

**News snaps**

**Distribution of seeds suspended**

**SIRAJGANJ, Nov 21:** Distribution of seeds of *maskalat* pulse in the aftermath of flood has been suspended in the district after detecting a corruption, reports UNB.

A contractor was also arrested on charge of supplying the adulterated seeds. Sources said, as part of the post-flood rehabilitation programme, the government has decided to provide the farmers with *maskalat* pulse seeds. With this view, DC office floated a tender for supplying 5,000 kg *maskalat* seeds worth about Tk one lakh on September 24. Seed trade Akhtaruzzaman Panna in Ullahpara thana got the order and started supplying seeds to the agriculture department in nine thanas from October 5. But the farmers after receiving the seeds lodged complaints to the Additional Deputy Commissioner that seeds were mixed with stones and sands.

**Clash leaves 2 dead**

**NETROKONA, Nov 21:** Two people were killed and 10 others injured in a clash between two groups over a trifling matter at Nasibpur village in Sadar thana here recently, reports UNB.

The victims were a sexagenarian (Jamidar Ma) and Shamsure Rahman, 30. Police said the clash ensued over selecting the role of the hero of a drama which the youths of the village arranged to stage for amusement. The feuding groups first locked in an altercation regarding the selection which later turned into violent clash among the villagers. Police recovered the bodies and sent to Netrokona Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Most of the male villagers deserted the homes to avoid police arrest.

**Housewife commits suicide**

**MADARIPUR, Nov 21:** A housewife committed suicide here at village Bahadurpur in sadar thana recently, police said, reports BSS.

The victim identified as Banalata, 30, committed suicide by taking poison. The cause of the suicide could not be known. An unnatural death case was registered with Madaripur sadar police in this connection.

**3 held for possessing illegal arms**

**CHUADANGA, Nov 21:** Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested three persons for possession of illegal arms in separate incidents from Jibannagar-Damurhuda thana here recently, said a BDR press release, reports BSS.

The BDR personnel held Mohammad Zahid Mahmud, 20, son of Nur Muhammad of village Modna, Damurhuda from a Kaji office at Jibannagar here and recovered one eight bore revolver from him. He was later handed over to Jibannagar police. In another incident, the BDR personnel arrested two terrorists from Hudapara, Damurhuda. They were identified as Mohammad Haidar Ali Sheikh, 35, and Mohammad Kallu Sheikh, 30, son of Mohammad Israfil Sheikh of village Anandbas of Mehrpur district. One gun and one country made pistol and four rounds of bullet were recovered from them. They were later handed over to Damurhuda police.

**Jail Killing Day observed**

**KISHOREGANJ, Nov 21:** The Jail Killing Day was observed in Kishoreganj town and other thana headquarters of the district in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

A discussion on the four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain M Mansur Ali and AHM Kamruzzaman was held at the district Awami League office to mark the day Vice-President of the district Awami League Syed Wahidul Islam presided over the meeting. President of the district bar association Advocate Jinnatul Islam, Advocate MA Rashid, Advocate Kamrul Ahsan and Advocate MA Afzal, among others, discussed different aspects of the lives of the slain leaders. They demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

**Foodgrains sanctioned for FWP**

**NARSINGDI, Nov 21:** The government has sanctioned 1941 tonnes of foodgrains under Food for Works Programme (FWP) for the maintenance of rural infrastructures for six thanas of Narsingdi district in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to the district relief and rehabilitation office, under the programme damaged roads, culverts, educational institutions will be repaired. The programme will also create employment opportunities for the poor people, including women in remote areas of the district. The government has also sanctioned 714 tonnes of foodgrains under Test Relief programme for maintenance of rural infrastructures in the six thanas of Narsingdi district in the current fiscal year.

**BRCS' relief distribution programme**

**KHAGRACHHARI, Nov 21:** Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) has launched its year-long relief distribution programme among the tribal refugees repatriated from India in three hill districts, reports UNB.

Under the programme, the Society distributed relief materials among 227 tribal families at the Sadar thana headquarters recently. District Red Crescent Society sources said a total of 9,178 repatriated families will receive 4 kg pulses, 2 kg salt and 2 litre soybean oil. Some 1,947 Janasanghati Samiti members who are leading a normal life now will also get 4 kg pulses, 2 kg salt and 2 litre soybean oil per month for six months under its rehabilitation programme.

