

News snaps

28 posts of physicians vacant

MADARIPUR, Nov 29: Some 28 posts of physician have been lying vacant in different government hospitals and health centres of the district for a long time, reports APB. Out of 60 sanctioned posts, only 32 MBBS doctors are now posted at the Sadar Hospital and various health complexes in the district. Out of which four doctors are on deputation away in Dhaka. Locals said the number of patients at the government hospitals has increased by 30 per cent after the devastating floods across the country. However, patients infected with different diseases including diarrhoea and dysentery are not getting proper treatment mainly due to lack of doctors. Meanwhile, local people have urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to improve healthcare services in the government hospitals.

33 posts of teachers vacant

RAJBARI, Nov 29: Academic activities in the government college here are seriously being hampered as 33 posts of teachers remained vacant for long, reports UNB. The vacant posts include two each in Bangla, English, Philosophy, Mathematics and Chemistry departments, three each in Economics, Islamic History, History, Botany, Accounting and Management departments and four in Physics. Besides, the number of teachers in the Honours section is also inadequate. The students have been the most sufferers due to shortage of teachers in the college and they demanded of the authorities to fill up the vacant posts without further delay.

Proper price of fertiliser ensured

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 29: Post, Telecommunications, Housing and Public Works Minister Mohammad Nasim called upon all to strengthen the hands of the government to give a befitting reply to the falsehood and propaganda used by the opposition, reports BSS. "The present government is determined to curb terrorism, stop anarchy and put to rest the politics of hartal," the minister said while addressing a public meeting at Sirajganj University College grounds here. Criticising the politics of out-governments-activities by the opposition, the minister said the present government was working for the people. He said during the past regime innocent farmers had been killed for demanding fertiliser in fair prices, but the present government ensured proper prices of fertiliser which resulted in changes in the lot of farmers.

Work on Gabjan Bridge to begin soon

JHALAKATI, Nov 29: Work on the much-awaited Gabjan Bridge of Jhalakati will begin from the month of December, reports APB. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to lay the foundation stone of the bridge. This, incidentally, happens to be the fifth China-Bangladesh friendship bridge in the country. Sources in the Roads and Highways Department said that the projected cost of the 918-metre long and 10-metre wide bridge is Tk 78.61 crore. Out of this amount, Tk 49.54 crore happens to be the grant by the Chinese government. The remainder of the expenditures will be borne by the Bangladesh government. The span of the bridge will have adequate lighting arrangements for nocturnal hours and be 60 feet above the water level in order to facilitate navigation.

Loan disbursed among farmers

MEHERPUR, Nov 29: The Livestock Department disbursed Taka one crore interest free loan among the farmers of 10 districts of Khulna division during the last fiscal year, reports BSS. Officials of the department said, they disbursed the loan under a package programme among 1,163 families of Meherpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura, Narail, Satkhira, Jessore, Khulna and Bagerhat districts for setting up poultry farms, goat and cattle rearing, cow fattening and purchasing fodder. The loan was disbursed among the most unprivileged groups, particularly the widows, the officials said. The programmes will continue in the current fiscal year to make the poor people self-reliant, official sources added.

Wheat sanctioned under FWP

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 29: The government has sanctioned a total of 1,200 metric tons of wheat against 705 uplift schemes under general and Test Relief (TR) works for 13 thanas including three pourashavas here, reports UNB. Official sources said the schemes would be implemented under Food for Works Programme (FWP) during the current fiscal year. The thanas included Sadar, Austagram, Bajitpur, Bhairab, Hossainpur, Itna, Karinganj, Katiadi, Kulliarhar, Nikli, Pakundia, Tarail and Mitamin including Bhairab, Bajitpur and Kishoreganj pourashavas. The work of the schemes including repair and construction of roads and earth filling work of different schools and different religious institutions has already been started and is expected to be completed by January next.

