

Tk 36,000, 20 goats distributed in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Sept 9: Islamic Foundation of the district distributed Tk 36,000 and 20 goats among the poor meritorious students and distressed women from its zakat fund on Saturday, reports UNB.

Deputy Commissioner M Rafiqul Islam distributed the money and the goats at a simple function held at his conference room.

The money was distributed among the 60 madrasa students and goats to 10 women of six thanas of the district.

Addressing the function, the DC urged the elite of the district to deposit a portion of their zakat money to the government zakat fund for the betterment of the poor students and distressed people.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Ibrahim Ahmed, Islamic Foundation Deputy Director (district unit) M Lutfor Rahman Sarcar and local elite including Maulana Sultanuddin Nuri, Khondaker Abdur Rahim and Manik Mia were present.

60,000 acres of khas land under illegal possession

NATORE, Sept 9: About 60,000 acres of 'khas land' worth about Tk 600 crore are reportedly under unauthorised possession of influential quarters causing loss to revenue earnings in the northern region, reports UNB.

These 'khas land', originally belonged to the Revenue Department, Postal Department, Railway Department, Roads and Highways Department, Public Works Department and Bangladesh Water Development Board before being occupied illegally by the influential and vested quarters.

The district-wise break-up of occupied khas land are: 6,000 acres of Natore district, 4,378 acres of Rajshahi, 4,936 of Chapainawabganj, 5,332 of Naogaon, 800 of Bogra, 3,500 of Pabna, 3,000 of Sirajganj, 490 of Joypurhat, 3,600 of Gaibandha, 4,595 of Kurigram, 6,516 of Rangpur, 4,523 of Lalmonirhat, 4,312 of Nilphamari, 3,223 of Dinajpur, 2,395 of Thakurgaon and 1,900 acres of Panchagarh district.

Meeting on "law and order" held

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 9: A meeting on law and order was held in the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner with Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Jhenidah in the chair on September 4.

Among others MAQ Badshah, SP Jhenidah and Member-Secretary Law-Order Committee Jhenidah, MP Abdul Wahab, MP Rehana Akter Hira spoke on the occasion.

The speakers called upon the members of law and order committee to take necessary steps to ensure law and order in the district at any cost, it was reported.

Citizens' meeting held in Tangail

TANGAIL, Sept 9: A citizens' meeting sponsored by Adalatpara club of Tangail against terrorism was held recently with Awami League Presidium Member Abdul Mannan MP as chief guest, reports BSS.

Abulaziz Khan Feroz presided over the meeting. The meeting stressed the need of rendering all sorts of cooperation and assistance to law-enforcing authority to curb terrorism from the society and establish peace.

Among others Abdul Latif Siddiqui, MP, Advocate, Shamshur Rahman Khan, Advocate, Tofazzal Hossain Mukul, Advocate, Shorawa Hossain, Advocate, Abdus Salam Chakladar, Abdus Sobur Birbikram were present at the meeting.

Bus dacoity committed

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 9: A dacoity was committed in a Dhaka bound night coach of GN Paribahan near Khalispur bazar on Kaliganj-Jibannagar road in the night of September 4, police said.

Police sources said, a gang of armed miscreants numbering seven to eight who were travelling in the guise of passengers attacked the driver and took control over the coach. Then the dacoits looted valuables worth at least Taka 30,000 from the passengers and came down at Jagannathpur.