**Road reconstruction work undertaken**

**KISHOREGANJ, Nov 21:** Roads and Highways Department here has undertaken the reconstruction works of 79.95 km roads damaged badly by the recent prolonged flood, reports UNB.

Official sources said of the total, 13 km of Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road, 9 km of Kishoreganj-Bhairab via Katiadi road, two km of Dhaka-Sylhet via Kishoreganj, two km of Katiadi-Bajitpur via Sarachar road, one km of Katiadi-Mathkholia road, 1.75 km of Gastalghat-Chandiber road, 15 km of Kishoreganj-Nikli road, five km of Gachihata-Polerghat-Mirzapur road, five km of Kishoreganj-Nilganj-Tarail road, one km of Kishoreganj-Karimganj road, 1.75 km of Mirzapur-Mitranagar road, 1.50 km of Kishoreganj-Hossainpur road, two km of Kishoreganj-Panchdona via Mathkholia road, 10 km of Trighat-Nandail-Tarail road, three km of Karimganj-Chamraghat road, four km of Nandail-Atharabari-Kendua-Rasulpur road and two km of Kaltapara Bazar-Gouripur road will be reconstructed.

**9 arrested on suspicion**

**GAIBANDHA, Nov 21:** Police arrested nine men, suspected to be the members of an international ring of racketeers involved in smuggling touchstone made statues, from Polashbari thana on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

They were Fazlur Haq, 68, of Kanchanpara village in Nilphamari district, Debesh of Lalpara in Doublering thana of Chittagong, Jafar Ali, 60, of Lalbagh thana in Dhaka, Sahidur Rahman, 38, of Patgram village in Lalmonirhat, Monir Uddin, 26, and Wazedin of Basabo area in Dhaka, city, Bidhan Rakshit, 23, of Boyalkhali thana in Chittagong, Habibur Rahman Patwari, 60, of Chatchil thana in Noakhali and driver Helal, 33, of Jamalpur district. They were arrested for their suspicious movement and irrelevant answers to queries by police on Monday. Many addresses of local and international smugglers were recovered from their possessions, police said.

**Wheat, cash allocated under FWP**

**NAOGAON, Nov 21:** A total of 4000 mts of wheat and Tk one crore in cash have been allocated under the Food for Works Programme under post-flood rehabilitation scheme in the district, reports UNB.

This was disclosed in a meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room which was attended by Housing, Public Works and Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim as chief guest on November 14. Of the allocation, Tk 80 lakh will be disbursed in agriculture sector, Tk 12 lakh for house building and Tk 8 lakh in other sectors including supplying of fodder. The meeting also approved 850 uplift schemes under the Food for Works Programme to create job opportunities for poor people.

**Islamic convention at Chandpur**

**CHANDPUR, Nov 21:** A three-day Islamic Convention began at Chandpur Government College ground here from Thursday afternoon, reports APB.

The Biponi Bagh Islami Sommelon Committee of the town has organised the programme, which is being attended by eminent religious personalities. Several thousand devotees are attending this grand Islamic convention.

**Computer science introduced in college**

**NETROKONA, Nov 21:** Computer Science is being introduced as a new course in Netrokona Government College for the first time from the current session, reports APB.

The opening of the 200-mark course is a part of the Education Ministry's planned introduction of Computer Science course in 56 elected government colleges across the country. Official sources said there was a shortage of manpower skilled in computer science. Such experts are in great demand all over the world. It is in view of this reality that the government had decided to launch a course entitled 'Computer Science course and training of computer trainers' at a cost of Tk 26.68 crore.

**Law and order worsens in Faridpur, Pabna dists**

From Our Correspondent

**FARIDPUR, Nov 21:** The law and order situation of the district has alarmingly deteriorated since the last week of September following occurrences of seven gruesome killings. About 50 others were also seriously injured in and around the town.

**Biswanath Ghose, 27,** a Jubo League leader was shot dead on the spot at East Khabashpur in the town while he was selling goods at his shop recently. Just a few minutes before this murder, Ramesh 35, a Jubo League worker was seriously beaten. Ramesh was admitted to Faridpur General Hospital. Two days after his release from there, his whereabouts could not be known.

Two cases were filed accusing some prominent Awami League leaders in each case.

**Kuddus Sheikh,** son of Sekenuddin Sheikh of village Deceer Char in Sadarpur thana was killed by his rival group recently.

Two or three days later, **Asma, 20,** wife of Sobhan Sheikh of village Dangi in Sadarpur thana was killed allegedly by her husband over communal affairs.