New drug invented

NAOGAON, Nov 29: The drug addicts in the district have invented a new cocktail of drug at a comparatively lower cost, reports UNB. A number of addicts of the town, who preferred not to be named, told that they prepare the new drug by mixing Phenidyl syrup with soft drink Coca Cola and slipping pills. The addicts and its traders call the new cocktail "Las Vegas" after the name of the US city famous for night clubs and gambling. The addicts said the new drug became very popular as it is affordable and the "kick" of the cocktail is very strong in comparison to other cheap drugs. One of them said they prepare it with half a bottle of phenidyl, a full bottle of Coke and adequate number of slipping pills for "strong and better performance" during their addiction sessions.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 13 lakh seized

COMILLA, Nov 29: Bangladesh Rifles seized smuggled goods worth Tk 13 lakh and arrested two people during the current month here, reports UNB. A surveillance team of Choudagram frontier under 17 rifles battalion at Kotbari seized six rickshaws and five rickshaw vans with smuggled goods including 1,600 kg of Indian sugar, 300 kg of powder milk, 420 kg of American and 140 kg of cumin seed worth Tk 2,16,850 from Uttar Barisha area in the thana on November 15. The jawans also seized a huge quantity of smuggled goods worth over Tk 10.80 lakh in different drives at the border areas including Chandigarh, Kosha, Modinpur, Malda Nadi, Nayanpur, Sankuchal, Khabera, Barajala, Bibir Bazar, Bauara Bazar, Jashpur, Mathurapur, Shiber Bazar, Amanganda, Chowddagram, Jagannadighi and Sathgharia during November 1 to 22. The smuggled goods included, Indian sugar, cumin seed, wine, hemp, phenidyl, turmeric, powder milk, timber, bamboo, sarees, steel crockery and bicycle.

Wheat sanctioned under TR programme

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 29: The government has sanctioned 1,200 tonnes of wheat for implementation of different small projects under Test Relief (TR) programme in 13 thanas of the district in the current dry season, reports BSS. According to an official source, the work of the projects included reconstruction of rural roads and repair and reconstruction of educational, religious and socio-cultural institutions. Besides, the Test Relief programme has provided job opportunities to unemployed rural poor.

Rice, wheat distributed

PIROJPUR, Nov 29: Distribution of rice and wheat through BFF cards is progressing under the post flood food rehabilitation programme of the Department of Relief and Disaster Management here, reports UNB. Official sources said at least 36,200 distressed families in six thanas and two pourashavas have been selected under the programme. Each family is receiving eight kg of rice and eight kg of wheat per month. A total of 1,158.6 metric tons of rice and wheat have been allocated in the first and second phases under the programme in the district. Meanwhile, 579,200 metric tons of rice and wheat have already been distributed among the distressed people in the first phase. It is expected that another consignment of foodgrains will be distributed during the current month.

