

National

News snaps

2,13,000 hectares brought under Aus farming

RANGPUR, May 11: The Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has undertaken a programme to put 2,13,000 hectares under Aus crop cultivation in eight districts of greater Rangpur and Dinajpur zone, and AED source told BSS.

About 1,12,000 hectares have so far been brought under Aus cultivation and the rest area is expected to be completed by next month. The districtwise break-up of the cultivation target is as follows: Rangpur target-62,000 hectares, Nilphamari-24,850 hectares, Gaibandha-4,000 hectares, Kurigram-27,500 hectares, Dinajpur-38,500 hectares, Thakurgaon-23,000 hectares and Panchagarh-12,100 hectares.

Culvert construction project undertaken

CHUADANGA, May 11: The Local Government Engineering Department has taken up a project to construct 20 pipe culverts in Jibannagar thana of Chuadanga district in the current financial year at a cost of Taka 9,80,424 under its rural development programme, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the two roads on which the culverts are being constructed are Shantoshpur-Hashadah bazar road and Banka-Andulbaria road. The construction work of the culverts will be completed by next month.

Valuables worth Tk 5 lakh looted

FENI, May 11: Valuables worth about Tk 5.3 lakh were looted in three dacoits in the district, police said, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, a gang of dacoits entered into the house of Badu Mia of Alipur village in Daghambhuiyan thana and decamped with valuables worth about Tk two lakh on April 28. In another incident, a gang of miscreants raided Laskarhat bazar in sadar thana and decamped with valuables worth about Tk three lakh from nine shops on the night of April 22. On the same night another gang of dacoits stormed the house of Shahabuddin of village Afokdia in the same thana and looted valuables worth about Tk 50,000.

Dispute on construction of road settled

BANDARBAN, May 11: The dispute on construction of Lama-Sualik road through the land of security forces' training centre has been settled amicably, reports UNB.

Local Government Engineering Department and the security forces in a recent meeting have agreed to construct 53-km alternate Lama-Sualik road avoiding the training centre. Earlier the road was passing through the land acquired by the security forces for the training centre. The new Lama-Sualik road may need additional allotment then the earlier allotment of Tk 34 crore, the sources said.

Construction work of 5 schools completed

RANGAMATI, May 11: Rangamati zone of Facilities Department has nearly completed construction work of five existing government secondary schools at a cost of Taka 14 lakh, according to official sources, reports BSS.

The project included construction of boundary walls of Rangamati Government High School and Rangamati Government Girls' High School in sadar thana, class-room of Marayangiri Government Pilot High School in Kapitali thana and academic building of Bhubanjoy Government High School in Zurachari thana of the district, the sources detailed.

Indian silk saree seized

MANIKGANJ, May 11: Detective Branch (DB) of police of Manikganj seized 190 pieces of Indian silk saree with blouse-pieces, three bottles of whisky and 13 bottles of phenisidyl on May 6 near Tara bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off DB police searched a Dhaka-bound passenger bus and seized the contraband items. None was arrested. A case has been registered with Manikganj police.

Drug addict kills baby

SHERPUR, May 11: A drug addict in an attack on Wednesday killed his two-year-old niece and injured his sister at Girdanayanganpura area of the town, reports UNB.

According to family sources, Haider Ali, 50, after taking hemp returned to his house from outside on the day in an abnormal condition. All on a sudden he attacked both his sister Pariman, 35, and her daughter Shahida with lethal weapons. They were rushed to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Shahida succumbed on the following day. Police arrested Haider Ali.

Manpower shortage in edn deptt

MADRIPUR, May 11: The local Education Department is facing problem due to shortage of manpower, reports UNB.

According to official sources, two posts of district primary and assistant primary education officers are lying vacant for a long time hampering the day to day activities. On the other hand, the post of primary training institute's supervisor is also lying vacant. The posts of two Headmasters of Donovan Government Girls' and Islamia Government High School remained vacant since long causing suffering to the students. The posts of District Education Officer and Assistant Education Officer in secondary have also fallen vacant.

Diesel price hike hampers farming

MADRIPUR, May 11: Cultivation of IRRI-Boro is being affected adversely due to price hike of diesel and erratic power supply, reports UNB.

According to the farmers, irrigation on about three lakh acres of land is facing set back as diesel price has soared up during the last three weeks. Diesel is being sold between Tk 17 and Tk 19 as against Tk 13. The farmers are also in hardships as they lost their Aman crops in the last season. The farmers of the area alleged that the power pump owners and Jotders have been taking advantage of the situation. They have already enhanced the irrigation charge abnormally. It is also alleged that frequent disruption of power and malpractice by a section of bank employees in disbursing agri loan are also responsible for the set-back in achieving the target of IRRI-Boro cultivation.