**Babu aias Bhangra Babu, 25,** was killed and 25 others were injured in a two-hour long gun fight between two rival groups of notorious terrorists at Alipur in the town over the establishment of supremacy.

Two separate cases were filed with Kotwali thana in this connection involving local influential Awami League leaders. It is mentionable here that a fortnight ago of this bloody incident, the two groups were locked in a gun fight that lasted for two and a half hours making the locality utterly panic stricken.

**Raisuddin Farazi 35** a bakery employee was brutally killed at a village Malanga in Kanaipur union of sadar thana. After this incident Nazmul, 18, son of Hakim Sheikh of village Bhazandanga in the sadar thana was slaughtered to death by his rival group. As a sequel to this incident the town residence of Habib, reportedly the rival of Nazmul was set on fire.

An Awami League leader **Barek Molla, 45,** Chairman of Kanaipur Union Parisad inflicted serious injuries with sharp weapons by some terrorists in broad day light at the district court compound recently. He was first admitted to Faridpur General Hospital from where he was shifted to Dhaka where he succumbed to his injuries. Barek Molla while in Faridpur General Hospital gave a dying declaration to a competent magistrate mentioning the names of some persons involved in committing fatal injuries on his person.

It may be mentioned here that the main cause of law and order deterioration had been attributed to the internal conflicts of two factions of the ruling party for local power politics since Awami League came to power. When the law and order situation of the district reached its climax, Prime Minister and the Awami League President Sheikh Hasina constituted a committee comprising three central Awami League leaders headed by Amir Hossain Amu MP, to look into the matter and take necessary action.

But grievances between the two rival factions are still on and at any time they may take a violent turn.

UNB reports from Pabna: The overall law and order situation across the district has deteriorated this year with the rise in number of crimes.

Law enforcement agency sources said they recorded 1,365 cases during the first 10 months of the year (January-October, 1998) in different parts of the district. The crimes include 55 murders, 105 suicide and 46 rape cases.

They said the number of recorded crimes has gone up to 400 in comparison to the corresponding period last year. The activities of outlawed political parties have increased much in nine thanas of the district, they observed.

The activities of these parties have extended to the district from across the south-western zone of the country in the recent years and 10 people were murdered in different thanas here by them during the last 10 months.

Members of these parties allegedly move openly with arms and extort money from the villagers in the name of arbitration for different types of disputes.

The issue of the outlawed parties had been discussed in the district law and order committee meetings in the past, said the sources, but there is no improvement in the situation so far.

The sources said during the 10 months period, the number of robbery was 22, abduction 42, acid throwing six, child repression five, repression against women nine, burglary 126, riot 54, drug related cases 83, smuggling 14, explosive and arms cases 21.

Besides, in three incidents police were attacked by the outlaws, said the sources.

In remote villages, obscene dance in the name of Jatra and gambling are the regular features and many organisers obtain permission from the local administration, said the people. They alleged that influential quarters have been involved in the matter and no one could dare to challenge the holding of Jatra.

On the other hand, the number of abduction of schoolgirls as well as businessmen for ransom has increased alarmingly in the district. A number of such incidents reported from different parts of the district during the period, said the sources.