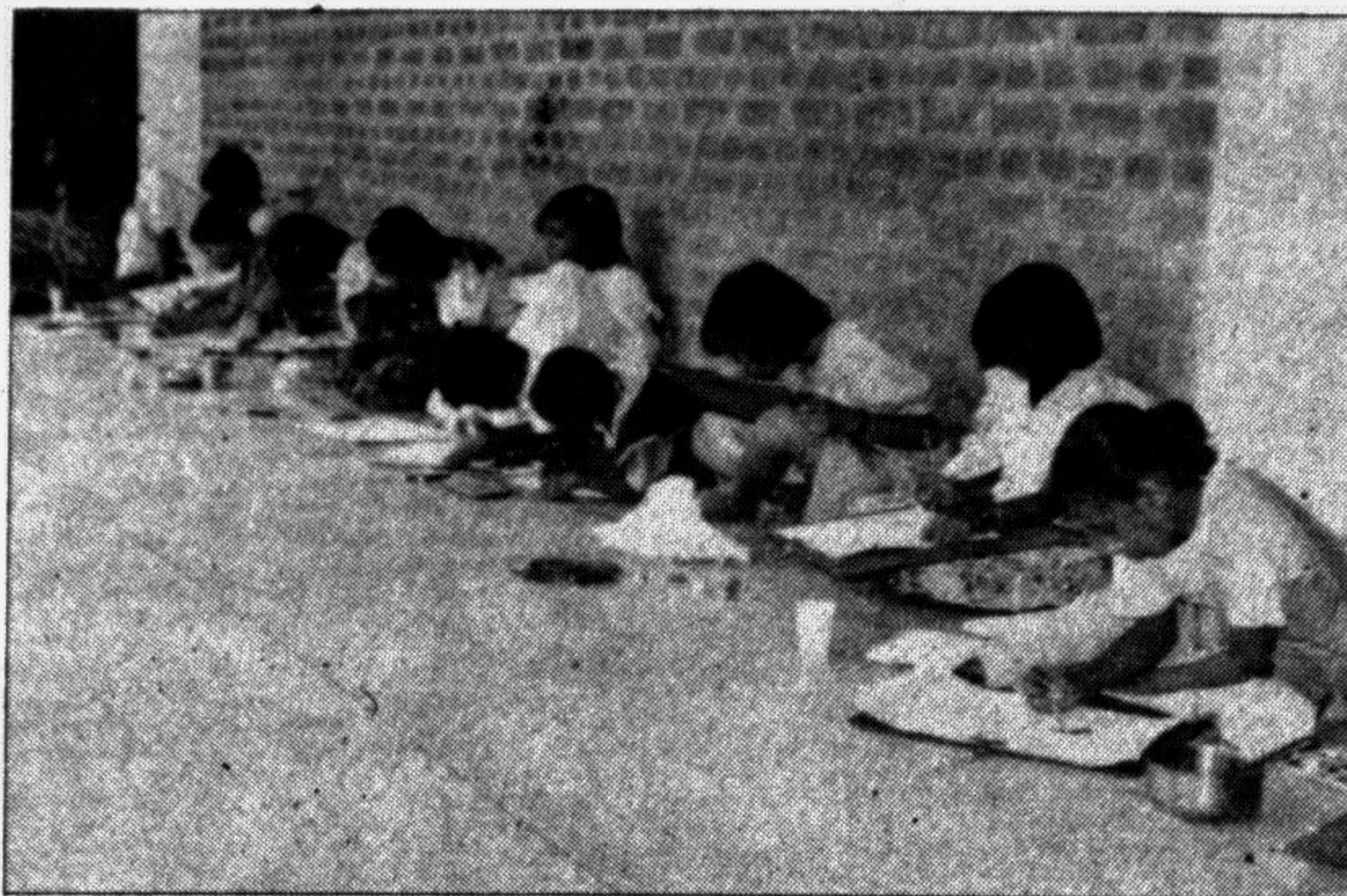
A case was filed with Mohespur thana in this connection. None was arrested till the reporting.

Onrush of hilly waters damages houses, crops

BANDARBAN, Sept 9: Onrush of hilly water damaged 388 houses in Alikadam and Lama thanas affecting 1,951 villagers during the last week, reports UNB.

Official sources said aman paddy on 264.14 acres of land were also submerged in the areas. The loss was estimated at about Tk 10 lakh.

Local leaders said the affected villagers, residing at the bottom of the hill areas, are passing hard days as no relief materials have yet been provided to them by the district administration.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Children are seen participating in an art competition on "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh" organised jointly by Ankor and Chetona 71 at the university campus recently. Prof. M Abdul Khaleque, Dean of Art Faculty, later distributed prizes among the winners. — Star photo

Highway robbery rampant on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar route

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 9: Highway robbery has become a menace in Cox's Bazar frequently causing problems for night coach passengers here.

