

**2 madrassah students get life-term for murder**

**JHALAKATHI, Mar 8:** Two students of a local madrassah were today awarded life sentence for killing another student of the madrassah in 1994, reports UNB.

The District and Sessions Judge court delivered the judgement, sentencing Md Quamruzzaman and Abdur Rahim, students of Nesarabad Alia Madrassah, to life term for killing Md Khaled Saifullah, a student of class ten of the madrassah.

According to the prosecution story, Saifullah was stabbed to death on the night of May 13 in 1994 for developing an affair with Mahmuda, daughter of the madrassah principal Abdul Bari.

Police arrested Mahmuda's maternal uncle Quamruzzaman, a Fazil examinee, and his accomplices on the night of the killing. Quamruzzaman and Rahim were also sentenced to pay a fine of Tk 5,000 each in default to suffer another two years' rigorous imprisonment.

Md Kabir Hossain, another accused in the case, was acquitted of the murder charge in default of any evidence.

**Tender schedules snatched away, set on fire in Gaibandha**

**From Our Correspondent**

**GAIBANDHA, Mar 8:** Some unruly people snatched away nearly one thousand tender schedules of fifty projects Wednesday and set those on fire. The last date of receiving tender papers was March 5.

A contractor could not arrange bank draft of security money due to closure of banking transaction during the riot. Being furious, the contractor and his supporters snatched away all the documents and set them ablaze. The authority, however, fixed fresh date.

**Husband gets life-term for killing wife**

**SATKHIRA, Mar 8:** Additional District and Sessions Judge has sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing his wife, reports UNB.

Court sources said Judge Md Rafiqul Islam on Saturday also fined the accused, Habibur Rahman, Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one year more imprisonment.

According to prosecution, Habibur Rahman of Kuskhal village in sadar thana beat his wife Rijiya, 17, to death on June 18, 1987.

The Judge after examining the witnesses and evidences pronounced the judgement.

**Ferry services on Barisal-Patuakhali route inadequate**

**PATUAHALI, Mar 8:** Inadequate ferry services on Patuakhali-Barisal route has been causing untold sufferings to the travelling people, reports UNB.

According to local sources, Dapdapia, Lebukhali and Kharishakhali ferry services have earned much displeasure of the travelling people for their inadequate service.

Hundreds of motor vehicles run to and from Patuakhali on the route daily. But most of the vehicles face obstruction and jam on the three ferry ghats due to shortage of ferries.

Local people urged the authorities to operate at least two ferries at a time to ease the traffic jam in the three ghats.

**4 Sylhet Shibir leaders freed**

**From Staff Correspondent**

**SYLHET, Mar 8:** Four Islamist Chhatra Shibir leaders including the president and the secretary of the Sylhet town unit were released today.

They are Fakhru Islam, president, Kaosar Hossain Qureshi, secretary, Jinali Abedin and Solaiman Jalali. They were arrested on February 15 when they were preparing for an anti-election procession in the town.

**Ex-UP chairman awarded 2 yrs imprisonment for corruption**

**JHENIDAH, Mar 8:** A former UP chairman was awarded two years imprisonment in a case for misappropriation of rice, reports UNB.

According to the prosecution story, former chairman of Halidani Union Parishad Abdul Rashid withdrew the government allotted 100 maund rice for Kattamari Mosque under Food for Work programme during 1988-89 fiscal year as the project Chairman. But he misappropriated the whole quantity.

A case was filed and police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against him.



**SHERPUR:** Farmers demanding (L) fair price and adequate supply of fertilizer in the district gheraoed the residence of the Deputy Commissioner last Monday. After failing to get supply of fertilizer bags angry farmers barricaded Dhaka-Sherpur highway at Nakla thana headquarters. Communication was disrupted for a few hours. The TNO and local leaders later assured the farmers of adequate supply of fertilizer bags.

Sherpur DC tells The Daily Star

**'Faulty fertilizer distribution, marketing system worsen crisis'**

From Ratan Chowdhury

**SHERPUR, Mar 8:** Abnormal price hike of all categories of chemical fertilizer coupled with chronic poverty continue to hinder farmers of the district to produce more paddy or go into other crop production.

Fertilizer crisis shook the farmers in the district including all its adjoining districts. Sherpur is wellknown for rice farming throughout the country.