School student drowns

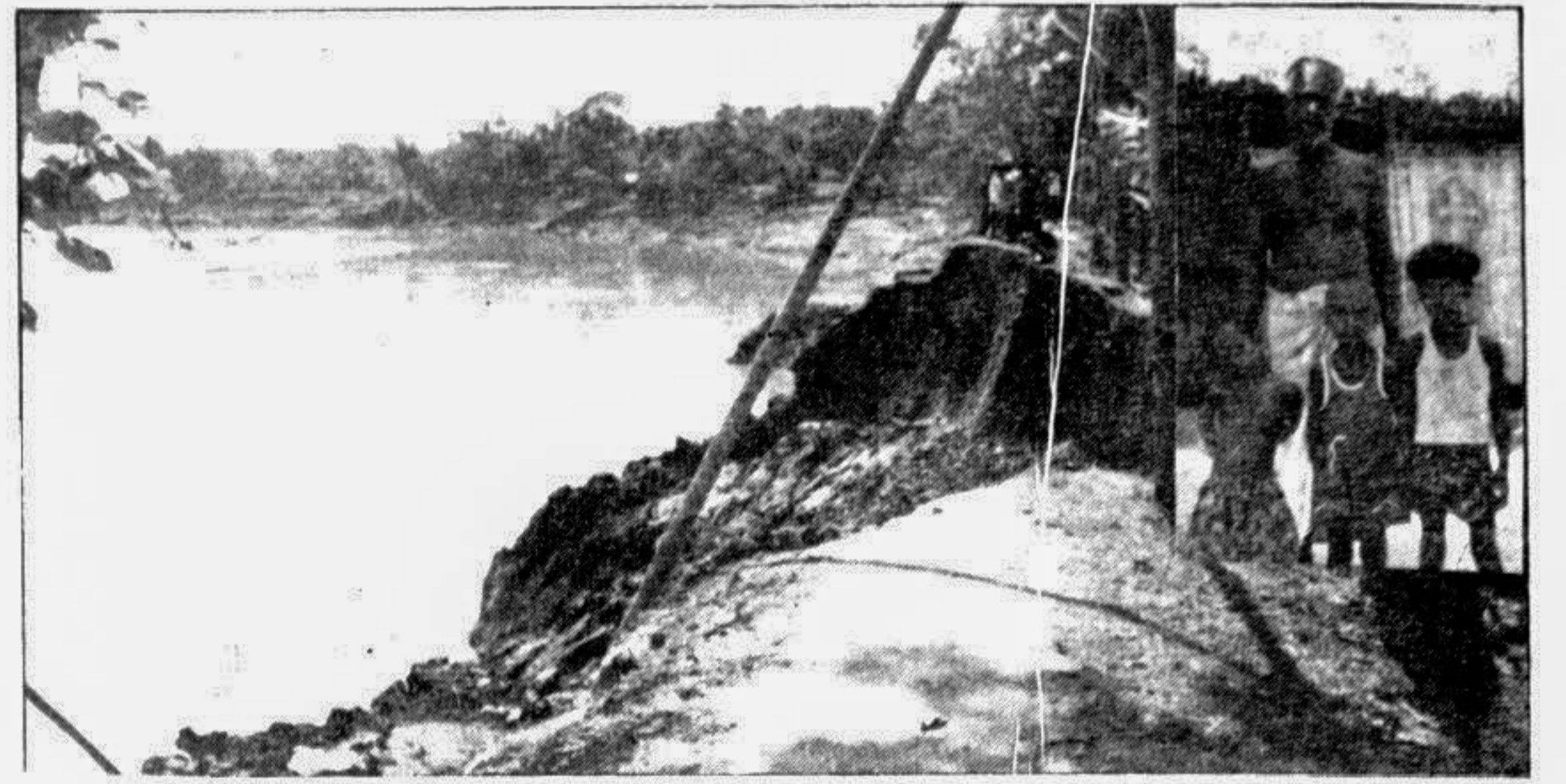
KAPTAI (Rangamati), Nov 29: A 13-year old school student on Thursday drowned in the Karnaphuli river near KMP Industrial Area, police sources said, reports BSS. The body of the victim, Sabuj, 13, a student of Class VI at KPM High School and son of an employee of Karnaphuli Paper Mills, was recovered by the local people.

28 alleged terrorists arrested

JAMALPUR, Nov 29: Police arrested 28 alleged terrorists and recovered some illegal arms from different parts of the town during the last week, reports APB. The arms include one foreign-made pistol, one 12 bore cut rifle, four chapati, 13 ramdao, nine Chinese axes one bayonet and one knife. The arms recovery drive was launched at the directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Legal action has been taken against the arrested people.



SYLHET: (Left) Erosion by the river Kushiara is going on unabated at village Manikpur in Jakiganj thana. Photo shows the river is about to devour a dwelling house in the aforementioned village. Already a vast tract of land went in the river bed. Such continuous erosion is also reducing the Bangladesh territory. Water Development Board's steps are too weak to check the continuous erosion till now. (Right) Erosion scene at village Gangajal. The Kushiara has already devoured village Aligarh. The inset photo shows a villager named Abdul Jabbar, 72, who had shifted his house for the fifth time recently to a nearby location.



