

## Tk 22.15 lakh distributed as stipend

BHOLA, Sept 3: District branch of Rupali Bank distributed about Tk 22.15 lakh among 208 female students of Sadar Thana under the government's female students stipend scheme this year, reports UNB.

Manager of the branch, Mosharrar Hossain, said the amount was distributed among the female students of 58 non-government high schools and madrasahs of the thana from January to June.

During the period, Tk 6 lakh was distributed among the respective educational institutions as tuition fee subsidy under the scheme.

Mentionable that each female student of class IX and Class X was provided Tk 250 and Tk 350 respectively for purchasing new books and SSC examination fees.

Bank officials said that they were present physically in the institutions while distributing the cheques among the students.

## Clash leaves seven injured

NARSINGDI, Sept 3: Seven people, including two teachers, were injured in a clash between the activists of two student organisations at Belabo Hossain Ali College here Monday, reports UNB.

The college authorities following the trouble have suspended classes till Thursday.

Witnesses said the clash between the ruling party's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League and BNP backed Jatiatabadi Chhatra Dal erupted when BCL workers attacked a JCD activist on the college campus at noon.

The principal asked the police to help restore normalcy on the campus. But the BCL workers went on rampage, attacked teachers, room and damaged some other rooms.

Of the wounded, college teachers Shahiduzzaman Khan and Abul Kalam Azad were admitted to Belabo Thana Health Complex.

## Plans undertaken to solve problems of water-logging

RAJSHAHI, Sept 3: A master plan has been taken up at a cost of Tk 44 crore to solve the long-drawn problem of water-logging in the Rajshahi Metropolitan area, reports UNB.

The plan, expected to be implemented in three phases by the year 2020, envisages construction of 180 kms of drainage and 166 culverts.

The first phase of work is being started immediately. The construction of 89 kilometres of drains by 1999 at a cost of Tk 22.7 crore. The second and third phases are expected to be completed by the year 2010 and 2020 respectively.

At present, there are 157 kms of drains including some 200 connecting points in the city, but most of them are out of order.

Moreover, there are 10 canals and 10 sluice-gates with non-existent water discharge facilities.

The rising water of the Padma enters the city through the inoperative sluice-gates inundating Shahab Bazar, Gournagar, rail gate, Barnali rail gate and Laxmipur areas.

On implementation of the plan, drainage and sewer discharge are expected to improve considerably.

The Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu said the master plan was approved by ECNEC in 1994.

## Grocer chopped to death

JHENIDAH, Sept 3: Abdul Wahab, 25, a grocer of village Sharatala in Harinakundu thana of the district was allegedly chopped to death by some unknown miscreants in the night of August 30 last, it was reported.

According to police sources, when the deceased was going to his shop at about 11 pm, some unknown miscreants allegedly chopped him to death on the spot.

A case was filed with Harinakundu thana in this connection and the body was sent to morgue for autopsy.

Police could neither know the cause of the killing nor arrest anybody in this connection till the reporting.

## Boy with arms arrested in Rajbari

RAJBARI, Sept 3: Railway police arrested a boy with a revolver at Rajbari railway station on Monday last, reports UNB.

According to police, the boy, Ujjal, 12, son of Rafiqul Hossain of village Piarpur in Kushati district got down from the Up-train no 507 at the station at night and started roaming around.

Suspecting his movement, police arrested him and recovered the locally made revolver with three rounds of bullets from his waist.

Arrested Ujjal confessed in Rajbari court that two youths named Tariqul Islam and Salim of his village threatened to kill him if he did not carry the gun according to their direction. They promised to pay him Tk 100 to carry the revolver upto Gosalondo ghat.

The railway police suspected that the arms smugglers have started using children to reach the illegal arms to their certain destinations.

# MINEP proving to be an effective education plan

From M A Ali Himu

NATORE, Sept 3: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Natore (IFBN) has attained 95 per cent success over its Mosque-based Integrated Non-formal Education Programme (MINEP).

The IFBN, involving its trained 'imams' as instructors with a minimum compensation, started the exclusive education programme — MINEP experimentally in 1993 which has been gaining popularity in Natore.

Initially, IFB introduced the MINEP in one village of each district throughout the country. So in Natore district, IFB selected Dharabarisha village of Gurudashpur thana for the education programme which has exerted influence over the people of that village within a short time. Later, observing its progress, the authority has expanded the programme with its working area.

At present, about 1500 people of different age groups of Gurudashpur, Baraigram and Sadar thanas of the district are being educated through a total of 45 MINEP centres (schools).

The centres are divided into two shifts — day and night. In the day shift, one and two-year long education programmes are

being conducted for the children of the age groups, 4 to 5 and 6 to 10 years respectively.

