

One killed in elephant attack

From CHT Correspondent
Rangamati, April 8: A woman was killed by a wild elephant when a herd of elephants numbering about 25 attacked the village of Mursidabad under Lagadua thana in Rangamati Hill district this morning at 1:30 am.
The woman identified as Komola Khatun age 32. Reports say Khatun was sleeping in her thatched bed room when the elephants suddenly attacked the house and crushed her to death instantly.
Her husband and two children managed to escape the attack.
A number of other neighbouring houses were also ranged to ground in the attack.

Arms, ammunition recovered from academic hostels in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, April 8: The police has recovered seven fire arms and 78 ammunitions from sadar thana and arrested 7 persons in this connection recently, reports BSS.
A special drive started from April 1, in the police station area including Agriculture University, AM College Hostel and Mymensingh Medical College Hostel.
The fire arms recovered rifles, one pistol, one revolver, one pipe gun four. Besides 10 ramdao kiriz were also recovered by the police during this period.

Acquisition of land at JMB site: Victims allegedly not getting compensation

SIRAJGANJ, April 8: About 5000 families of west bank of Jamuna affected due to construction of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge are allegedly being deprived of getting proper compensation, reports UNB.
In a written allegation to concerned authorities, the affected people said the local officials selected only 600 families for compensation when World Bank, JMB authorities and the district administration identified 5,575 families as victims.
The decision angered 50,000 people of the west bank following which they are staging demonstration everyday in the area to press home their five-point demand, said a local leader.
Deputy Commissioner Syed Abdul Malek held meetings with local political leaders in the last two days, but could not reach on any solution to this effect.
The petitioners urged the concerned authorities to pay equal amount of compensation to the affected families barring any discrimination.

Arms recovered, 3 arrested in Comilla

COMILLA, April 8: Police recovered some arms and ammunition and arrested three people in this connection from different parts of the district last week, reports UNB.
During the period, police seized three pipeguns, one revolver and four rounds of bullets in separate drives at Lalmai Bazar and Tikkarchar in sadar thana and Dighirpar village in Daudkandi.
Three people were arrested from Lalmai Bazar.
Separate cases were filed with sadar and Daudkandi police stations.
Another report says: Railway police seized 50 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from Comilla Railway Station on Sunday.
However, no arrest was made in this connection. A case was lodged with the GRP.

BNP leaders demand removal of Sirajganj DC

SIRAJGANJ, April 8: Local BNP leaders demanded removal of the Deputy Commissioner, a senior Assistant Judge and two other government officials for "taking side with the opposition" during the non-cooperation movement, reports UNB.
Addressing a meeting at Eliotganj crossing of the town on Friday, the BNP leaders said those officials claimed themselves as supporters of a certain political party while giving speeches from the local Janata Mancha.
No election would be neutral under the supervision of these officials as they had lost their neutrality by giving political speeches, the BNP leaders alleged.

Students demand exam centre

For Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, APR 8: The students of the district Hospital Medical College and Hospital have demanded the opening of examination centre here. They have submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding immediate steps to be taken in this regard. They have been continuing their movement for the purpose for a long time which remained unheeded.

Recent fire incident at Benapole Port

C&F agents threaten to stop work unless demands met

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, April 8: Horrible scenes of devastating fire at Benapole Port Warehouse causing extensive damage to importers and national finance, recently, is still vivid, said sources.
According to reports, businessmen including exporters and importers are organising themselves to launch movement in support of their claim for compensation from port authority.
It may be mentioned here that the devastating fire at Benapole Port warehouse broke out on March 18, last, which was quite unprecedented in respect of occurrence and losses.

Sources informed that it originated from store-blast, while worker of Indian truck waiting inside warehouse to off-load cargo, were looking for food. Goods worth Taka over 100 crore have been gutted, the report added.
According to another source, Mongla Port Authority (MPA) formed enquiry committee to probe into causes of fire and assess extent of losses

immediately after the incident. Benapole Land Port is under control of MPA.
It is further reported that task of MPA apparently ended with forming the enquiry committee, as no tangible result was achieved so far.