One dies in police custody at Naogaon

NAOGAON, Nov 29 A man died in police custody after he was arrested for killing his wife at Shibpur village in Atrai on Saturday, reports UNB. Tarajul Islam, 27, suddenly fell ill around noon and rushed to the hospital where the doctors declared him dead. The cause of his death could not be known immediately. According to family sources, Panna, 21, was married to Tarajul Islam four years ago. Tarajul quarrelled with his wife and father-in-law over dowry money at the latter's house on Friday. Later that night, Tarajul strangled his wife and fled the house. But the local people caught him from Ahsanganj Rail Station and handed him over to the police. Panna's father filed a murder case with the thana on Saturday. Nowadays, the demand for powdered spices have gone up remarkably and some unscrupulous traders and businessmen have been taking advantage of this increased demand. They, sources informed, have allegedly been preparing these contaminated spices in unwholesome ambience and marketing them without fear. These are available in packets of 100 grams to one kilogram. There are allegations that even crushed bricks are being mixed with powdered dry chillies. Manufacturers of these powdered spices are procuring powder colours for mixing them with ground spices. So, the traders become able to sell it at low prices, which is not possible in case of the pure ones. An official of the Health Department told on terms of anonymity that at least 3,000 consumers in all nine thanas have so far fallen sick after taking these spices. A reputed physician here said that most of the patients complaining with intestinal troubles were found suffering due mainly to having food prepared with the contaminated spices. The concerned authorities, however, have not taken actions to curb such criminal activities against the manufacturers and sellers of these spurious spices, the consumers alleged.

Adulterated spices on open sale in Pabna

PABNA, Nov 29 Much to the possible danger to the public health, adulterated powdered spices are being sold at almost all the haats and bazaars of the district with impunity, reports APB. According to unofficial estimates, some 3,000 people, mostly children, have already fallen victims to various intestinal diseases by consuming these tainted spices, mixed with various powdered colours. The Health Department sources here said these spices, available in colourful and attractive packets, do not have the approval of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI). Nowdays, the demand for powdered spices have gone up remarkably and some unscrupulous traders and businessmen have been taking advantage of this increased demand. They, sources informed, have allegedly been preparing these contaminated spices in unwholesome ambience and marketing them without fear. These are available in packets of 100 grams to one kilogram. There are allegations that even crushed bricks are being mixed with powdered dry chillies. Manufacturers of these powdered spices are procuring powder colours for mixing them with ground spices. So, the traders become able to sell it at low prices, which is not possible in case of the pure ones. An official of the Health Department told on terms of anonymity that at least 3,000 consumers in all nine thanas have so far fallen sick after taking these spices. A reputed physician here said that most of the patients complaining with intestinal troubles were found suffering due mainly to having food prepared with the contaminated spices. The concerned authorities, however, have not taken actions to curb such criminal activities against the manufacturers and sellers of these spurious spices, the consumers alleged.

'Aus' worth Tk 160cr produced in 10 dists

JESSORE, Nov 29: Nearly 2,05,840 metric tonnes of 'Aus' paddy worth about Tk 160 crore has been produced in 12 districts of Khulna division during the current season, reports APB. Sources in the Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Jessore, told that 'Aus' paddy was cultivated on 1,64,421 hectares of land in these districts as against the targeted 1,64,000 hectares. The cultivated areas include 52,179 hectares under the high yielding variety and 1,12,251 hectares under local varieties. Aus was cultivated on 21,505 hectares in Jessore, 19,615 hectares in Jhenidah, 18,990 hectares in Magura, 18,325 hectares in Narail, 2,925 hectares in Khulna, 6,442 hectares in Bagerhat, 2,447 hectares in Satkhira, 44,000 hectares in Chudanga, 19,000 hectares in Kushtia and 1,172 hectares in Meherpur district. Besides, more than 60,000 tonnes of broadcast 'Aman' was harvested from this region during the season. Broadcast 'Aman' was cultivated on 4450 hectares of land in Jessore, 4185 in Jhenidah, 6,000 hectares in Magura, 29,990 in Narail, 2,450 in Khulna, 5,000 in Bagerhat, 15 in Satkhira, 3647 in Kushtia, 1740 in Chaudanga and 2,104 hectares in Meherpur districts. Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADCO) had provided the farmers with agricultural inputs, including seed, while the AED provided the technical know-how.