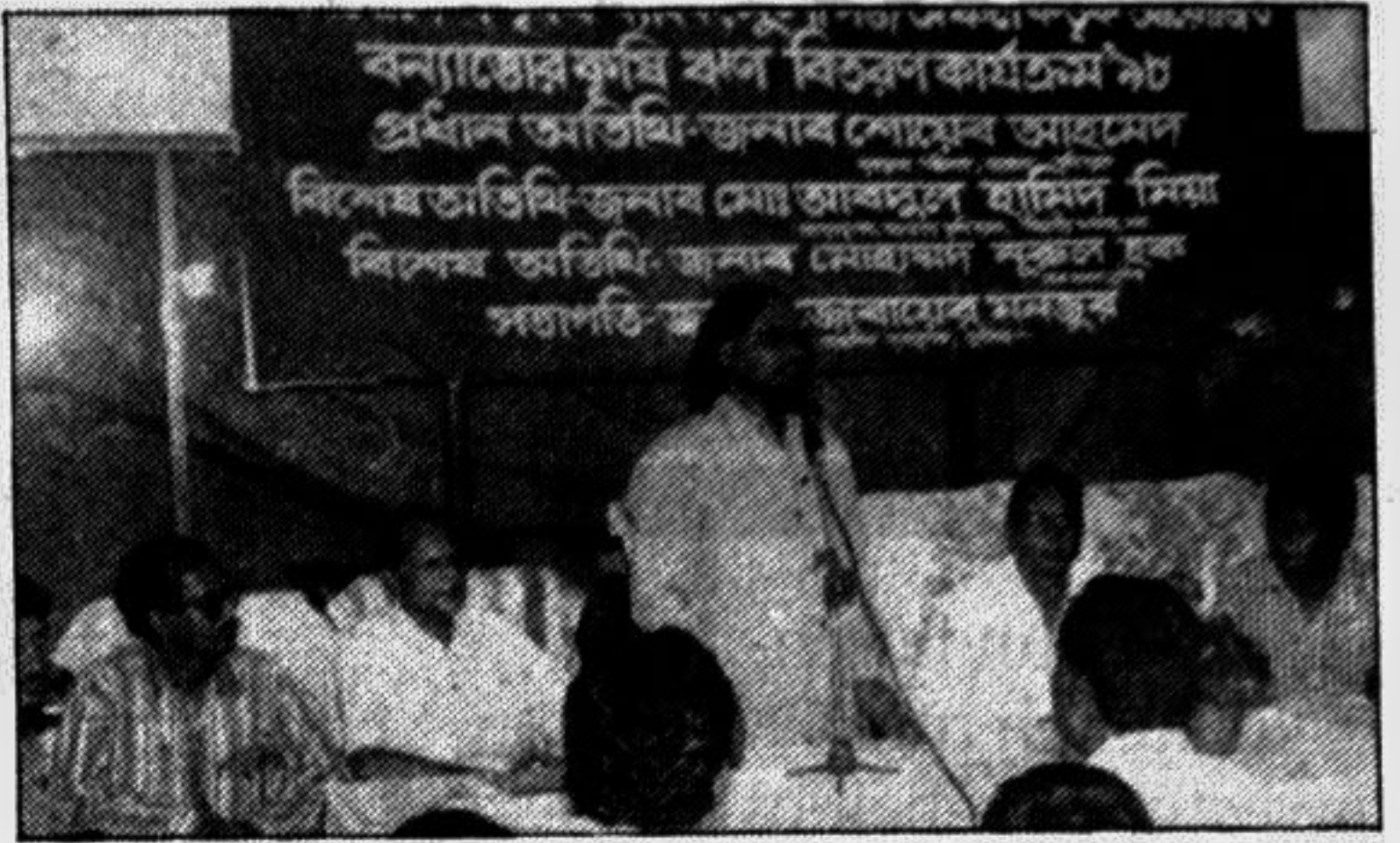
Besides, local police are being influenced by the political leaders and in a number of cases police refused to record cases thus forcing the victims of different crimes to record their cases directly with the concerned courts.

A court source said the number of cases in three cognizance courts has increased much in the current year.

BSS reports from Tangail: The monthly meeting of the district law and order coordination committee was held on Sunday in the conference room of the deputy commissioner.

**Abdus Satter Khan,** Deputy Commissioner, Tangail presided over the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the overall law and order situation prevailing in the district. The meeting asked the law enforcing agencies to take strong measures to curb crime, and anti-social activities in all the thanas of the district.



**MUNSHIGANJ:** Shoib Ahmed, Managing Director, Bangladesh Krishi Bank recently disbursed an amount of Taka 28 lakh as loan among 150 flood affected farmers of Munshiganj. Krishi Bank, Munshiganj region disbursed Taka 10 crore out of the target of 48 crore which is more than double the amount of the previous year. M Abdul Hamid Mia, General Manager, Asaduzzaman, DGM of Dhaka division of Krishi Bank, Md Nurul Haque, Deputy Commissioner, Munshiganj district and Zobair Manjur, Regional Manager of the bank were present on the occasion.

**Acid victim needs proper treatment**

From Mozammel Haq

**RANGPUR, 21:** Minara Begum, 19, an acid victim is now fighting for life in Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) for the last one month.

Minara hails from Bagdogra village in Domar thana of Nilphamari district. She was severely injured by acid which was thrown on her person recently by Nagen, 25, of the same locality.

According to allegations, the accused person, Nagen was trying to allure Minara for some time with a view to establishing illicit relationship. He became furious when he failed to convince her.