Benapole land customs clearing and forwarding (C&F) Agents Association has taken up the matter very strongly. It has bitterly criticised the MPA for its passive role in this connection. At a press conference, held by the association at its office auditorium at Benapole on March 30 last, as representatives of importers and exporters, speakers accused the MPA including Chairman for their failure to avert the fire incident and demanded removal of all staff and officers including chairman on national interest.

They are reported to have placed charter of 8 point demands including payment of compensation of insurance, introduction of insurance to cover the warehouse, installation of fire unit at port to meet such emergency more

effectively, upgrading Benapole Port into full-fledged land port and structural development of warehouse. Judicial enquiry into the whole affairs of the fire incident has also been demanded by the association, report said. Speakers threatened to stop functioning of the port should their demands were not met by the authority soon, the report added.

Presided over by Acting President Benapole Land Customs Clearing and Forwarding Agent Association, Shamsur Rahman, the press conference was attended among others by Vice-President Haji Moynuddin Ahmed, General Secretary, Anwar Ali, joint secretary, Mofizur Rahman, Rabial Alam, Ali Reza Raju.

Strangely, enquiry committee was yet to find out causes that originated the fire and assess extent of losses even after expiry of 3 weeks from its formation, nor the authority has taken any steps to settle claims yet.

Witnesses say that more than 500 Indian trucks were still stranded on both sides of

the road from Benapole warehouse to check post creating serious traffic jams. What was more surprising was that Indian truck drivers were still cooking food inside the store in their usual habit careless of any hazards despite the recent fire at Benapole warehouse.

On the other hand, business activities at Benapole Port has come to halt following decision of Indian exporters not to make any shipment of cargo since March 20, last. Besides Indian Truck Owners Association, has categorically said that they would carry no goods to Bangladesh through Benapole until Bangladesh administration agreed to pay full compensation for damage of 17 trucks in the fire at Benapole port recently.

Incidentally letter of credit, LC worth Taka over several thousand crores opened earlier for importing goods through this port, became uncertain causing growing concern to parties concerned on the back drop of current situation, said a source on condition of anonymity.

Meeting decides to step up security in Sylhet Div

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, April 8: A meeting of the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendents of Police of four districts of Sylhet Division decided to take immediate measures for curbing the terrorist acts and other crimes in the region. The meeting was presided over by the Divisional Commissioner Md. Habibur Rahman and Deputy Inspector General of Police Modabber Hossain Chowdhury.

The meeting stressed on recovery of illegal arms, arrest of accused persons in the different criminal cases throughout the region.

The Divisional Commissioner in his speech said, the government officials should be neutral while discharging duties and they should effectively curb the terrorist acts and other crimes with a view to improving the overall law and order situation for ensuring the people lives and property immediately. He also sought cooperation from all quarters especially the political leaders and workers for the purpose.

The meeting was held at the Sylhet Circuit House Tuesday, April 2.

3 commit suicide in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, April 8: Two school girls allegedly committed suicide Thursday by taking endrin following pressure by their respective parents for more attention to their studies, reports UNB.

The girls were identified as Hafiza Khatun, 12, of village Pikara in Kaliganj thana and Sabita Bala Sarker, 17, of village Fingre in Sadar thana in the district.

In another incident, Anwara Khatun, 23, allegedly committed suicide at village Gangine in Sadar thana also by taking endrin on the same day following family troubles, villagers said.

Separate cases were filed.

Truck burnt to ashes

From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, April 8: A truck was burnt totally when fire broke out from the overhead electrical wires at Betul in Chowdhali thana on Tuesday last.

It is learnt that a truck loaded with straw on way to Enayetpur came into contact with the overhead electrical wires and fire broke out due to sparking. The driver took the burning truck into the field of Sabuz Sangha.

Sustaining burn injuries driver Anil Sarker, 38, is undergoing treatment at Beluchi thana health centre. The registration number of the truck could not be ascertained.

6 bridges, culverts to be built in Magura

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, April 8: Roads and Highways Department, Magura has taken up a programme to build 6 bridges and culverts in Magura district.

According to the sources, an amount of Tk 3 crore 24 lakh will be spent to build the bridges and culverts.