Anniversary of death of Nawab Musharrif Hossain

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Nov 29: The 32nd death anniversary of Nawab Musharrif Hossain Khan Bahadur of Jalpaiguri was observed at village Mulghar in Fakirhat thana of Bagerhat district on November 14 last. Befitting programmes were arranged on the occasion. A discussion meeting was also arranged on the life and works of the Nawab. The discussants recalled the contributions of the Nawab in various social works and in other people's welfare activities. Among others, elite, bankers, social welfare department officials, police officers and college teachers took part in the discussion meeting.

Accused escapes from police custody at Pabna

PABNA, Nov 29 Two policemen were suspended after an accused escaped from their custody while undergoing treatment at the General Hospital here Saturday, reports APB. Officials named the two police constables as Akkas Ali and Abbas Ali of Sadar thana. The accused Rafique, 25, and six others were admitted to the hospital with bullet injuries after they were arrested from village Chartarapur in Sadar thana on November 7, police said.

Female UP members forum formed

From Our Correspondent PABNA, Nov 29: Samata, a non-governmental organisation has taken up an initiative to form a thana based "Elected Female UP Members Forum" in each thana of the district to ensure their activities in the union council. As a part of this initiative Samata has recently formed the forum of Santhia thana consisting of 11 members with Fatema Kabir (Karamja UP) and Rafeza Khatun (Nandanpur UP as its president and secretary respectively. This forum will work towards preventing any kind of women's torture, dowry and mitigating village women's sufferings. It may be mentioned that Samata's group members had nominated 54 candidates for Union Council Election '98 in its working areas where the voters had elected 43 candidates. Samata also has taken up an initiative to form "Women Action Committee" (WAC) in each village of Santhia thana to protect females from any kind of oppression. As a part of this initiative it has formed such committees in three villages of Khetupara union. The forum also works from door to door to ensure education of the children.