Hundreds of agitated farmers put up barricades on the Sherpur-Dhaka highway on March 4, demonstrated in front of Deputy Commissioner Office (Sherpur) and all the five Thana Nirbahi Officer's office in the district.

According to witnesses the demonstration in front of the Deputy Commissioner office was staged at around 1.30 pm on the day. The farmers demanding urea fertilizer including other fertilizer at fair prices. Angry farmers had also gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's residence near Gualpotty on March 3.

They, however, dispersed after the Deputy Commissioner and Police Supper of Sherpur assured them of quick measures to supply fertilizer. However, the promise could not be maintained. Angry farmers again gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner office including five TNO offices of the district.

A group of angry farmers at Nandir Bazar under Char-mucharia union of sadar thana also put barricade on the road and stopped eleven fertilizer loaded trucks carrying urea fertilizer from Jamuna Fertilizer Factory (Sharishabari under Jamalpur district), 2 Nakla thana and forced the dealers to

sell the fertilizer there, local sources and the dealers said. The dealers were compelled to sell the urea at the spot at the rate of Taka 240 per bag.

In Nakla, farmers and local people also put up barricade near the Nakla bridge on Sherpur-Dhaka highway and disrupted communication for several hours.

Later they removed the barricade following intervention by the Nakla Thana administration and local social and political leaders at noon.

In this regard when The Daily Star contacted the Deputy Commissioner of the district, Mohammad Abdul Mobarak said, he informed the concerned higher authority in different ministries about the prevailing crisis of fertilizer in the Sherpur district.

Deputy Commissioner said, "we received complaints but have no official capacity to take any action. Unless the higher authority take measures, and immediately put into action farmers will continue to suffer."

The DC also said, faulty system of distribution and marketing of the fertilizer can be blamed for the present crisis and sufferings of the farmers.

Sadar Thana Nirbahi Officer Md Asadul Islam told The Daily Star, distribution and marketing system of fertilizer allocated whole sale dealers who handled the total distribution and marketing system after lifting their allotted quota from the mill or respective offices. This system, as observed by many businessmen, allowed dealers to make excess profit.

One BADC official said government has appointed some 42 dealers for five thanas of

the district which is very much inadequate.

In the open market a farmer is buying a bag of urea between Taka 420 and Taka 430 as against the government rate of Taka 186.25 per bag of 50 kilogram. TSP (50 kg bag) is selling between Taka 600 and 620 as against the government rate of Taka 343. To meet the TSP crisis, or other chemical fertilizer concerned authority is yet to take any effective measure.

Many farmers alleged that to mitigate the sufferings concerned authority did not take any step for the betterment of the farmers. On the other hand, many unscrupulous dealers are fooling farmers by selling SSP (Single Sugar Phosphate) fertilizer bags claiming them as TSP fertilizer bags.

**Dealers responsible for fertilizer price hike, crisis in Sylhet Division**

From Iqbal Siddiquee

**SYLHET, Mar 8:** An acute crisis of fertilizer has been prevailing in all the four districts of Sylhet division causing much inconvenience for the farmers in general at this peak time for cultivation of IRR-Boro crops through the region. It would severely hit the production of the crops during the season, it is apprehended.

The situation was caused by the short supply from the government owned fertilizer factories and malpractice by a section of officials and others. A section of unscrupulous traders is also making the crisis acute by taking advantage of the situation, it is alleged. Absence of any sort of government control to monitor the fertilizer price is considered to be the major cause of the prevailing situation.

An official source informed that, an ambitious programme has been taken up to cultivate Boro paddy on 3 lakh 25 thousand 200 hectares of land in the four districts of Sylhet Division during the current season. It includes, one lakh 25 thousand 200 hectares of local varieties and the rest 2 lakh hectares of different High Yielding Varieties. The total target of paddy production has been fixed at 8 lakh 34 thousand metric tonnes, the source added. But the whole programme would face extreme condition due to the prevailing fertilizer crisis, it is apprehended, said an official.

In Sylhet district, 1,001 tonnes of Urea fertilizer had been allotted to 13 dealers during the month of March while 1,300 tonnes were allotted in February and 1,625 tonnes in January this year. The allotment is far below than the genuine demand. Due to the short supply, one bag of 50

kilogram Urea is being sold at Taka 280 to Taka-300 in the markets. The factory rate for a bag of Urea is Taka 187 for the dealers. They have to spend Taka 16 to Taka 18 as carrying expense.