On the night of the incident when Minara was sleeping with her mother, the culprit entered into their house and at an opportune moment threw acid on her face and fled away. She was immediately shifted to a local clinic from where she was again shifted to RMCH.

Due to acute poverty the victim is being deprived of proper treatment. RMCH has no stocks of required medicines to treat this poor acid victim.

The doctors have urged the government, non-governmental organisations or generous persons to take immediate measures and supply necessary medicines for proper and timely treatment of the poor girl.

**Old man killed in road accident**

From Our Correspondent

**SATKHIRA, Nov 21:** An old man was killed in a road accident at Chaltebari in Kaliganj on Satkhira-Kaliganj road recently.

The victim has been identified as Nazir Ahmed, 60, of village Kamta in Kaliganj thana.

Eye witnesses said, when the victim reached at the accident spot, a speeding bus knocked him down and he died on the spot.

**Rabidas congregation held**

From Our Correspondent

**MYMENSINGH, Nov 21:** A big congregational meet of Rabidas community was held recently at Thanarghat Shiva Temple compound. This was held on the occasion of 'Rasmela' which is an annual event.

Each year thousands of devotees from different parts of the country gather here on the bank of the river Old Brahmaputra on this occasion.

Seakers at the congregation maintained that on this day of Kartik full-moon 600 years ago Saint Rabidas vehemently protested against the divisive caste system. Addressing a million strong gathering at Rajghat of Kashi in northern India he called for a vigorous movement against the despicable caste system. The speakers maintained that the movement still continues towards removing prejudice and violence from society and establishing peace and fraternity therein.

The meeting attended, among others, by Director General of Bangladesh Guru Rabidas Misson Kanai Lal Rabidas Mohanta. This was followed by a night-long 'Bhajan-Kirtan' programme.

**50 shops gutted in Kishoreganj**

From Our Correspondent

**KISHOREGANJ, Nov 21:** At least 50 shops were gutted at Adampur Bazar in Aushtagram thana recently, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the fire originated from a shop at about 8 pm.

Local people put out the flame after about eight hours. The firefighters could not reach the spot due to poor communication facilities. There was no report of injury.

**Shops running without license Govt deprived of revenue**

From Our Correspondent

**JAMALPUR, Nov 21:** The government is being deprived of a huge amount of revenue here every year as most of the shops are running without license, reports UNB.

Sources said a section of people have been constructing shops on the khas lands around different government market places in the town and elsewhere without taking any license from the revenue department.

The concerned officials and employees have been showing reluctance in performing their duties and did not issue any license to the shop-owners during the last two years.

Taking the advantage of the situation, a section of employees are extorting money from the shop-owners.

The Land Ministry has a directive to issue shop license at a rate of Tk 500 per square metre at the district headquarters, Tk 200 in other municipality area, Tk 100 in thana headquarters and Tk 50 in other areas.

Sources said there are about 5,000 shops in 115 hats and bazaars in the district without license and the government is being deprived on an average of Tk 1.5 crore every year as shop license fee.

Besides, the shops have made the market places much crowded causing serious problems for the people. Moreover, a section of vendors are occupying the roads with their commodities creating obstacles in the movement of vehicles.

There had been several steps in the past to evacuate the unlicensed shops, but the drive could not be successful due to unknown reasons.

A source in the revenue department said the authorities have launched a survey to identify such shops in and around the hats and bazaars in order to demolish the unauthorised structures.

**Load-shedding a regular feature in Pabna**

From Ranesh Maitra

**PABNA, Nov 21:** Load-shedding in the evening has become a regular feature in Pabna town and other parts of the district.

Load-shedding usually starts at around 5 pm and continues up to 8 pm every day. Sometimes there is a small break and sometimes it continues without any break. This situation has been continuing since August, 1996.

When contacted with the local PDB authorities, they replied, "we get nearly one third of required electricity for meeting the minimum demand. Only four days were exceptions when there was no load-shedding in two-and-a-half years."

The President of Pabna Chamber of Commerce and Industries, M A Kafee Sarkar, told this correspondent that at least one third of small industries had been closed down in the district due to irregular power supply for years together. At least 20 per cent of medium industries have been closed down due to this reason, he told further. He further revealed that owners of many industries had already sacked many employees and workers. At least 30,000 employees and workers have become jobless.

No new investors or entrepreneurs are coming forward to build any new industry in the district, M A Kafee elaborated.