Outstanding land dev tax unrealised

GAZIPUR, May 11: Outstanding land development tax of over Tk 15,20 crore have been lying unrealised for long with private land owners, government and other organisations in five thanas of the district, reports UNB.

Of the total amount, Tk 14 crore remained outstanding with various government and non-government organisations. Meanwhile, an amount of Tk 3.01 crore has been fixed as land development tax is the current year. Deputy Commissioner of the district expressed his dissatisfaction over poor realisation of outstanding tax.

8 drug addicts arrested

NAOGAON, May 11: Police in a drive against drug abuse and drug trading in the last week arrested eight people and recovered a huge quantity of narcotics from different areas of the district, reports UNB.

The seized contrabands included 24 litres of rectified spirit and 47 bottles of phenisidyl syrup. Police arrested three people with 20 litres of rectified spirit from Atrai thana and three youths — Taher Khaleque and Polash — from the town with 40 bottles of phenisidyl. Earlier, police arrested two phenisidyl traders with seven bottles of phenisidyl from Uklipara in sadar thana on April 29. The arrested were identified as Motahar Hossain and Babu.

Villager beaten to death

THAKURGAON, May 11: Shahidul Islam, 45, of village Keshurbari under Thakurgaon sadar thana was beaten to death at Dholbarhat on May 5, reports BSS.

Witnesses said Shahidul went to Dholbarhat for marketing. All on a sudden a hue and cry started in the market and people began to beat him as alleged bicycle lifter. He died on the spot. A case was recorded at Thakurgaon Police Station. After autopsy the body was handed over to his relatives.

Efforts on to make women self-reliant

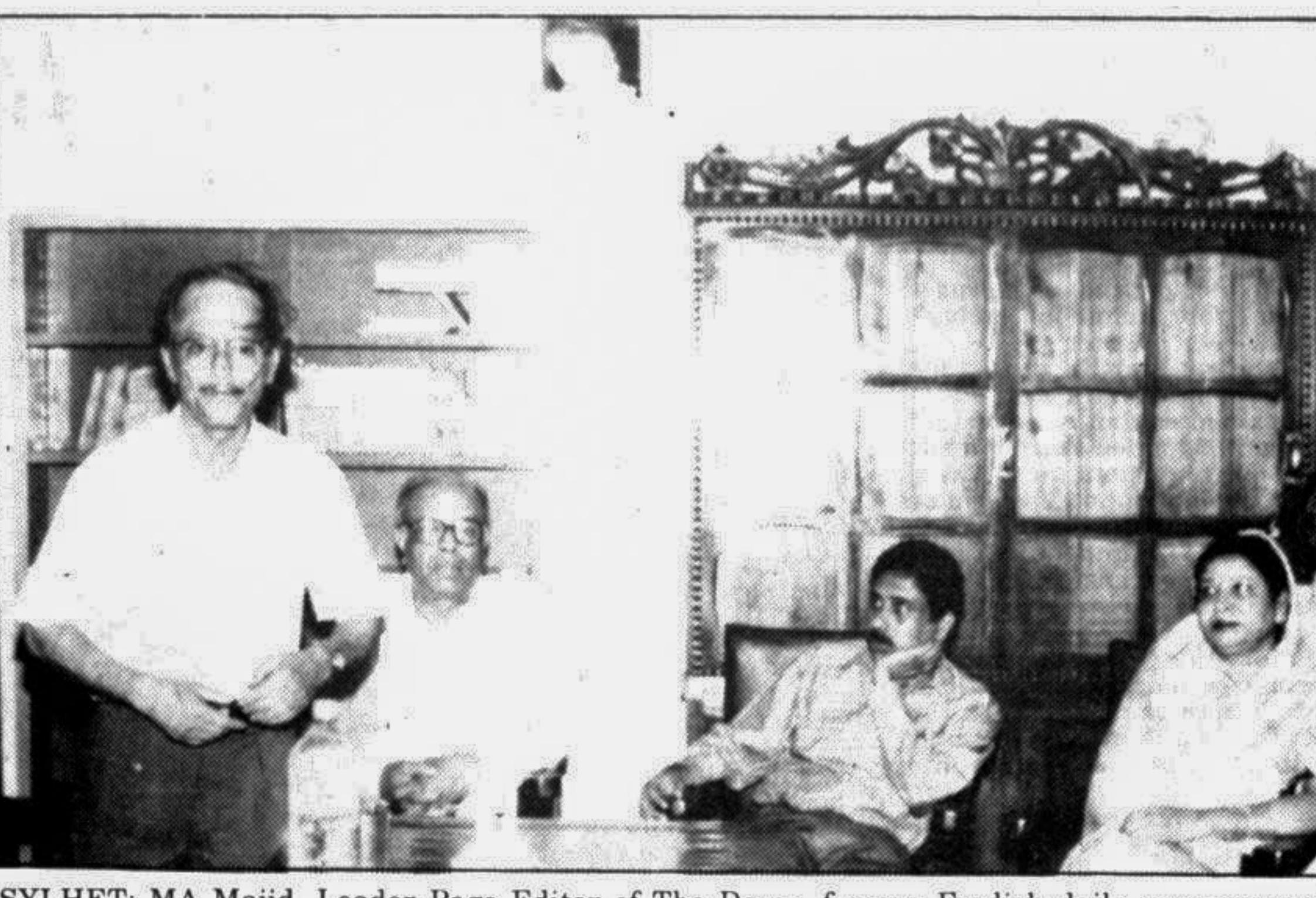
PABNA, May 11: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believed in empowering the women and pledge-bound to make them self-reliant, reports UNB.

