

# Rly wagon shortage hits grain shipment from Teestamukh ghat

From KM Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: Due to largely shortage of wagons the railway authorities of the eastern zone so far have failed to ship even half of the grain shipment scheduled to reach destinations in the western railway stations within the stipulated time.

According to sources, the government food department had given the task of shipping 60,000 metric tons of grains, produced in various northern districts, to the railway authority. The consignments were to reach destinations in Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong division from Teestamukh railway ferry

ghat within the deadline of April 15 starting from 1st of this month.

According to sources in the railway, the authority, till April 23, was, able to despatch 20,164 metric tons of the grain consignment.

It is learnt that shortage in goods wagon at Lalmonirhat railway division and poor planning has resulted in such a dilemma. The hope of successful shipment, even after the deadline, has been shattered largely due to poor planning of the authority, alleged many businessmen here.

According to sources, at least 200 goods wagons are required to ship grains belonging to government food department everyday. It is work mentioning that most of the food go-downs, where grains were stored, are to be emptied to accommodate more grain stocking. Most of the grains were purchased from different centres during the wheat procurement drive. However, space shortage many hamper storing of grain stocking in the godowns in near future.

Meanwhile, shipment of other consignments which are waiting at Teestamukh ghat,

has become totally uncertain due to the same reason. Huge quantity of goods, destined for mostly in the capital, are lying at the Teestamukh railway ferry ghat waiting to be shipped.

Local businessmen who prefer this cheaper and safer railway route for shipment of their goods to Dhaka told this correspondent that business with their partners in Dhaka will be seriously affected by this uncertain delay in despatching goods. The railway authority could not specifically mention when would they start shipment of goods waiting at that ghat.

## One convicted for killing unborn child

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 29: A man was awarded six years rigorous imprisonment here on Sunday for killing an infant in the mother's womb, reports UNB.

The court also fined him Tk 1000, failing to which he has to suffer another six months rigorous imprisonment.

According to the prosecution story, the convicted Musa Sheikh in his mid thirties and his accomplices attacked Rustam Ali's house on February 5, 1991 in broad day light following a previous enmity.

They beat up Rustam Ali and his children mercilessly. At one stage when Rustam's pregnant wife Mariam Begum came to their rescue, Musa started kicking her abdomen killing her 5 months old unborn baby.

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

## Touchstone images of Hindu goddess recovered

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: Local people recovered three images of Hindu goddess made of touchstone from Bairagihath under Gobindaganj thana on April 26. The images were later handed over to police and one person was arrested in this connection.

According to police, a group of labourers were digging a pond at village Gopalpur under Ghoraghat thana. They unearthed three touchstone images of goddess weighing 45 kilograms. The labourers concealed the matter and later secretly passed the images to Gobindaganj bazar. When they were bargaining over the price of the images it created suspicion among the local people. On challenge they, however, confessed the matter. On being informed, police arrested one person. The three images were taken into police custody.

## Applications invited for Swarupkati Samity stipends

Swarupkati Samity, Dhaka has invited application, for scholarship from poor and meritorious students of Higher Secondary, Bachelor and Post-graduate level who are studying in Dhaka, says a press release. Interested candidates have been requested to be present personally on May 3, 1997 at 3 pm with relevant documents at Room No. 508, 65-66, Motijheel C/A, (4th floor), Dhaka Chamber Building, Dhaka.

## One commits suicide

BHOLA, Apr 29: A housewife allegedly committed suicide in sadar thana here by taking poison, police said today, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, Rashida Begum 22, mother of a child was staying with her parents for some days. On April 22 she had a brawl with her family members that shocked her and at night she allegedly took poison to commit suicide.

She was rushed to the sadar hospital where the attending doctors declared her dead. A case was lodged with the police.



JHENIDAH: Shailakupa thana police arrested Liton, 23, of Kamalapur area and recovered 42 bottles of banned Phensidyl syrup near Katlagari bazar recently. Police also seized a motor cycle and Taka four thousand from his possession. — Star photo

## Accused flees from Gaibandha Thana

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: One Sarower Alam, an accused of a case filed under Women and Children Repression Act fled from Gaibandha police station's office room on April 22.