After completion of these six bridges and culverts communication link between Magura and Jessore will greatly improve, the sources said.

Hundreds of trucks remain stranded at ferry ghats

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, April 8: Hundreds of trucks remain stranded at Sirajganj and Bhupur ferry ghats for days together due to shortage of ferry boats.

It is learnt that out of five ferry boats two are remaining inoperative due to machinery troubles, the rest three ferries can not carry more than eight trucks at a time.

Consequently on large number of trucks remain stranded at Sirajganj and Bhupur ferry ghats everyday. This correspondent observed that about 270 loaded trucks at Sirajganj ghat and similar quantity at Bhupur ghat were waiting for crossing.

Wood-cutter shot dead by Shantibahinimen

SHANTIBAHINIMEN, April 8: A wood-cutter was shot dead by the outlawed Shantibahinimen in the deep forest of Belkhar in Ramgarh thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Abdus Sattar, 35, of Thanachandra Para area.

Police recovered the body this afternoon and sent it to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

In another incident, seven day labourers were injured when they clashed with each other over duty roster at Arimal in Sadar thana today.

Fate of 400 refugee families uncertain

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, April 8: The fate of 400 landless families living in Kalenga area under Komolgonj thana since 1964 is still uncertain.

It is alleged that these landless families came to erstwhile 'East Pakistan' from Tripura state of India in 1964 and the then Sub-Divisional administration, Moulvibazar rehabilitation, Moulvibazar on an area covering 715.16 acres of khash land of Dewrachhera Tea Estate. They have made the excess lands fit for cultivation with their hard labour and are living on the land since then. But records show that 715 acres of land out of 715.16 acres have been leased out to Mohibur Rahman Ex-MNA by the erstwhile Board of Revenue vide memo No 402 (2) v-335/62 in 1969 for cultivation of tea. Knowing this, the landless families in possession of the land prayed for leasing out land in favour of them. For the last 26 years several inquiries were made by the local authorities. They recommended to the higher authorities justifying and cause of landless refugees and lastly the then Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) of Sylhet issued a showcause notice to Mohibur Rahman, saying that why the allotment of land should not be cancelled as he did not utilise the land for tea cultivation. Fate of the showcause notice issued in 1979 is still unknown.

People of Kalenga, who is being treated as 'refugees' in the locality, informed The Daily Star that the people living in Kalenga are exercising their right of votes since 1969. They are paying all sorts of union parishad taxes under the Rahimpur Union Parishad. Besides, various development works including construction of a government primary school, installation of 15 tube-wells, construction of roads have been done in the area by the government.

In 1995, in the monthly meeting of the district law and order committee — in a resolution formed a committee headed by the TNO of Komolgonj thana to survey the land and find out the actual number of landless of Kalenga for settlement of land. But as regard settlement of the land is still remaining uncertain.

Most of the khash land in Kalenga area have already been grabbed by a quarter of influential people from other areas which needs a impartial investigation.

Noted social worker rewarded

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, April 8: Faridpur Rotary Club ceremonially awarded an incentive reward to Abdul Ali Sikder in recognition of his selfless and dedicated social services for more than three decades recently.

In this connection a meeting of the Rotarians, the elite of the town and the local journalists was held here with Abul Bashir Mia, Chartered President of Faridpur Rotary Club in the chair while Fazul Kabir Chaud, Chairman of Faridpur Pourasava and Alauddin Khan, an octogenarian noted social worker were the chief and special guest respectively. The President of Faridpur Press Club and District Correspondent of The Bangladesh Times.



FARIDPUR: Abdul Ali Sikder being presented with a wrist watch for his contributions in the field of social services in the district. — Star photo

Text book crisis affects two lakh students in Sylhet Div

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, April 8: There has been an acute scarcity of Text Books for the students of class six and class nine in the four districts of Sylhet division affecting two lakh students, though three months of the year has already been passed. The books are not available anywhere in the division.

It may be stated here that the Ministry of Education introduced new books for students of class six while new books in all subjects except English had been introduced for class nine from this year. Ten books are needed for a student of class six while 14 for class nine.