He was addressing a literacy certificate distribution programme of an NGO named 'Nijera Kori' as chief guest at Kasilnathpur in Sathia thana on Friday. The State Minister said the government has undertaken all out efforts to eradicate illiteracy and make Bangladesh free from poverty.

Fire claimed 37 lives in 5 years

KISHOREGANJ, May 11: Some 37 people were killed, 44 others injured and properties worth over Tk 3 crore have been gutted in 265 fire incidents during last five years in the district, reports UNB.

District Fire Service and Civil Defence sources said, 25 people were killed and 33 others injured while properties worth about Tk 55.54 lakh were charred in 44 fire incidents in 1993. Seven people died and property valued at Tk 54.50 lakh had been gutted in 97 fire incidents during the year 1994 and 1995. In the year 1996, valuables worth about Tk 1.41 crore were gutted in 64 incidents and in 1997, property worth of Tk 53.35 lakh had been destroyed in 60 separate incidents. Five people died and 11 other injured in these incidents.



SYLHET: MA Majid, Leader Page Editor of The Dawn, famous English daily newspaper of Pakistan, speaking at a function held recently at Sylhet Press Club. — Star photo

Bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy expected in B'baria

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, May 11: Bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy is expected in all seven thanas of the district during the current season.

According to the Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, initially a total of 79,000 hectares of land had been brought under IRRI-Boro paddy cultivation. Later the cultivation target was increased up to 87,980 hectares of land to achieve the production target of 2,21,055 metric tons of paddy.

Due to the growing interest among farmers the cultivation target was exceeded in all seven thanas of the district. A total of 82,205 hectares of High Yielding Varieties (HYV) paddy field, were cultivated while 5,775 hectares of land were cultivated with the local varieties.

AED sources said, due to favourable climatic condition and enhanced programme of IRRI-Boro cultivation they have been expecting bumper production of IRRI-Boro paddy.