Normally, it is to be sold at between Taka 225 and Taka 235 per bag to the retail buyers. But, on the plea of short supply, the dealers and traders are realising between Taka 280 and Taka 300 for each bag from the buyers, it is alleged.

When contacted, an official said that, there is no fixed rate of fertilizer at retailers-level. However, the dealers are asked not to take excess prices from the retail customers, he added. In fact, it gives no effect, to the farmers in general and taking advantage of the situation, the dealers and sellers can easily raise the prices especially during the peak seasons almost every year. A handful number of dealers and big shots have now taken control over the fertilizer business by stocking and creating artificial crisis of the essential commodity. At the prevailing situation, the poor farmers are losing their interest or capability of using the fertilizer in their croplands.

In the local markets of Sylhet, TSP (Triple Super Phosphate), MP Murate of Potash and Gypsum is also not easily available.

An official of the Department of Agriculture while talking to this correspondent said there was no crisis of Fertilizer, but he said, the dealers were totally responsible for the price hike adding the governments allotment was not also as per demand of the district authority.

The situation further deteriorated in the district of Habiganj district, where 12

**WDB sanctions wheat to implement 3 projects in Bhola**

**BHOLA, Mar 8:** The Water Development Board has sanctioned some 1939 metric tons of wheat to implement three projects in the district under food for works programme during the current fiscal (1995-96), reports UNB.

According to officials, the project works include construction and reconstruction of embankment roads, and excavation and re-excavation of canals.

Under the programme, about 500 metric tons of wheat were allocated for repairing work a 9-km embankment road over sadar, Burhanuddin, Lalmoheh and Charfission thanas.

**BRTA allegedly allotting 'false' registration**

**From Our Correspondent**

**JESSORE, Mar 8:** Alleged corruption and malpractices are being reported against local office of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

According to source, official and staff of BRTA are allegedly involved in allotting false registration number of motor vehicles on realisations of handsome amount of bribe.

The source informed, Assistant Director, BRTA recently allotted fake registration number to three trucks (Narail Ta-30, Narail Ta-33 and Narail Ta-35) on realisation of a handsome amount from the owners.

A complain was put forth to the Deputy Director, BRTA, Zahur Uddin, in Dhaka who inquired details of registration, recently. Being unsatisfied with the concerned documents he asked for further information from Narail.

It can be mentioned that the task of issuing registration number was entrusted on BRTA in 1991.

**Meeting held to create awareness about prevention of diarrhoea**

**PARIDPUR, Mar 8:** A discussion on 'Prevention of Diarrhoeal Disease and Uses of Iodised Salt' was held at Hamirdi Pilot High School in Baghata thana on Sunday, reports UNB.

District Information Department arranged the discussion meeting to create awareness among the school children about the prevention measures and curative treatment of the water borne disease.

Civil Surgeon of the district Abul Hossain Khan attended the discussion as chief guest while Dr Jalaluddin Ahmed and Dr Shaif Ahmed addressed it as resource persons. Assistant Headmaster of the school Fazlur Rahman presided.

The organisers hoped that managements of all schools in eight thanas of the district would come forward to arrange such discussion to make their students aware about the disease.

**Pirates rule the sea**

**COX'S BAZAR, Mar 8:** Fishing in deep sea has been facing a set back due to unabated pirates and the fishermen are becoming the captives at the hands of pirates, reports UNB.

Local fishermen said, in the absence of security measures the organised pirates swoop on their engine boats and trawlers at random and take away their belongings including huge catches and many of them have already turned pauper and are passing their days in great hardships.

On Monday and Tuesday night, fishermen of Teknaf area also came under attack near St Martin Island and lost catches and valuable inputs of their 15 boats and trawlers worth about Tk 10 lakh. Some 10 fishermen were injured in the attack.

**Toll collectors gear up their activities in CHT**

**KHAGRACHHARI, Mar 8:** Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) has reportedly directed its armed wing, Shantibahini, and shadow student front Pahari Chhatra Parishad, for collecting toll invariably from different government projects and natives with a view to increasing their funds, reports UNB.

Local government officials alleged that the Shantibahini imposed high monthly toll from the government officials who particularly belong to the tribal origin.

They also allegedly imposed more tolls and fixed new other taxes on agricultural products, domestic animals, lands as well as on forest resources in the Chittagang Hills Tracts (CHT) region, the officials added.