Sources informed that, the acute text book crisis occurred as the print order of books was less than the actual number needed of the students. The ministry had ordered publishers association to print only 9 lakh 27 thousand copies of books for class six, the source added. The Text Book Board entrusted the publishers and sellers association with the task of publication of the text books for class six to class nine. But, the Board authorities themselves printed 20,000 books of Bengali for class nine students and later they asked the publisher Association to print the rest books for class nine and others. The books of class nine were still being printed, a source said.

While talking to this correspondent, some book sellers in Sylhet said that, most of the sellers in the region did not collect the books for class six and class nine due to the short supply and high prices from the Dhaka market. It resulted him an acute crisis of these books in different markets of Sylhet.

Though it is hardly possible to get some books for class six at higher prices, no single copy for class nine is available in anywhere of the region. However, a guardian alleged that he bought the Bengali (Poetry) book of class nine for Taka 50 against its fixed price at Taka 16.20 from a book stall in Sylhet town on March 24. The seller informed him that, he (seller) collected a few number of books from Dhaka last week at higher cost.

Some book sellers in Sylhet said that the print order of the authority was not realistic and accurate, this year. They suspected that a number of unaffiliated schools remained out of the estimate for print order prepared by the authority. They also blamed the existing political unrest, paper crisis and some other problems relating to the printing for the non-availability of the books in different areas.

A source of the publishers association informed that, though 9,27,000 sets of books were printed only four to five lakh sets could be sent to the districts due to various reasons including Eid holiday and political unrest.

The district education officials when contacted, expressed their inability to say when the crisis would end.

Tk-4 lakh robbed at gun point in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, April 8: A number of robberies were committed in the Sylhet town during the last two days. Armed miscreants snatched away Taka 3 lakh in broad day light in two separate incidents. People caught one miscreant along with a pigeon during an incident.

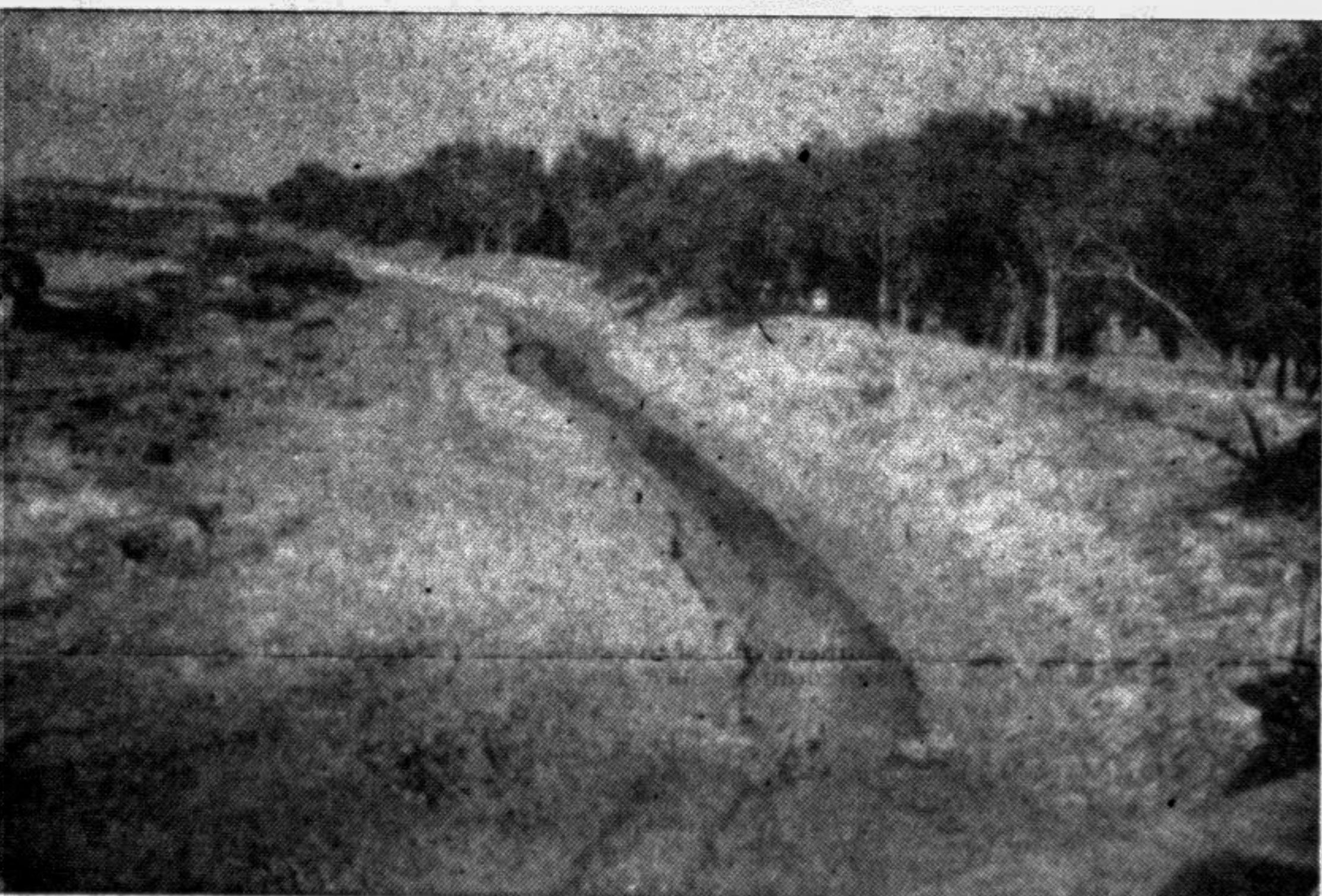
At about 12 noon, Tuesday Shahan Rob Chowdhury, son of the owner of Pushti Foods on way towards bank to deposit an amount of Taka two lakh and reached near the Anbarkhana Girls High School came under attack of a gang of miscreants who were on a baby taxi. They asked him to handover the money at gunpoint. Two miscreants snatched away the cash amount and two of them managed to escape along with the money. But, the mob caught one Raushan, 20, along with his pigeon. He was later handed over to the police after a good beating by the mob. Raushan is reportedly an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