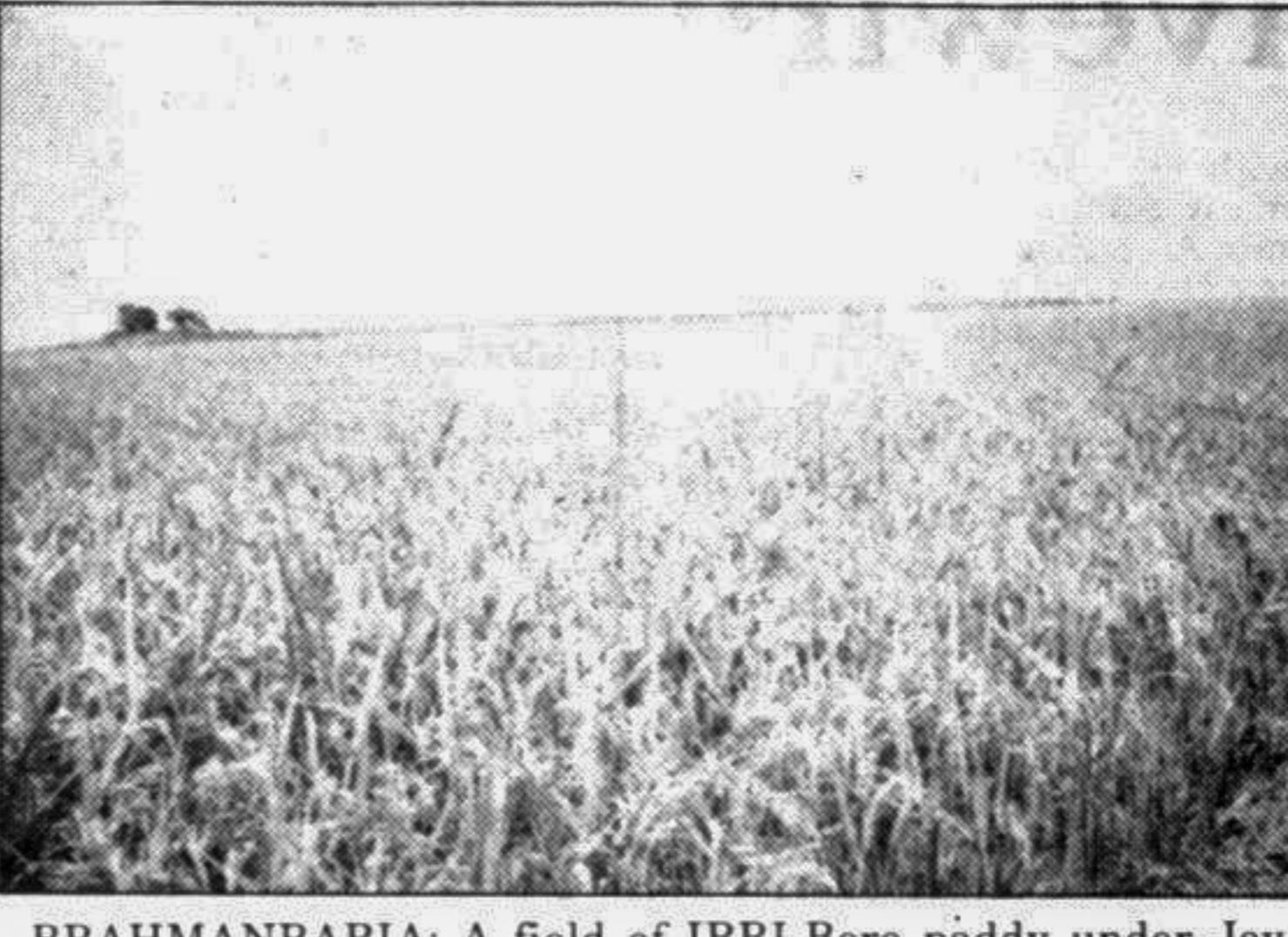
While talking some farmers informed this correspondent, they hope an enhanced production of IRRI-Boro paddy. If the climatic condition is favourable up to the harvesting time, they hope to have a good production of IRRI-Boro paddy.

Meanwhile, the farmers of the district did not get expected production of Transplanted

Aman paddy during the last season. The farmers gave a special drive for IRRI-Boro production is the current season to recover the losses incurred during the last Transplanted Aman cultivation season.

According to AED, Brahmanbaria district office sources, they will obtain a good result is IRRI-Boro cultivation during the current season. They fixed up their achievement target of production to 2,43,768 metric tons in the previous target 2,21,055 metric tons in the current season.

Out of the total target, officials have been expecting to achieve 2,35,106 metric tons of paddy from the fields where HYV of paddy have been cultivated and 8,665 metric tons of paddy from the fields where local varieties of paddy have been cultivated.



BRAHMANBARIA: A field of IRRI-Boro paddy under Joydordandi-Sunamra Irrigation Project in Sarail thana. — Star photo

Arsenic panic grips Chandpur

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, May 11: Arsenic panic has gripped seven thanas of the district.

Arsenic content has been found in most of the tubewells in the district. According to the local Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) sources, the whole Chandpur district has already been plagued with arsenic contamination.

The local PHED started testing arsenic content in tube-well water in different thanas since last year.

PHED authority examined water of about 50 per cent tube-wells of the district. Almost all tube-wells, so far examined, are found more or less arsenic contaminated.

But local PHED officials are

unable to tackle this alarming situation. The places where arsenic contents are detected are Faridganj, Haziganj, Matlab, Shahristi, Kachua, Halmchari and Chandpur sadar thanas.

A large number of people have been suffering from arsenic related diseases. Meantime, 25 per cent tube-wells have been sealed-off in the district.