According to sources, a case was filed with Sundarganj thana against accused Sarower Alam and Dudu Mia under Women and Children Repression Act. After making necessary investigations the IO, Dilip Kumar Chowdhury and the SI, Wazed Ali of Gaibandha thana arrested both the accused and produced them before Gaibandha thana for taking under police custody. But due to negligence of on-duty police personnel accused Sarower Alam managed to flee from the thana office room.

## Body recovered

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: Police recovered a floating body of an unidentified woman from the river Karotoa at Panthamari under Gobindaganj thana on April 23.

Local people found a floating body in the river in the morning on the day. The corpse was recovered by local police and sent to Gaibandha for post-mortem. Police could not identify the dead body.

## Shortage of doctors, medicine, saline

# Diarrhoea takes alarming turn in 6 S-districts

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 29: Diarrhoea has broken out in an alarming state in the southern districts of Barisal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Pirojpur and Jhalakati since the last week of March.

In some thana areas of Barguna district spreading of diarrhoea has also been reported, according to local people and officials. It is revealed, attack of diarrhoea is less intense in Barisal and Patuakhali than other districts. Pirojpur and Bhola districts are the worst affected areas, local and official sources said. Bhola sadar, Daulat Khan, Tajmuddin and Monpura of Bhola, Nazirpur.

Kaukhali and Bhandaria of Pirojpur are also badly affected areas.

The death and affected figures, according to official sources of different districts revealed as 48 and 827, while unofficial sources quoted the figures as 72 and more than one thousand till Saturday.

Medical teams working in the affected areas are not adequate. Besides, necessary medicines, salines could not be supplied due to shortage of those items. Medical teams have no doctor. Paramedics are working there.

Meanwhile, a number of diarrhoea camps were opened in Bhola, Pirojpur and Jhalakati areas which are not more than 15. Saline supply is very much meagre in comparison with the necessity. Acute scarcity of drinking water is prevailing.

In Bhola, people who are living in offshore islands are worst sufferers in every respect. In these offshore islands diarrhoea has broken alarmingly.

But the authorities concerned came to know it after one week due to bad communication system in the offshore islands.

## Remand of 36 Manipuris extended

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 29: The remand of 36 Indians and 2 Bangladeshis has been extended by 5 days from Monday. Earlier the court allowed remand for 5 days.

The BDR arrested the 36 Indian nationals from the Balaghat border area on April 20 on charges of unauthorised entry into Bangladesh.

Two Bangladeshi nationals, belonging to the Manipuri community, who went to the border to receive the Indians were also taken into custody.

## Body recovered from hotel in Comilla

COMILLA, Apr 29: Comilla police Monday recovered the body of a doctor from a residential hotel at Shashangacha area, reports BSS.

Police said, they recovered body of the doctor Sufian Khorshed, 31, from a room of Hotel Maynamoti at about 4:30 pm on the day.

They suspected that Dr Sufian committed suicide hanging himself from the ceiling fan of his hotel room. He was an inhabitant of Paikpara in Brahmanbaria town.

An unnatural death (UD) case was registered with Comilla sadar thana.

## BCL (S-P) sweeps students union poll of Shailakupa College

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Apr 29: Awami League-backed BCL (S-P) swept students' union election of Shailakupa Government Degree College here Monday bagging all 24 posts.

Mizanur Rahman and Sayed Manzurul Islam of BCL (S-P) panel got elected as VP and GS of the students' union. The other panel that contested the poll was of left-leaning Jatiya Chhatra Dal.

Pro-BNP student front JCD boycotted the election protesting re-scheduling of polling date.

## Two killed during fierce clash in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Apr 29: Two persons were killed and five others injured in a clash between two rival groups at village Nilakha under Raipura thana of the district Monday, reports BSS.

Police said, the victims are Raish Miah, 40, and Bodar Uddin, 30.

The fierce clash between two groups erupted following a land dispute. The injured persons were admitted to Narsingdi sadar hospital. Later, one of them was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

## 300 trucks stranded at two ghats

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 29: Some 300 trucks, carrying perishable commodities, remained stranded at Sirajganj and Bhupur ghats for last two days due to inadequate ferry services, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the trucks loaded with potato, banana, watermelon and vegetables from Natore, Naogaon, Bogra and other northern districts were waiting in queues for different destinations of the country.