It is reported that, in the last ten months, about one hundred night coaches and trucks were attacked and looted valuables worth Taka lakhs at various crime points in Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway and Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road.

Almost every night, over 60 night coaches, minibuses and trucks pass through these routes to and from Dhaka and Chittagong. But the robbers prefer mostly the night coaches for the purpose of looting.

Not only in night but also daylight road dacoity became rampant within the jurisdiction of Cox's Bazar district. The situation is particularly alarming at six recognised points of the highways falling within Chokoria, Sadar thana, Ramu, Ukhaia and Teknaf thanas.

The night coach, minibus and truck drivers travel at night on the inter-district routes from various districts of the country. The passengers, drivers, helpers etc. are falling victims in the hands of the armed dacoits who are allegedly not arrested by the police.

The six crime zones over the said highways in Cox's Bazar district are: Chokoria, Harbung Dala, Medha Kassapia, Napitkhali, Kalir Chara and Paner Chara Dala.

The points, as mentioned above, speak of themselves as to the daring nature of the criminals involved. They continue committing such dacoities even within the town areas where police is supposed to remain more active. Police vigilance on the highways is absolutely absent, said one bus driver.

Only a few weeks back, early in the morning on August 2 about 12 armed dacoits stopped two passenger coaches in Aziz Nagar Dala coming from Dhaka and Chittagong heading for Cox's Bazar. They robbed the drivers, helpers and passengers at gunpoint. Taka 4 lakh worth of goods were looted. The passengers, drivers and helpers were also assaulted. The occurrences take place when people

fall asleep, said a passenger who regularly make such journeys on the route.

A number of night coaches began to move together in a bid to face such situation jointly. But this system is not found doing any good to be effective.

Most recent incidents of robbery were reported in night coaches at Cox's Bazar-Chittagong and Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway caused losses worth Taka fifty lakhs including ornaments.

It is also alleged that the criminals involved in highway robbery are mostly known to the police and they reportedly do not take any action. It is alleged that highway police patrol has never been seen during such occurrences.

On the other hand, law and order situation in the Cox's Bazar district has deteriorated in recent days causing great concern to local people.

Dacoity, theft, murder, gambling, kidnapping, rape, cattle head lifting, hijacking, kidnapping, pricking, pocketing, smuggling and highway robbery have been rampant in all seven thanas of the district, local people said.

The miscreants allegedly move almost freely in and around the town, thana headquarters and the adjoining areas carrying unauthorised lethal weapons and engage in anti-social activities with impunity.

Open sale of drugs, ganja and liquor is rampant in town and as well as in almost all thanas giving rise to criminal activities. Local people complained that law enforcing agencies remained silent over the illegal sale of drugs and wine for unknown reasons.

They urged the authorities concerned to take steps to check the anti-social activities in the district.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Moheskhalia and Chokoria thanas have been passing their days in fear as they may be victim of terrorism at any time. The security of life and property of the people of Moheskhalia (island) thana in the district is at stake following the increase of crimes. Crimes have taken a

serious turn with the free movement of the miscreants with fire arms even in broad day light.

Murder, killing and stabbing of the opponents on the slightest pretext and rape, hijacking and toll collection have become a regular feature in this thana.

Sale of wine and its use increased, cultivation of ganja and other immoral activities have been going on unabated. Clashes between rival groups and gunmen for vested interests have vitiated the atmosphere.

The peace-loving people have been passing their days in great anxiety for fear of being an easy prey to their greed.

According to Moheskhalia police, about 65 crimes were committed in the thana during the last four months till August 10. But the local people put the figure to be about 90. The crimes committed during last four months included eight dacoities, ten robberies, five riots, three kidnappings, two rapes, five gun-fights and 32 other crimes.

Meanwhile, a huge quantity of illegal and live ammunition were seized by the police from different places of the thana.