In another incident at about 11 am same day the armed muggers snatched away an amount of Taka one lakh from a person who was on his way from the Sonali Bank Sylhet branch. The muggers who were on a motorcycle however, managed to escape along with the money. The injured had been admitted into the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

A case in this connection had been started with the Kotwali police station. No arrest has yet been reported, yet.

Re-excavating Ghaghar Canal can given back life to thousands of farmers

From Alimuzzaman Mia



GOPALGANJ: The Golabaria-Ghaghar Canal seen drying up.

GOPALGANJ, April 8: About 50 thousand acres of adjoining agricultural land of the Ghaghar Canal is deprived of irrigation resulting in drastic fall in production as its Kalabari-Rajior portion was not re-excavated during the last 22 years. As such more than one lakh families of the northern and southern areas of Kotwali para thana of Gopalganj district and Rajior thana of Madaripur district respectively depending basically on cultivation have been sustaining serious economic losses.

The Gobindapur-Kalabari portion of the Ghaghar Canal was re-excavated at a cost of 42 metric-ton wheat under the food for works programme in 1974. Since then 22 years have been elapsed but no re-

excavation or reformation work of the canal was done. The 10 kilometre long portion from Chowaribari to Kalabari of the canal is about to disappear. Though the portion of the canal is navigable during the rainy season, but during the dry season it totally dries up and the navigation is stopped causing serious hazards in transporting goods including agricultural products.

Irrigation to thousands of acres of IRRI cultivating land becomes impossible as the canal dries up during the dry season. As a result the IRRI cultivation in the areas of Chowaribari, Senkhali, Dodara, Gobindapur, Gachhkhola, Ramnagar, Kalabari, etc. is seriously hampered. Pumps do not function in some of the areas for want of water during

the IRRI cultivating season.

Water can not be drained out from Baghar bar, Ramnagar, beel, Jalisar beel, Noyabhi, Lakhandar beel, Hajirbarir Pather, Dodara beel etc. in the northern areas of Kotwali para thana after the rainy season as the Ghaghar Canal is about to be silted up and there are stagnancies every year affecting boro and aush cultivation on 30 thousand acres of land in the said areas.