According to PHED, the danger level of arsenic contamination in the water is .05 mg. This is dangerous to human body. Besides, arsenic content was also found below danger level up to .02 mg in some areas of the district. Local PHED sources told this correspondent that steps were taken to examine water of most of tube-wells of the district.

Later his body was recovered by the Fire Brigade personnel and sent to Faridpur General Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Shiraj left behind his widow and a son.

But no measures were taken as yet PHED to check the arsenic contamination further.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Prof Abdul Khaleque, Vice-Chancellor of the university speaking at a farewell function and freshers' reception ceremony held recently at the Genetics and Breeding Department. Treasurer Prof Abul Fazal Huq, departmental chairman Prof O I Joarder and Dean of Biological and Geological Sciences Prof Abdul Khaleque are also seen. — Star photo

Clashes over Jalmahal continue

NARSINGDI, May 11: Clashes continued for the third day over the possession of a Jalmahal at Harirampur in Raipur thana of the district, reports UNB.

At least 35 people were injured, three of them seriously, in the clashes which erupted at about 10 am between the supporters of Nanu Bepari and Lal Mia Master.

The series of clashes which began on Friday, continued throughout the day.

2 killed in Feni road accident

FENI, May 11: Two people were killed and seven others injured when a microbus, carrying a bridal party, fell into a ditch near Muhuriganj on Khaigrachari road at night, reports UNB.

Of the victims, Joyon Abdin, 27, died on the spot while Salwar Hossain, 30, succumbed to his injuries in Feni Sadar Hospital.

The injured were also admitted to the hospital. They were on way to Comilla to join a marriage ceremony.

On information, police rushed to the school and recovered the body.

One killed in blast while making bomb

SIRAJGANJ, May 11: A young man was killed in a bomb explosion at Sabuj Kanon Preparatory School at Mujib road in the town early morning.

Police said Zakaria Masud, 27, died on the spot when the bomb he was making along with his associates in a room of the school went off at about 2:30 am.

On information, police rushed to the school and recovered the body.

River erosion Modern tech-based pilot project to protect Bhola

BHOLA, May 11: A modern technology-based pilot project has been undertaken to protect Bhola island from river erosion, reports BSS.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzaq and Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed inaugurated the pilot project here on Sunday.

The pilot project, with the financial assistance from Denmark and the Netherlands, will cost less than the cost of the methods usually applied to stop river erosion in Bangladesh, officials said. The project will also help save agricultural land, they added.

Another such pilot project has been undertaken in Haimchar under Chandpur district.

The pilot project at Bhola,

officials said, would be implemented to protect one kilometre area from erosion of the river Meghna in Kachi union of sadar thana.

During a briefing on the occasion, the ministers were told that when implemented the project would completely stop river erosion resulting in emergence of new land.

The project would cost Taka one crore 20 lakh, officials said. Secretary to the Ministry of Water Resources Dr. ATM Shamsul Huq, and Ambassador of the Netherlands in Bangladesh Dick Den Haas were, among others, present during the briefing session.

Inaugurating the project, Abdur Razzaq said the govern-

ment of Bangabandhu had implemented different projects immediately after the independence to reconstitute the island of Bhola which was affected by 1970 cyclonic storm. The present government, he said, would continue its efforts for the development of Bhola.

Speaking on the occasion, Tofael Ahmed said sufficient power stations were being installed in different parts of the country, including Bhola with the help of available adequate gas reserve.

He said 17 per cent growth was achieved in the exports. The minister urged all, irrespective of party affiliations, to help lead the country towards progress.

Inadequate manpower, insufficient vehicles and watercraft and absence of modern communication facilities have been hindering the protection of forests, Tapan Dey main-

tained.

Raised in 1909, CHTSFD-one of the major territorial forest divisions in the country — has got a forest cover of 6,29,537 acres, including 2,02,937 acres of reserved forests and 4,29,537 acres of unclassed state forest, divided into 17 units manned with only 233 officials. The number of manpower needs enhancement.

Seven timber traffickers were rounded up, one truck and nine engine boats seized in the drive conducted by the special team of Chittagong Hill Tracts south forest division led by its divisional forest officer.

Twenty-five forest cases were lodged, officials said.

On re-establishing control over government reserved forests in the region following the signing of the CHT peace accord, officials of the south forest division recovered about 50,000 cft of timbers, mostly teak, worth about Taka 2.5 crore till April, 1998 from mid-December 1997, Tapan Kumar Dey, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) said.