They said one of the four ferries in the ghats had gone out of order due to mechanical fault and the remaining three were on operation between Sirajganj and Bhupur ghats.

When contacted a source at BIWTA said more ferries were needed to ease congestion at the ghats, or else, the situation would take a serious turn.

## Smuggled goods worth Tk 2.6 lakh seized from Satkhira border

SATKHIRA, Apr 29: Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized contraband Indian goods worth more than Taka 2.67 lakh from different border areas of the district during the last seven days, reports BSS.

The BDR members raided several border areas and seized Indian goods including drugs like injection, pressure cooker, dry food tins, bicycles, salt, cows, cotton sarees, sugar, radio, battery, spare parts of bicycle and hasish.

The goods were deposited with the custom authorities. None was arrested.

## Paddy worth Tk 8cr lost in recent hailstorm

SUNAMGANJ, Apr 29: Intermittent hailstorm over the district recently damaged paddy on 9,667 acres of land with an estimated value of more than eight crore Taka, official sources said here, reports UNB.

Hailstorm continued intermittently for a week beginning April 17 seriously affecting crops in five of the ten thanas of the district.

Officials estimated the loss in Jamalganj at 24 per cent, Sunamganj sadar 2.38 per cent, Tahirpur 1.4 per cent, Biswambarpur 2 per cent and Doarabazar 3 per cent.

Boro was cultivated on 168,500 hectares of land in the ten thanas of the district this year but hailstorm had destroyed paddy of 3,914 hectares of land in five thanas, they said.

Farmers apprehending more hailstorm in the season have been trying to complete harvesting, but shortage of labour, has stood on the way.

Farmer's representative say groups of labourers have been moving out of the district for higher wages.

As a result, about 80 per cent of the paddy worth about Tk 300 crore are lying unharvested on the fields.

## Thatched houses allegedly set on fire by 'influential'

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Apr 29: The thatched houses of 10 poor Adbasis families of 'Marmi community' of village Marmi under Ishurdi thana in Pabna district were allegedly set on fire on Friday last by a group of hired miscreants. They were heavily armed with various weapons.

The Adbasis, whose houses were burnt, are Bernard Biswas, Abraham Biswas, Marisita Biswas, Sebrina Biswas, Ram Naluch, Luis Boma, Pancher Biswas, Georges Biswas, Lat Anthony Biswas and Martin Biswas.

All the numbers of the above affected families were rendered homeless and their families comprising 50 members with men, women and children were still staying under open sky.

Philip Samadhar, a leader of the Marmi Adbasis, told The Daily Star that this criminal and inhuman act was committed with the purpose of disposing the poor Adbasis who were residing there for over two centuries. He further stated that the main aim of the miscreants who were allegedly hired by one powerful person to drive the poor Adbasis from their house with a view to grabbing their land Megally. The land concerned was Debottari properties as recorded in the DS Record, he asserted.

## Metropolitan

# Qualitative aspects of primary education remain neglected

CPD study reveals

The country has developed a vast network of institutions to provide primary level education to the relevant age group making it feasible to attain the universal primary education in 10 years, an independent study has said, reports BSS.

"In recent years the level of primary education appears to be moving upward primarily because of higher allocation of public sector resources and commitment of larger volume of resources by non-government organisations (NGOs)," the study, guided by noted economist Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, said.

It, however, said "the qualitative aspects of primary education, hitherto, appears to have been a generally neglected concern."

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), which is headed by noted economist Prof Rehman Sobhan, conducted the study "Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) 1996."

According to official statistics, the enrolment rate in primary schools has now increased to 92 per cent, the completion rate to 61 per cent, the male-female ratio to 53:47 and the literacy rate to 44 per cent.

The present number of government primary schools is 37,710, non-government registered and aided primary schools 19,683, non-government, non-registered and non-aided schools 577, ebtedayee madrasahs 9,500, kindergartens 1,417, satellite schools 200, community schools 1,000 and non-formal primary schools (NFPS) 51,777, the statistics said.