Witnesses said, in most cases the rivals use lethal weapons like, ran dao, hockeysticks, Chinese axes, cocktails and different kinds of fire arms during clashes. The source also said that most of the activists are college-going boys.

However, when contacted a police officer said that they are trying their best to curb crimes. But, they added, sometimes we have to face problems.

Though the total number of crimes has been reduced this year, the number of murders and women oppression including rapping has increased.

About 42 murders and 25 incidents of women oppression were committed during last year while about 28 murders and 10 incidents of women oppression was record in the previous year.

Local people appealed to higher authorities to ensure peaceful atmosphere throughout the district as well as to protect young generation from violence.

Alleged toll collector with arms held

COMILLA, Sept 9: A young man with a revolver and two rounds of bullet was caught by local people while allegedly collecting toll in the town on September 4, reports UNB.

Police said, Jasimuddin was held by local people when he demanded a huge amount of money from the owner of Lion Unani Dawakhana at Kaptan Bazar.

He was then handed over to sadar thana police. A case was filed in this connection.

Warm reception accorded to Deputy Speaker

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 9: Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Advocate Abdul Hamid was accorded a warm reception by the members of Kishoreganj Press Club at a function held in the club premises Saturday night. Speaking on the occasion Advocate Abdul Hamid who is also an Associate Member of Kishoreganj Press Club stressed the need for improving law and order on priority basis for the overall development of the country.

He also sought co-operation from all political parties in this regard. Md Matur Rahman Superintendent of Police (SP), Md Abdul Khaleque Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Prof Ziauddin Ahmed, Abu Khaled Pathan, Abu Bakkar Siddique Hero, Kazi Shaheen Khan spoke among others at the function.

Md Sayeduzzaman president of the press club presided over the function. Besides Kishoreganj Pourasava, Bar Association and Diabetic Association also accord reception to him.

Erosion leaves 200 families homeless

MADARIPUR, Sept 9: About 200 families of Gharishar and Charatra unions at Naria thana of the district have been rendered homeless by erosion of the Padma, reports UNB.

According to officials, some 300 acres of cropland, one primary school and the road connecting Sureshwar launch ghat including five shops of the market were also devoured by erosion. The Sureshwar Darbar Sharif is now threatened while the Sureshwar launch ghat has been shifted to a safer place.

The homeless families have taken shelter on the highway near the Sureshwar village.

The affected families alleged that they were spending days in miserable condition without any relief from the government.

Local MP Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali have urged the concerned authorities to help the affected families.

Widespread pest attack reported

MADARIPUR, Sept 9: Widespread pest attack has been reported from Rajoir thana damaging standing aman paddy in the area, reports UNB.

Local farmers said they are not getting fruitful results using pesticides in their fields.

The agriculture officials said transplanted aman on 10 hectares of land of the thana has been affected by *Paniri* insects. The situation, they said, would ease when the crops get exposed to sun-ray.

Farmers are being advised on remedial measures to save their transplanted aman from *Paniri*-attack, the sources said.

Imam of a mosque chops his wife to death

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 9: An Imam of the local Nilogor Mosque namely, Abul Kasem, 45, allegedly chopped his wife, Manuara Begum, 35, to death in his house at Salmura-chria village under Nobinogor thana of the district on August 29.

Manuara was allegedly murdered by her husband following a family feud, sources said.

It is learnt that during the incident, while her 3 children was screaming the neighbours rushed to the spot and nabbed Imam Abul Kasem. Later, Kasem was handed over to the police of Nobinogor police station.

A case was filed with Nobinogor police station in this connection.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Prof M Eusuff Ali, RU VC addressing a seminar on "Race relation in USA," jointly organised by Bangladesh Society for American studies, BSAS, and USIS, Dhaka, Wednesday held at the sanate hall of the university. — Star photo

Farmers at stake in N-dists Agri products fetch prices far below the output cost

NATORE, Sept 9: Farmers of the country's northern region are facing serious hardship because of the prevailing low market prices of their produce, reports UNB.

Market observers said the farmers of Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Bogra, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Kurigram and Dinajpur districts are being forced to sell their agricultural products at a rate far below their production cost.

