrine from distant places to seek his blessings for recovery from diseases. Rush of patients is marked on every Tuesdays and Saturdays in particular.

On enquiry it is learnt that faith healing was the system of his treatment. There is no denying the fact that there have been tremendous progress in medical science in the country for medicare. But yet rural people frequently visit the Shrine of Balu Dewan in case of any complicated health problem.

Every last Tuesdays of Bhadra in BS is a historical day of the Shrine. 'Disa' is observed here on the day and thousands of people from across the country attend. They come to pay respect to the memory of the sacred soul.

Tender Notice

Military Engineer Services (Army)

1. Applications are invited by AHQ, QMG's Br, DW&CE (Army) Dhaka Cantt. for issue of tender documents for the following works. Applications to be submitted within 07 days from the date of publication of the advertisement:

- Constr. of office and store (single storied with double storied foundation) including internal/external svcs at Comilla Cantt.
- Provision of barbed wire fencing from gun garage to Tipra bazar MP check post at Comilla Cantt.
- Constr. of CH/DH and recreation room over it incl. internal/external svcs at Comilla Cantt.
- Constr. of 1x6 bay MT garage (2 storied, repairing garage in ground floor & store in 1st floor incl. internal/external svcs at Comilla Cantt.
- Constr. of Officers family ward incl. internal/external svcs at Comilla Cantt.
- Constr. of 1x10 Mrd JCO's qtrs (5 storied) incl. internal/external svcs at Comilla Cantt.

2. MES approved 'B' & 'C' class contractors may apply quoting their class & index number. One contractor will be eligible for applying at a time for a single job out of this notice. Contractors must have VAT registration certificate and VAT will be recovered from the amount received on services rendered. Applications should be submitted by post.

3. Authority preserves full power to accept/cancel any/all applications without assigning any reasons.

ISPR/Army/96/204

DFP-2025-27/1

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DW & CE (Army)
Dhaka Cantt.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board
Office of the Director Procurement
Telephone Exchange Building
Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207
No.DP/FR-2/IR/95-96/3 Dated, Dhaka the 23.01.1996
Subject: International Tender Notice for replacement of Bogra Tax by digital switching and related equipments on turnkey basis
International Tender Notice

Sealed (by gala) tenders are hereby invited from international bonafide manufacturers, suppliers for replacement of Bogra tax by digital switching and related equipments on turnkey basis. Tender schedule may be purchased on submission of written application on tenders/representative's official pad to the undersigned on cash payment of Tk. 5,000/- (Taka five thousand) only (Non-refundable) between 9.00 AM to 2.00 PM on all working days. No tender schedule will be sold on the closing day of tender or by post.

Tender will be received on 20.03.96 up to 11.00 hours BST and will be opened at 11.05 hours BST on the same day in the above office in presence of the tenderers or their representatives, if any. The authority reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids/tenders partly or wholly without assigning any reason thereof.

Md Maududul Haque

DFP-1959-25/1

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Dy Director (Foreign Procurement)
Phone - 814339

Government of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, (RHD)
Workshop Division, Baya, Rajshahi.
Notice Inviting Tender
(Sealed tenders are invited in Form No. 2908)

1. Tender Notice No.	14/95-96, Workshop Division, Rajshahi, Dt. 17/01/96.
2. Name of work	Group 'Ka' supplying Spare Parts of Ittefaq Roller, Fadroma Roller and China Road Roller of Road Division, Pabna under (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi during the year 1995-96.
	Group 'Kha' supplying Bed Ford Engine (Reconditioned, Model J-6) of Seviem Truck No Rajshahi-Tha-3786 of Road Division, Nawabganj under (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi, during the year 1995-96.
	Group 'Gha' supplying Spare Parts of Fadroma Road Roller and JM Road Roller of Road Division Nawabganj, under (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi, during the year 1995-96.
3. Estimated cost	As per schedule.
4. Earnest money	2% as per schedule.
5. Time allowed	Group 'Ka' 20 (Twenty) days & Group 'Kha' 30 (Thirty) days & Group 'Gha' 20 (Twenty) days from the date of work order.
6. Eligibility of contractors	'A' to 'C' general category of (RHD) Department, 'D' general category of (RHD) Workshop Circle Bogra & 'E' general category of (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi.
7. Office where the tender documents will be available	a) Executive Engineer, (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi/Santahar, Bogra. b) Executive Engineer, (RHD) Ferry Division, Bogra.
8. Office where the tender will be received	a) Superintending Engineer, (RHD) Workshop Circle, Bogra. b) Executive Engineer, (RHD) Workshop Division, Rajshahi/Santahar, Bogra & Ferry Division Bogra.
9. Last date of selling tender	06-02-96 at office hours.
10. Last date & time of receiving the tender	07-02-96 at 12-00 Noon.
11. Date & time of opening the tender	07-02-96 at 12-30 PM.

DFP-1844-24/1
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Executive Engineer, (RHD)
Workshop Division, Rajshahi.