Local people said the outlawed activists march through different hilly villages asking "cooperations" with their toll collectors.

Binoy Kantil Chakma, a former Shantibahini cadre who is now leading normal life after defecting from the organisation told that the cadres were collecting tolls, including fixation of new taxes, taking advantage of the situation created out of the ongoing ceasefire between the government and the PCJSS in the CHT.

For that reason, he added, the armed Shantibahini can freely and easily move in the hilly areas for the same as the troops are restricted by truce agreement in going to any military action.

Local people said they are passing their days in great insecurity and distress.

Allegations also said that the outlawed activists collect tolls from the citizens and send those to the insurgent leaders, living on the other side of the border who spend the money for buying arms.

Local leaders have urged the government to impose restriction on Shantibahini and take immediate steps to ensure safety of life and property of the local people.

**30,000 children do not get their fair share of school lessons**

**NATORE, Mar 8:** Despite on-going progress in implementing Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) programme and ensuring Education for All by the year 2,000, about 31,000 children have been deprived of education in the district for various reasons, according to an UNB report.

The reasons include shortage of accommodation, lack of proper guidance and negligence of teachers and employees of the local Primary Education Department.

According to the district Education Office, a total of 2,56,637 children have been admitted into the primary schools this year out of 2,88,189 school-going children in the district.

But concerned sources said the number of deprived children was actually much higher than that of the official figure of 31,551.

On the contrary, the on-going progress of CPE is facing set back due to shortage of teachers and accommodation in remote rural areas of the district.

According to government decision, the teachers-students ratio should be 1:50. But there is a 1:70 ratio in some remote schools.

In the meantime, according to a non-government organisation (NGO) report, a reverse situation is prevailing in urban areas of the district.

The report mentioned that in many cases teachers do not want to stay in the rural primary schools. They tend to stay and serve in schools located in town areas.

Meanwhile, district Education Officer said at least 50 more teachers are required here for smooth running of CPE programme.

**Traders doing brisk business selling adulterated fertilizer**

**From Our Correspondent**

**JESSORE, Mar 8:** Varieties of adulterated fertilizer bags have flooded markets in the district, following current wave of fertilizer crisis, causing immense harm to productive capacity of soil and financial losses to poor farmers, said sources.

According to reports, good number of wholesale traders are openly selling low-grade foreign made fertilizer in the name of quality brand at higher prices.

A group of such traders particularly in Ghope area of local town are doing this practice by adding impurities in the fertilizer bags for long without protest from any quarters. They are allegedly selling Indian Single Super Phosphate (SSP) filled inside the bags of the Bangladeshhi TSP (Triple Super Phosphate) bags at higher rate.

Indian SSP is said to be lower in quality and cheaper in price than TSP. It is also reported that application of SSP in the field adversely affects its productivity and fertility, while on the other hand, TSP brings better result both in increasing merit of soil and production. As such the poor farmers are being cheated.

Reports say that random use of empty TSP bags by these traders to repack it by SSP the rate per TSP bag has shot up. Every empty TSP bag now sells at Taka 15 to 20. Previously it sold at Taka 5 only.

When contacted a few small traders in rural markets told that continued crisis of fertilizer, deepened by short supply, from the Nowapara wholesale market, added by blessings and protection from vested interest, has provided this group of dishonest traders this unique chance to monopolize markets.

A thorough and investigative look into the matter of the administration is urgently needed before situation further worsens, was the remark of a section of social thinker.

**Tk one lakh looted in Patuakhali 15 hurt as farmers, Ansars clash in Sherpur**

**PATUAHALI, Mar 8:** Armed dacoits on Monday swooped on a post wedding ceremony at a village in sadar thana and looted gold ornaments worth about Tk one lakh, reports UNB.

Local people said a gang of about 12 dacoits equipped with firearms stormed the house of Abdus Sattar and Jalil Sikder at Sreerampur village and looted the ornaments.

Later, the dacoits raided the house of a UP member, Md Yunus Badsha, and robbed cash about Tk 20,000. They left the scene blasting homemade bombs.