They said although there was a bumper production of irri-boro and jute during the season the prices of paddy and jute declined the lowest in comparison to the past few years owing mainly to low demand. On the other hand the production cost of these crops had soared due to exorbitant prices of agricultural inputs, including chemical fertilizers.

Farmer said a mound of paddy is being sold at Tk 180 to Tk 190 while jute which was selling for Tk 400 to 450 at the beginning of the season, is now being sold at Tk 280 to Tk 300. The price of paddy never crossed Tk 200 to 220 per mound after the harvesting of irri-boro this year.

Farmers said the decline in jute price was mainly due to slow purchase of jute in the market. Many traders were waiting for a new jute policy.

Drug, liquor recovered

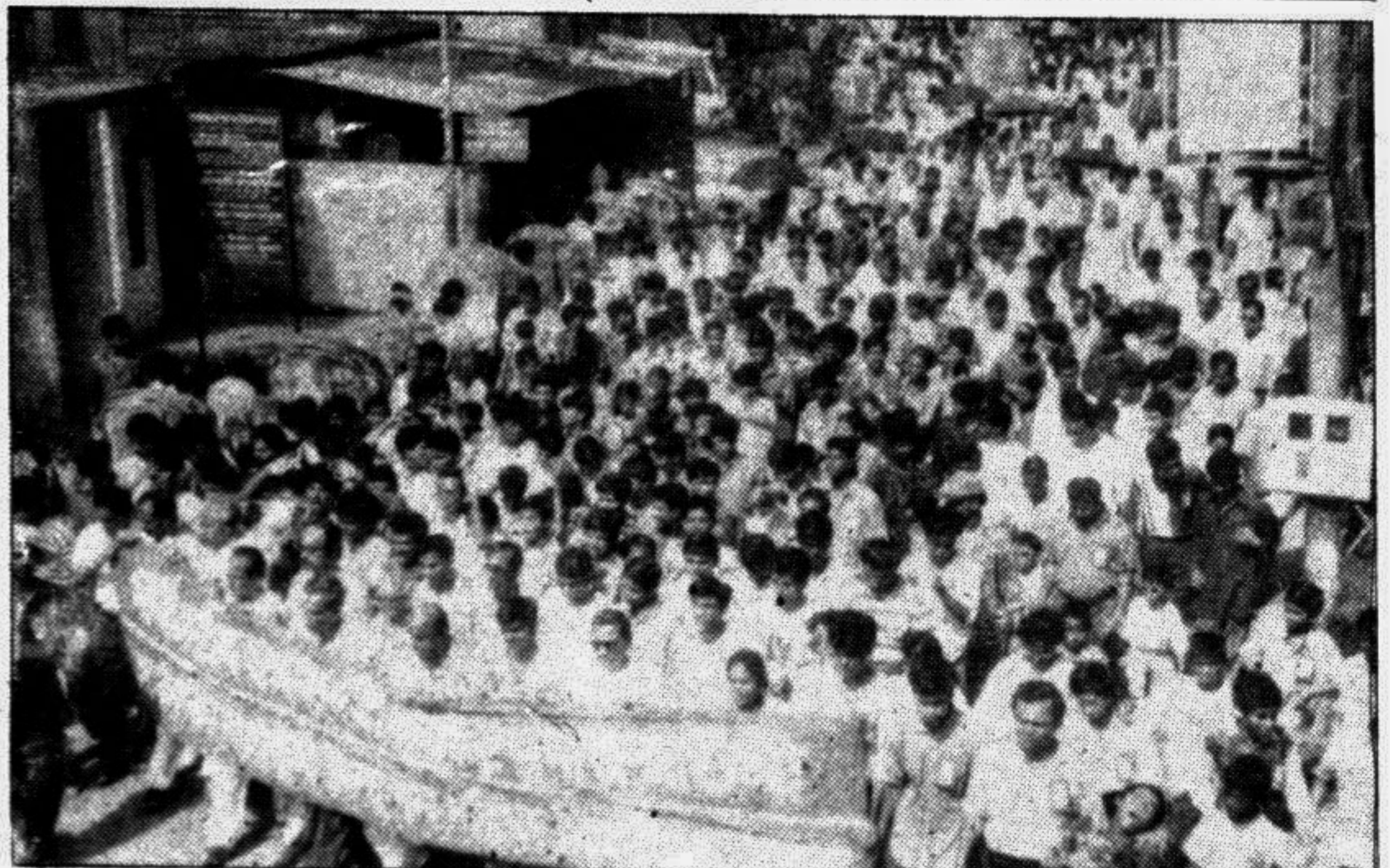
NARSINGDI, Sept 9: A huge quantity of drug and liquor was recovered from two houses at Godairchar village in sadar thana of the district on September 3, reports UNB. A case was filed with sadar thana in this connection.