Shab-I-Miraj observed

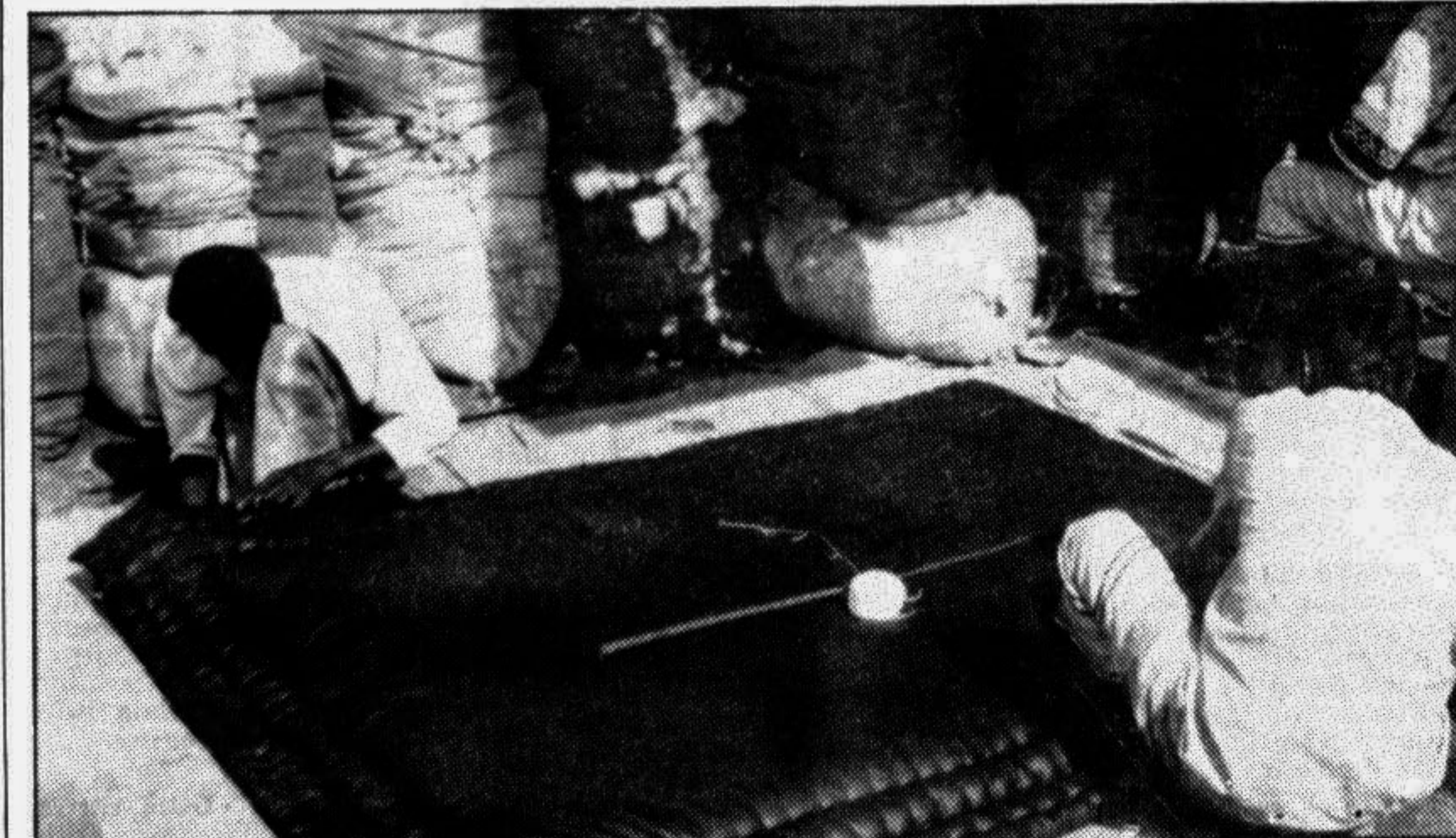
NETRAKONA, Nov 29: The holy Shab-I-Miraj was observed here on last Tuesday night with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports BSS.



MAGURA: Child Rights Week began on November 26, but like this child the right to education, health and development of thousands of our poor children is yet to be established. The boy in the photo who is a van puller is less concerned about the significance of observing the week. — Star photo by Monojit Kumar Das

Probable candidates start meet -the-people campaign in Natore Pourasava

From Our Correspondent NATORE, Nov 29: Although the date of municipality election is yet to be announced, the probable candidates of Natore Pourasava have started their campaigning. Especially the probable commissioner candidates are active in their respective areas. They are visiting localities of their constituency, spending time at the tea-stalls, enquiring about the electorate's well-being, exchanging compliments. Some of them are also visiting their homes. The present chairman of Natore Pourashava Khondoker Jubayer Hossain is expected to contest again for another term. Jubayer was elected chairman as an independent candidate in the last election. This time, however, he is likely to contest the election race with the ticket of Jatiya Party (JP). The party president, H M Ershad, in the meantime, amid controversy among the local leaders, announced the name of Jubayer as the chairman candidate of JP for the next municipality election. Earlier, the town unit of AL announced their helping hands to solve minor problems of their areas by persuading influential persons and government officials. Likewise the probable chairman candidates are spending time in their electioneering. Generally the major political parties pay special interest on the municipality elections to strengthen their power bases at municipality level. The parties usually back candidates of their choice and in most cases sponsor their electioneering. Advocate Quamrul Islam, President of Paribahan Sramik Union as an ideal candidate, but another AL leader Chitta Ranjan Shah is also seeking AL nomination for chairman candidate. Chitta Ranjan may participate in the race of ballot as an independent candidate if he does not get the AL ticket, it was learnt. As for BNP's nomination, the name of businessman Abdul Mannan is being widely speculated. The president of Natore sadar thana Central Cooperative Association Ltd and ex-president of Natore Chamber of Commerce and Industries Abdul Maunaf contested in the last pouira polls but he lost by marginal votes. He is also the organising secretary of the district unit of BNP. He has already brightened his image in the district town. Meanwhile, the BNP backed Jubo Dal President Quazi Shah Alam is lobbying for the party's green signal. Probable candidates are also meeting journalists off and on.