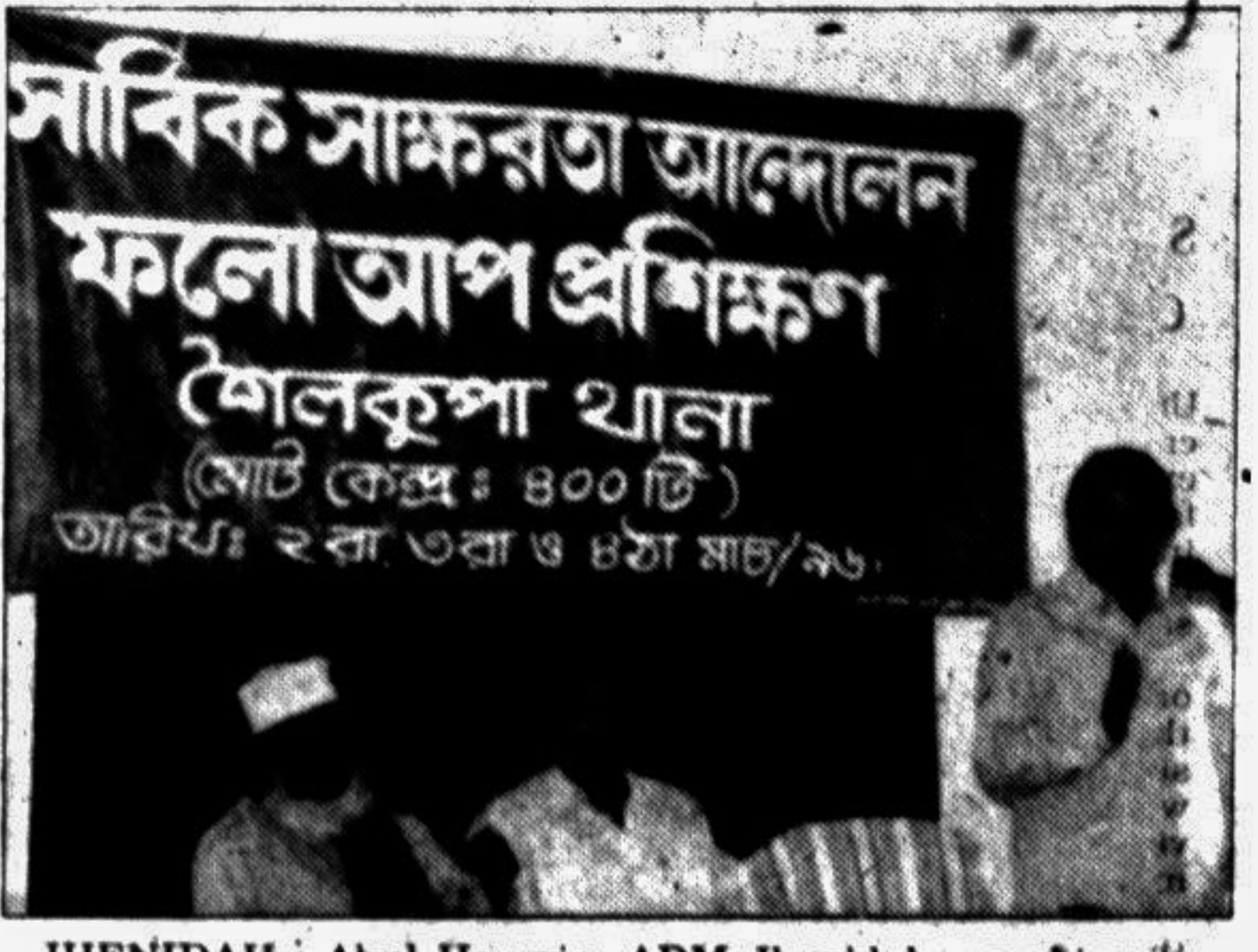
**SHERPUR, Mar 8:** At least 15 people, including two Ansars, were injured in a clash between farmers and members of the law enforcing agencies in the town today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when police resorted to lathicharge on the farmers queued to collect token from a fertilizer dealer in front of Agriculture Institute at about 4:30 pm.

Of the injured, Anwar Shahjahan, 28, and Abul Bashar, 22, and a farmer, Forkan Ullah, 23, were admitted to Sadar hospital.



**SYLHET:** Alhaj-Badrul Islam, President, Sylhet unit of BNSB speaking at the annual general meeting and Eid-reunion of the organisation held at its office recently. — Star photo



**JHENIDAH:** Abul Hossain, ADM Jhenidah, speaking as chief guest on 'Total Literacy Movement (TLM) held at Saikupa Government Degree College premises recently. — Star photo