Some of the traders have not yet received payment for jute supplied to the mills in the past. The government-owned enterprises and agencies have not cleared the bills of the dealers and traders.

In addition to these, the different agencies had already bought a huge quantity of jute on deferred payment basis and the godowns are reposed to be fully loaded with jute.

Taking this opportunity, a section of middlemen have manipulating the local markets fixing rates at their will. These are the factors causing drastic decline in the demand and subsequent fall in the prices of jute, they said.

Concerned officials attributed the situation to the lack of sufficient space, transportation problem, irregular and insufficient money supply and slow jute processing in the mills.



SYLHET: Hindu community in Sylhet brought out a rally recently in the town in observance of Jamashtomy. — Star photo

Firewood used in brickfields

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 9: Frequent cutting of trees creates ecological imbalance in Cox's Bazar coastal areas. As a result rainfall have become scanty and excessive hot weather is prevailing here, local meteorologist and environmentalists said.

Rampant use of firewoods despite government ban in the brickfields of the district is going on unabated hastening the process of deforestation and causing ecological imbalances.

Brickfield owners are using woods as fuel despite availability of coal in the depots, local people alleged.

Eye witnesses said that a huge quantity of firewoods has been collected and stored at brickfields by the manufacturers. Besides bamboo's are also being used as fuel for burning bricks in all the 40 brickfields while age old fruit bearing trees are being felled down.

Date trees on the other hand are being chopped down indiscriminately to feed the brickfields affecting production of molasses, they added.

Meanwhile, the environmentalists have expressed

grave concern over the increasing felling of trees which is affecting the ecological balance in the district.

The government in July 1980 imposed a ban on using firewood in brickfields to curb deforestation all over the country. Local people urged the authorities to take proper action against the brickfield owners for violating government order without further delay.

It may be mentioned that

Cox's Bazar is a over populated district and new offices are being built which require huge bricks.

On the other hand, plantation of trees are not enough in comparison to felling of trees including fruit bearing trees.

Most of the villages in Cox's Bazar district have become treeless. As a result rainfall have become scanty and excessive hot weather is prevailing.



JHENIDAH: A colourful rally was brought out recently in Saikupa town by SRIZON on the occasion of International Literacy Day. — Star photo

Housewife commits suicide, another allegedly poisoned to death

From CHT Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, Sept 9:

One house-wife has allegedly ended her life consuming poison Saturday night while another divorce reportedly a pregnant was poisoned to death Saturday afternoon at two separate places in the district, concerned police sources said.

The incidents of unnatural death took place at Bandarchhora village in Matrangana thana and Dainichhari village in Manikchhari thana of the district respectively.

Shyamali Khatun, 25, wife of Shahabuddin Sabu of village Bandarchhora in Matrangana thana of the district allegedly killed herself by consuming poison Saturday night being frustrated of family trouble. She was under pressure to divorce her husband, Matrangana thana police quoted the villagers as saying.

The body of the deceased was sent to Khagrachhari sadar hospital for autopsy.

In another incident Hushe Ara Begum, 28, a divorce and reportedly a pregnant was allegedly poisoned to death by the father of her lover and would-be husband Saturday afternoon at Dainichhora village home of the later in Manikchhari thana of the district, Manikchhari thana police said.