NATORE: The winter season begins. With its arrival quilt makers have started doing brisk business. This photo was taken from the Station Bazaar road in the town where such a professional stitching a quilt. — Star photo by M A Ali

Fund shortage suspends bridges' construction work

NARAIL, Nov 29 The construction work of two bridges in the district on Dhaka-Khulna highway via Mowa-Bhanga remained suspended for two years due mainly to non-availability of necessary fund, reports UNB. Officials said the construction work of the two bridges, one on the river Chitra and the other on Nabaganga near Lohagara, was started in December 1994. The bridge over Chitra was due to be completed in two years while the other over Nabaganga within a year. But the bridges could not be completed as yet due to non-availability of necessary fund. About 30 per cent work of Chitra bridge has so far been completed while 50 per cent work of the other bridge is yet to be completed. Only four pillars of Nabaganga bridge was erected, but it was abandoned by the contractor as the authorities failed to release the fund. The authorities floated fresh tender for the work, but it is yet to be started for lack of fund. The local authorities are yet to issue work order to the new contractor due to the same reason. There are other problems like delaying of the higher authorities in approving the revised design and estimate for the work. Local people said the delay in the construction work is mainly due to the reason that there is no influential quarter of the district in the government or concerned ministry who can lobby for it. The local leaders demanded early completion of construction works of the two bridges for the interest of people of the district.

9.18 lakh Kishoreganj flood victims in miseries

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 29 Some 9.18 lakh people of 1.75 lakh families in the district, who lost their homes during the recent flood, have been passing their days in great uncertainty, reports UNB. These people can not return to their homes as they are unable to rebuild their dwelling houses due to acute financial hardships. Most of the families affected by the long lasting devastating natural calamity are staying at their relative's houses or under the sky and various private and public buildings. Poor people are the worst affected by the flood as most of their thatched and other vulnerable dwelling houses were damaged by the high water. Scarcity and high prices of house building materials including bamboo in the aftermath of the flood have made the problem acute as they cannot afford to repair their damaged houses. The affected people said the government has taken steps for agriculture rehabilitation, distribution of foodgrains through VGF cards and VGD programmes, but there is no initiative in the house building sector for repair and rebuilding of their damaged dwellings. According to the estimate of the District Relief and Rehabilitation office, the number of damaged or destroyed houses in all the 13 thanas of the district during the past natural catastrophe is 94,207. Of them, 14,324 houses were damaged completely while 79,883 partially. Besides, nearly 6,000 people living in the low-lying areas of Itna, Nikli, Austagram and Mitamin thanas have been suffering seriously as a number of cross dams were damaged during the flood.

Separate incidents claim 8 lives in Feni district

FENI, Nov 29: Eight people were killed in separate incidents in the district in five days last week, reports UNB. Of the victims, two women were killed by rapists, one in a political clash, two committed suicide and two in road accidents since November 17. Police said the body of a 17-year-old girl was recovered from a paddy field at Khaikhali village in Dagonbhuiyan thana on Saturday. Police recovered another body of a 16-year-old girl from near outer-signal of Muhuriganj Station on November 17. Her hands and legs were found tied up with ropes. Police suspected that both the girls were killed by miscreants after rape. On November 20, police recovered another body of an unidentified man, aged about 25, from Safarpur village in Sonagazi thana. The reason behind the killing could not be known. In another incident, a Jubo Dal worker Nur Nabi, 28, was killed on November 17 in an attack by a group of armed men in the house of BNP leader Jainal Abedin in the town. Besides, Nur Nabi, 45, of Charbhota village of Laxmipur and Dalim, 12, of Panchara in Fulgazi thana allegedly committed suicide on November 18. Police said an unidentified young man was crushed under the wheels of a running train at Baharipur on Dhaka-Chit-