Moreover WAPDA canal from Mustapur to Bhangarhat, Ramnagar Lakhandar canal, Dangarpar Tentulbari canal, Parkona-Lakhandar canal, etc. under Kotwalpara thana are required to be immediately re-excavated as the cultivation and navigation is seriously hampered.

— Star Photo

Youngman commits suicide

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, April 8: A youngman committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree at village Chamakdani Bishara under Madhyaganj thana of Sunamganj district Sunday last.

Gopal Sarker, 27, took an amount of Taka 400 as loans from a professional money-lender of Madhyaganj thana headquarters on the day of incident. He spent Taka 200 for marketing for family members. Gopal also informed his family members that he would spend the rest 200 for enjoying 'jatra' (night show) at Madhyaganj. His father and brother rebuked him for useless expenditures. With this, Gopal felt anguished and on the next day he committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree near their village house.

Police later sent the body to the Sunamganj sadar hospital for post mortem. A UD case has been registered with Madhyaganj thana.

Tribals-police clash: 3 hurt

KHAGRACHHARI, April 8: Three people were injured in a clash between the tribal people and police at Shapia crossing in the town Monday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the clash was a sequel to Sunday's clash at Pankhayan that left an SSC examinee, Kejai Marma, dead.

Firemen sometimes can not reach spot on time due to poor road link

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, April 8: Properties worth Taka 4 lakh 50 thousand were gutted in two separate fire incidents in the district on April 2, according to fire brigade source.

Three cattleheads were roasted alive and 12 rooms belonging to three families were gutted in a devastating fire that broke out in village Gopinathpur, under Hatas Haripur union of sadar thana on April 2. Fire originated from Dakhiluddin's kitchen spread to the neighbouring houses of Chand Ali, Afor Ali and Motleb Ali. Out of 12 rooms eight were of corrugated semi pucca rooms and another 4 rooms were kutcha. eyewitness said.

Fire Brigade was informed but they could not reach there for want of road link. Loss estimated due to fire was Taka two lakh.

In other fire incident on the same day nine houses were gutted in village Dangmorka of Daulatpur thana. As there is no fire brigade unit either in Daulatpur or nearby Bheramara thana fire brigade from Kushtia was informed but before it reached there people of the locality fought bravely and extinguished the fire after one hour of fighting. Loss estimated to be due to fire was Taka two lakh and 50 thousand.

Organised gang snatches away Tk one lakh

From Our Correspondent

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, April 8: A gang of reportedly a well-known terrorists of Rohanpur under Nawabganj district snatched away one lakh 72 thousand 3 hundred Tk 72 from one rice dealer Ashrafu Hoque recently.

Property worth Tk 20 lakh gutted

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, April 8: Property worth about a total of Taka 20 lakh were gutted when a fire took place at Gachhbhari Bazar under Kanaihat thana in the night following Wednesday last. However, there was no casualty in the incident.

The fire reportedly originated from a pharmacy when a man was engaged in cooking using a kerosine stove. It soon spread to the adjacent shops. As many as 8 business establishments in this important commercial centre of the area were totally damaged. Preliminary loss caused by the fire had been estimated to be about 20 lakh, sources said. As the incident took place at the time of Magreb prayer, almost all the shopowners were in the mosque. The fire was brought under control from further expansion after about an hour by the people.

Destitute families to get interest free loan in Bandarban

BANDARBAN, April 8: Social Welfare department will spend Tk 17 lakh for the socio-economic development of destitute people in the district during current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Official sources said the department earlier disbursed Tk 19 lakh as interest-free loan among 2,690 poor families in seven thanas of the district. Besides, some 2,972 men and women were given training on various income-generating works like typing, short hand, sewing, knitting, weaving and bamboo and cane work.

Some 267 village mid-wives were also given training. An official of the department said a total of 2,023 schemes were implemented from 1991-92 to 1993-94 fiscal years spending Tk 54 lakh. Some 112 tin shed houses were built for poor people during the period.

A total of 1,837 men and women, who received training from the department, have now become self-reliant, he said.

Officials alleged implementation of various schemes are being hampered due to lack of staff and transport facilities while some staffs do not get their salaries regularly.