Suspected murdered Hushe Ara, mother of one girl child had an affair with Muhammad Zafar Ali, 33, son of Sultan Miah, a local union parishad member which had developed between themselves before the marriage of the victim, police quoted the First Information Report (FIR) submitted by Seraz Miah of Shampoopara, the father of the victim to have said.

Hushe Ara went to the house of Zafar that morning to request him to marry her early as she was carrying for the last three months. Zafar would reportedly enjoy Hushe Ara sexually promising her to marry for a pretty long time, the FIR report said.

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Proposed Ruppur power plant project still remains a dream

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Sept 9: The proposed Ruppur Atomic Power Plant Project of Ishurdi, taken up over 35 years back, still suffers from indecision from the higher authorities of the government.

The project, proposed and surveyed on a number of occasions by a number of national and international agencies, for removing the acute scarcity of the entire northern and southern zones of the country, never received final approval nor was it taken up for implementation nor was abandoned starting from 1961 till today.

Initial approval was, however, given by the then government in 1960 under the third five year plan. On the basis of this approval, the then government acquired 292 acres of land in 1961 at a place near Ruppur Jamiagar on the side of the Pabna-Kushtia Road, only five miles from the back of the river Padma. Hundreds of families were, due to the above acquisition, affected and were given compensation money as against their land and houses.

Land was acquired for the implementation of two projects originally. Two different sites were selected for their implementation. Land was also accordingly acquired from two different places. For the main project, known as Ruppur Atomic Power Plant Project, 260 acres of land was acquired in the same year at the village already mentioned and an additional area of 32 acres of land was also acquired at a place known as Sahapur Natembar.

Local leaders said the affected villagers, residing at the bottom of the hill areas, are passing hard days as no relief materials have yet been provided to them by the district administration.

house were already constructed long ago by the then government during the sixties.

A large number of officials and employees were also posted and 18 of them were still continuing in their job with no literally no work to do.

This correspondent, while visiting the area, about 20 miles from Pabna town, found no one in the buildings except ten boys in their teens gossiping there. When asked what they were doing there, they said that they often come here to play there.

When asked about the whereabouts of the staff of the Ruppur Atomic Power Plant, they said that they do not usually come but, one of them said that they

Ten shops gutted in Khagrachhari

From CHT Correspondent

LUXMICHHARI (Khagrachhari), Sept 9: Fire which broke out September 6 midnight at Luxmichhari bazar in Luxmichhari thana of the district has consumed 10 shops, official said.

The damage caused by the fire reportedly originated from the oven of a fuel-weld shop of Jel Miah was primarily estimated unofficially over Taka five lakh, the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Luxmichhari thana quoted the victims as saying.

The fire was extinguished after a two-hour effort of the dwellers of the bazar as there is no fire fighting installation in the thana, victims said.

Traders of the ten shops which were burnt to ashes in the fire sought government patronization for their rehabilitation. TNO added.

come here once or twice a month, possibly to collect their salary.

All the buildings, constructed in the sixties, were found very ill-managed, hardly taken care of and not at all properly maintained although maintenance costs, is inadequate.

It was stated in 1963 that a 70 megawatts capacity plant would be set up. Again in 1966, the scheme was revised and it was decided that a 125 megawatt Atomic power plant would be set up. This capacity was again raised to 300 megawatts in 1987 long after 21 years. But nothing was finalised as yet.

It may be recalled here in this connection that this project, badly needed for the 32 districts of the Northern and Southern zones of the country can be implemented with active financial and technical assistance possibly from the foreign countries. With this end in view, the then government of Pakistan and thereafter the government of Bangladesh sought the co-operation of the Soviet Union, the USA, the United Kingdom and France. Delegates at different times visited the project site and also talked a various aspects of the scheme with the government but nothing ultimately happened. In another effort, Canada, France, Germany and Switzerland approached and their representatives also visited the sites. But no visible result was found.

During her tenure, the then prime minister, Begum Khaleda Zia personally visited the project area in 1992. But nothing was done about the project.

The fate of the planned power plant still remains in uncertainty.