At least 60 per cent businessmen have been compelled to close down their shops every evening and they do not reopen their shops at night, local businessmen alleged. They also alleged, police remain inactive in maintaining the law and order during load-shedding period. They have been demanding for deploying many more armed policemen at different points of markets for a long time, but their demand goes unheeded.

Movement of people in the evening has reduced much in Pabna town due frequent load-sheddings. Many rickshaws have stopped plying of their vehicles at night for security reason.



**MAGURA:** Unabated erosion by the river Gorai has taken a serious turn recently in Gayeshpur and Amalsar unions of Sripur thana. Photo shows the river has already devoured a vast tract of land at Char Chakdah village. — Star photo.

**Jamuna devours 200 villages in Sirajganj**

**SIRAJGANJ, Nov 21:** At least 200 villages under nine thanas of the district have been devoured by the mighty Jamuna over the last two decades, reports APB.

A local study revealed that some 20,00,000 people had been rendered homeless by the relentless erosion of the Jamuna. The affected thanas included Kazipur, Sadar, Belkuchi, Chowhali and Shahjadpur.

"Thousands of people, who become homeless by the erosion are still known by the villages they once belonged to and that are no more there," said a local observer.

Locals complained that Water Development Board had not done anything to check the devastating erosion. On the contrary, they alleged, many a board officers and employees had been rich almost overnight through a process unknown to the commoners.

Although it is shown on the papers that schools, colleges, mosques, madrasahs and temples had been damaged by the erosion and money was sanctioned for repairing them, but, in fact, most of them did not exist at all, the people further said.

Like previous years, the local WDB office had shown expenditures on account of repair of erosion-damaged structures from Saizbari to Barakola area to be Tk one crore during this year.

Official sources estimated the extent of damage to be in the neighbourhood of Tk 700 crore in the region.

No effective step, however, has yet been taken to save the homesteads and crop lands over an extensive tract of land in this area.

Local political leaders have already demanded an official inquiry into the matter and called for taking the responsible ones to task. They felt that the WDB should not allocate any further fund, before carrying out a full-scale investigation.

**School teacher gets 7 yrs' RI for killing parents**

**CHITTAGONG, Nov 21:** A court recently sentenced a school teacher of Saikania thana to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for killing his parents, reports UNB.

The convict was identified as Ronendra Chakrawarty, a teacher of Chhadaha High School.

The case history in brief is Ronendra killed his father, Yugesh Chakrawarty and mother Jharna Chakrawarty, and injured his son and daughter following a family feud on September 2, 1994.

**Farmers' mixed opinion over Alok-6201 seeds**

From Aroop Talukdar

**BARISAL, Nov 21:** 'Aman' cultivation has faced a serious setback across the country following the deluge.

Farmers could not cultivate or plant 'Aman' seeds in time due to floods.

To overcome the crisis the government permitted private importers to import High Yielding Variety (HYV) of seeds on emergency basis from foreign countries.

Private importers imported 'Alok - 6201', 'Lokenath' 'Ruparsae' and 'Amarsree' from India and two other kinds of seeds from China.

These HYV seeds have already been distributed among the farmers. They have already cultivated it besides their local varieties throughout the country.

According to different sources, ACI company sells 'Alok - 6201' seeds through its dealers across the country. The claim is that this variety of HYV seeds from India have been accepted by the farmers widely. But some agriculture experts, referring anonymity, differ in opinions about these imported seeds.

They said, these HYV seeds are not so much high-breeding and useful for our farmers as well as for our lands. Though in some cases they show unexpectedly good result, they added.

They also said, the HYV seeds imported from China and India are very much sensitive. So it should be handled and cultivated in time very carefully. In case of failure, production will be lesser and hampered. It will be attacked by pests easily. Reality is this that the farmers of our country are not much skilled in any respect - farming, cultivation, using fertilisers and so on. They are actually not aware of their works according to change of seasons and their influence over water, climate and soil.

According to the agriculture department, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) have distributed 42 varieties of HYV seeds (Ufsh) during last 29 years.

According to Majid Munshi, 65, a President's Prize winner and an ideal farmer of Khudrakathi Village in Babuganj thana, once he planted Alok seeds on 30 decimals of land. He said, particularly in the southern districts crops of Alok - 6201 variety are attacked by pests in humid climate.

But a highly placed source in the ministry said, these HYV seeds have been imported and distributed through private sector importers after making the feasibility study.



**BARISAL:** A flourishing high breed crop field in Barisal. — Star photo