Taking the statistics into account the IRBD study said "if the foundation of our education has to be strong, we need to pay more attention to the quality of educators and the quality of

teaching materials besides improving the physical environment for curricular and co-curricular activities with a more creative and innovative bias."

It added, "Incorporation of a quality dimension in the assessment of our educational attainment indicates that the wastage of resources is of a magnitude that a poor country such as Bangladesh can not afford."

The study found performances of 20 per cent primary students in Bangla, five per cent students in mathematics and four per cent in general knowledge of elementary level as 'good' on the basis of some sample tests. Most of the students simply dislike English, it said.

A UNICEF study of 1992 had concluded that after five years of schooling, 46 per cent of students satisfy the basic education criteria.

Another survey by the World Bank, conducted in the same year, found that only 44.60 per cent of ever enrolled children with up to six years of schooling satisfied the 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) test, the percentage being 72.2 per cent for the urban and the rest for the rural areas.

The IRBD study on 550 students in 15 government, 10 non-government primary schools and five NGO-run schools found that nearly 75 per cent students are afraid of their head teacher or class teacher as the teachers are not specially trained to handle the students with care.

The survey also observed that the teachers are not capable enough to teach even the

Bangla language in an appropriate manner.

"Of the 50 per cent teachers observed during the participative survey, the language of communication used by almost all teachers in the class room tend to be colloquial... these teachers' pronunciation was non-standard and many even wrongly spelt certain words not in common usage," the report said.

Regarding the mathematics, only 18 per cent students of Class Five in government schools and five per cent in non-government schools have developed a liking for a proficiency in mathematics as a few number of teachers have had adequate schooling and training to teach primary school mathematics.

"This may explain why science education is not putting down roots in our education system," the study observed.

It said that although the text of English is simple, only one fifth of the students found the subject interesting while 37 per cent "positively dislike it".

The study further observed that only 19 per cent students in Class Three and eight per cent in Class Five can read their school English book merely in an "acceptable way."

"If a policy decision has been taken by the government to introduce English as a second language for school students in Bangladesh then it is important that its teaching be undertaken more effectively than what has been done so far," the study suggested.

It observed that in the prevailing system, there is no effective interaction between the parents and school management. It, therefore, laid emphasis on developing a rapport between the school authorities and parents.



A speeding truck rammed a private car on Dhaka-Gazipur highway yesterday killing the driver on the spot. — Star photo

## Housewife strangled in city slum

By Staff Correspondent

A housewife was strangled at a slum at Mohakhali in the city Monday.

Noorjahan, 27, mother of two children, was found dead in her thatched house near the TB Hospital at Mohakhali in the morning. Police suspected that Noorjahan was killed sometime between midnight and 6 am.

They took the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Mojibar Rahman, husband of the victim, fled shortly after the incident.

Noorjahan's father, Khorshed Alam, filed a murder case with Gulshan thana accusing Mojibar. None was arrested in this connection till last night.

## Outgoing S Korean envoy calls on Khasru

Outgoing South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Tae Kyu Han called on Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

During the visit, the ambassador discussed bilateral relations and expressed his appreciation for the cooperation between the two countries.

## 5 Asian countries eager to provide economic support: Rob

By Staff Correspondent

Five countries of Asia, including three developed nations, are eager to provide technological and economic support for the development process initiated in Bangladesh by the present government.

Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rob said this during an exclusive interview with BSS in his office yesterday. He visited Hong Kong, North Korea, China, Japan and Singapore from April 9 to 26 where he had talks with governments and investors about aims and objectives of the present government of national consensus in Bangladesh.