In the night shift, there is only one-year long separate education programme for the age groups of 11 to 14 and 15 to 35 years.

IFBN is supplying all the educational materials and equipment necessary for smooth continuation of the programmes.

Generally Bengali, mathematics and Arabic lessons are given at the classes of these schools and only the children of the age group between 6 to 10 years are facilitated with the English subject.

An official said, one can get himself admitted in class three or class four of primary level after completing the courses under MINEP.

The number of interested people and participants of the education programmes are increasing day by day. The girl participants are also included in this programme.

The attendance of the students in much encouraging. On an average, the attendance rate is above 90 per cent. The rest could not attend due to their extreme poverty. So, food for education programme may be introduced here to achieve one

hundred percent success of the scheme, said Assistant Director AKM Monirul Islam.

While talking to The Daily Star, Abdus Sakur, Deputy Director (DD) of IFBN explaining about the education programme said, this is an experiment, which has already proved efficient to make people vigilant about education and added that many more have been inspired by the dramatic interest shown by the people of Dharabarisha village.

The DD said, that through this programme, the socio-economic conditions of the neglected 'imams' of the villages are also being improved.

Field supervisor of the INEP Md Majharul Islam told this correspondent that people realising the importance and significance of the programme extended their whole-hearted cooperation to make the programme a success. He also told that transport facility is a crying need to supervise the programme in remote areas smoothly.

Some people also viewed that in respect of better result of this education programme, the time may be extended which is at present is up to December, 1996.

## Wanted criminals rounded up

From CHT Correspondent RAMGARH (Khagrachhari), Sept 3: Police has here rounded up two accused wanted in connection with a highway dacoity case from a jungle hideout of Patachhora in Ramgarh thana of the district in a raid conducted Thursday. Ramgarh thana police said.

The absconding accused arrested were identified as Jalal Ahmed alias Ratan of Ramgarh and Mohannad Idris Miah of Comilla.

The accused were sent to Khagrachhari court for trial today.

The raid was conducted in a tip off, police added.

## Dispute over banana, 25 wounded in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Sept 3: At least 25 persons were injured in a clash between two rival groups at village Parmathurapur in Harinakundu thana of the district Tuesday last, it was reported.

According to report, the clash ensued between activists of Awami League and BNP following harvest of a bunch of banana and left 25 persons wounded.

Of the injured 17 were admitted to Jhenidah sadar hospital. A case was lodged with Harinakundu thana in this connection.

# Cotton cultivation faces set-back in Natore

NATORE, Sept 3: Cultivation of cotton, a prospective cash crop of the country, is facing set-back having left only to the private sector without financial and institutional support, reports UNB.

About 86,000 bales of cotton are being produced every year against an estimated demand of six lakh bales, meeting only 15 per cent of the country's requirement. Imports meet the rest of the demand.

Sources said cotton is now being cultivated on only 95,000 acres of land. But the prospective area for cultivation of cotton was estimated at about 2.40 lakh acres.

Cotton Development Board (CDB), established in 1972 to face a cotton crisis then, is itself facing problems after European Commission assistance came to a halt causing a fall in overall cotton production.

Although cotton production in the country increased after 1972 but it never could achieve its production target.

During the pre-liberalisation period, local producers did not get much incentive to produce quality cotton and the shortage of cotton in this area was met from the supplies of West Pakistan that benefited only the businessmen in Karachi.

After independence, the

country faced with an acute shortage which forced many cotton mills to close down.

Even in 1994, about 60 per cent of the spinning mills of the country faced closure for want of raw materials — partly for low production and mainly for a price hike in world markets caused by export restrictions by Pakistan and India, two big cotton exporters.

In 1982, the integrated Cotton Development Project (ICDP) was undertaken with the assistance from EC that included cotton research, seed extension and training programmes.

Source said the CDR showed optimum achievement from the integrated programme, but the EC was not convinced. The EC wanted to survey cotton growing areas and the quality of cotton and an economic adviser of EC personally visited a number of spinning and cotton mills.

He found that the figure quoted during 1993-94 about the cotton production was exaggerated, and recommended termination of the EC's assistance.

Although, the CDB has taken some steps for quality control, the cultivators are more interested in selling their output to private buyers (Ginners) as they get higher prices.

The producers need quick cash money as they do not have much institutional credit and marketing facility.

Inadequate and unskilled manpower of the board is another reason behind the unsatisfactory development in cotton production, the sources observed.

Meanwhile, convinced of the feasibility and potentiality of cotton production, some interested growers are expanding cotton cultivation under private initiative.

They slaughtered Tusher near the bazar and kidnapped Azhar.

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