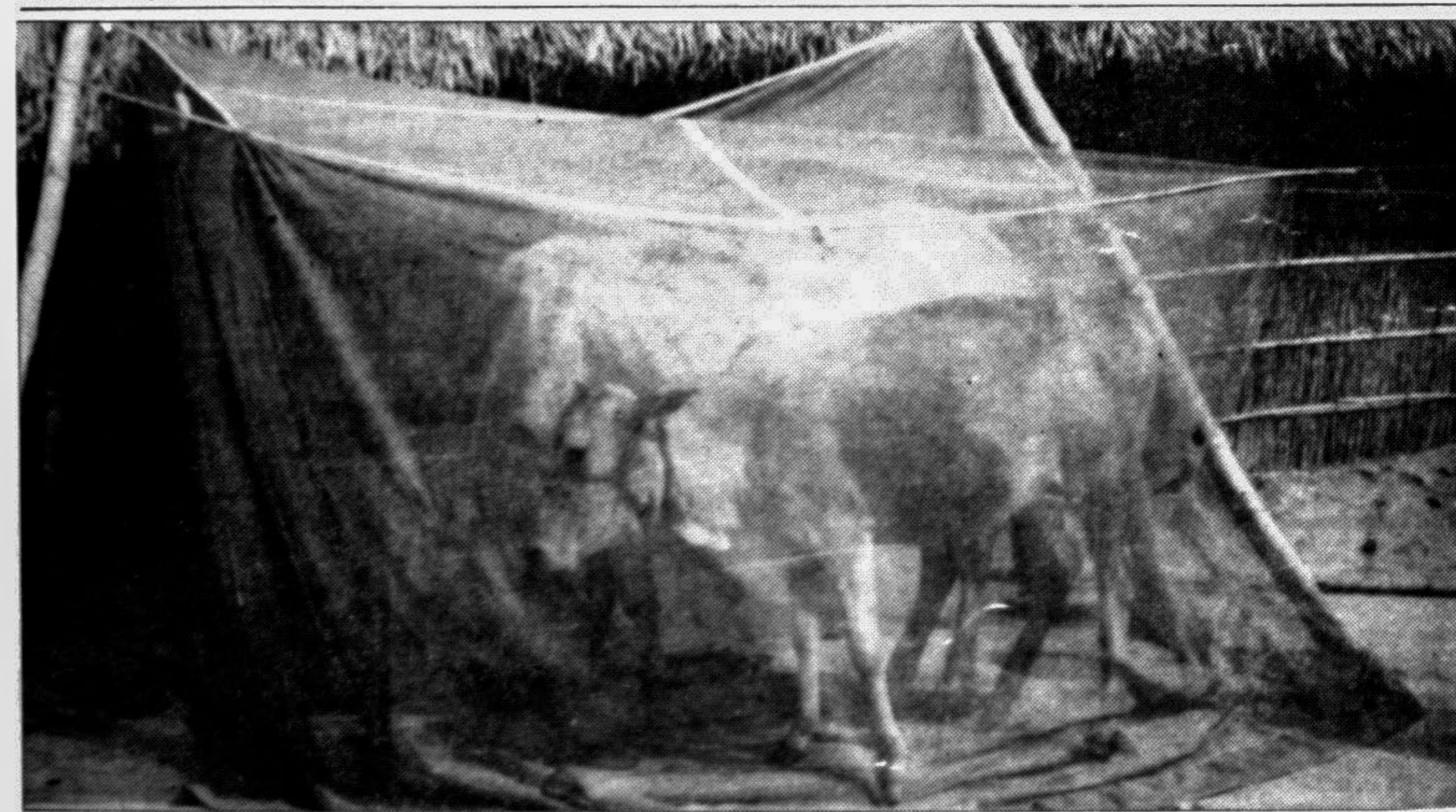
Rob said he had apprised both the governments and investors of those countries of the present government's policy towards poverty alleviation by achieving rapid economic progress and got positive response from them in terms of assurance for help and support in all fields of development in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, he said.

On his way to Pyongyang leading a delegation, Rob stopped over in Hong Kong where he had a courtesy meeting with the Speaker of Hong Kong parliament and held extensive discussions on parliamentary systems of both the countries.

The Bangladesh delegation, afterwards had a stopover in China where Vice Minister for Communications Hwangshun Ziang had cordial talks with the minister on bilateral issues of two countries.

The Bangladesh delegation during seven-day stay in Pyongyang held extensive discussions at various levels on political, economic and issues mutual interests. It attended the celebration of the 85th birth anniversary of late North Korean President Kim Il Sung and signed the Pyongyang declaration.



GAIBANDHA: Mosquito menace has forced farmers to use mosquito nets for their cows. — Star photo