

News snaps

443 new tubewells to be set up

KISHOREGANJ, Dec 20: Public Health Engineering Department will set up 443 new tube-wells and re-sink 265 shallow ones in the district under Rural Water Supply Project during the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Officials said the project would be implemented as part of the post-flood rehabilitation programme to ensure supply of drinking water to about one lakh rural people. Of the total, some 181 shallow tube-wells and 262 Tara pumps will be set up free of cost in 13 thanas of the district. Of the total, officials said, 56 tube-wells in Sadar, 36 in Katiadi, 32 in itna, 31 in Hossainpur, 29 in Tarail, 43 in Karimganj, 25 in Nikli, 51 in Bajitpur, 43 in Pakundia, 25 in Astagram, 30 in Kuliarchar, 21 in Mitamoin and 21 in Bhairab thanas would be set up under the project. Besides, 28 tube-wells in Sadar, 25 each in Katiadi and Pakundia, 22 in itna, 15 each in Hossainpur, Nikli, Mitamoin and Bhairab, 17 each in Tarail, Astagram and Kuliarchar and 27 each in Karimganj and Bajitpur thana will be re-sunk.

Punishment for rape attempt

NAOGAON, Dec 20: A man in his 50s got his penis cut in a tricky bid of a housewife at Kumaigari in the suburb here when he entered into her house at midnight and attempted to violate her, reports UNB.

Taramoni, wife of hotel worker Taizul, did this to save her chastity from neighbour Azizur Rahman, now under treatment at Naogaon Hospital, local people said. Aziz allegedly made another attempt to rape her in her house earlier on November 26 evening when her husband was not at home.

Taramoni tactfully invited him to come at midnight. Aziz came again at night but returned with his genital organ cut off by a sharp weapon. That was, however, not enough for Aziz as local people acted rapidly and in a village arbitration fined him Tk 15,000 for the offence.

Six miscreants rounded up

CHHAGALNAYA, Dec 20: Chhagalnaya thana police rounded up six miscreants in two separate drives and recovered some arms from their possession recently, reports BSS.

The police, while on round duty in front of Hicha-Chara High School, found three men sitting in a suspicious manner. Police challenged them and after search recovered one revolver from the possession of one of the three persons, identified as Nurul Alam.

Police arrested them. In another drive in the same night Chhagalnaya thana police rounded up three miscreants at box Mahmoud road culvert near Banspara while they were taking preparation to commit crimes. Police recovered, after search one LG pipe gun and one ramdao from their possession.

Workshop on Human Rights

TANGAIL, Dec 20: A two-day workshop on law, education and human rights sponsored by Bangladesh Human Rights Implementation Organisation, Tangail branch concluded recently at Nazrul Sena School here, reports BSS.

The workshop was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner, Tangail, Abdus Sattar Khan. The concluding function was presided over by Ataur Rahman Azad.

Seventy-five persons both male and female participated in the workshop.

Disbursement of agri-loan suspended

PANCHAGARH, Dec 20: Disbursement of agriculture loans in the district remained suspended on Sunday following arrest of an employee of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RKUB) here recently, reports APB.

The Post-flood Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme got stalemated in the northern district as a result, the bank sources said.

They said Azizul Islam was arrested on December 4 after the regional manager of RKUB, Abdul Motaleb, filed a case against him and three other employees of the bank. He was arrested on allegations of obstructing government activities, threatening to kill the manager and so on.

Inter-dist dacoit arrested

PATUAKHALI, Dec 20: A notorious inter-district dacoit, Qudus Gazi, was arrested from his father-in-law's house at Kalikapur in the town on Friday morning, reports UNB.

Wanted by the police in several cases, Qudus, who hails from Galachipa was sentenced to 10 years jail in absentia in a dacoity case. He has confessed to the police that he came here on a contact of Tk one lakh by an influential group for an operation in the town. Qudus further confessed that he has already received Tk 40 thousand from the party. Police, however, didn't disclose the name of the party for sake of investigation. Qudus Gazi is also an accused of several launch dacoity cases in the greater Patuakhali district.

Rly passengers suffering

NAOGAON, Dec 20: Suspension of services of four passenger trains in the Western Zone of Bangladesh railway for over two months now have been causing sufferings to passengers and hampering trade and commerce in the area, reports APB.

When contacted, railway sources told that services of the Khulna Mail, Chilahat-Khulna 27 UP, Parbatipur-Amura 571 UP and another local train have been suspended since September 27 due to crisis of engine. Asked when the services could be resumed, the sources said, it depends on the availability of engines.



MANIKGANJ: Jhitka unit of Muktijoddha Sangsad in Harirampur thana accorded a reception to Khandkher Quamrul Huda, author of the book 'Swadhinata Sangram and Sheikh Mujib' on December 17. Enayet Hossain Khan, commander of the Sangsad handing over a letter of felicitation to the journalist and columnist. Local Thana Nirbahi Officer, elite and freedom fighters were present on the occasion.

Sanitation exhibition at Thakurgaon

THAKURGAON, Dec 20: A two-day sanitation exhibition organised by Thakurgaon NGO Cell and Rangpur NGO Forum was held at the local public club premises last week, reports BSS.

Md Abdul Baki, Deputy Commissioner, Thakurgaon was present at the inaugural function as the chief guest while Shamul Haque Pramanik, Public Health Engineer and Md Ilias Hossain, Thana Nirbahi Officer, Thakurgaon were special guests. The function was presided over by Md Hamidul Haque, Convener, organising committee of the sanitation exhibition. A total of 19 organisations including Thakurgaon Pourasava participated in the exhibition — sanitary wares, handicrafts, models of cottage industries and books were put on display in the exhibition.

Arms recovered

RAJBARI, Dec 20: Daulatdia river outpost police recovered two country-made revolvers with three rounds of bullets and arrested two people last week, reports UNB.

Police said arrested Ashrafuzzaman Asu of Sakthira and Kausar Ahmed Titu of Noakhali while they were moving suspiciously on a ferry. In their confessional statements they said they were going to reach the arms to their gang leader at Gabtali bus terminal in Dhaka.

Workshop on cattle fattening work

TANGAIL, Dec 20: Five-day workshop on cattle fattening work concluded recently in BRDB, Training Centre here, reports BSS.

A total of 25 women from Comilla, Jessore, Mymensingh, Gazipur and Tangail took part in the workshop. The participants were awarded with certificate in the concluding session.

15,000 Dahagram-Angorpota people in miseries

From Mozammel Hoq

RANGPUR, Dec 20: A total of 15,000 people of Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves are in great miseries following damage of crops by floods, pest-attack and lack of jobs for the day labourers.

About 85 per cent people of the enclaves are landless and day labourers while the rest 15 per cent are small and marginal farmers and employees of different offices and small traders.

An elderly inhabitant of Dahagram enclave named Alimuddin, 60, told that he had faced a severe crop loss in his only one acre of land due to deluge and insect-attack. A few maunds of 'Aman' paddy which he harvested is quite insufficient to meet his tilling cost. He is now apprehending very hard days ahead. He is fearing starvation along with his family members at his present economic hardship. There are no work in the field and no crop left in the field to harvest, he added. Many other residents of the enclaves expressed the similar painful stories to the journalists and said, 'We don't want arms, but we want to survive by doing works.'

The total area of the enclaves is around 20 square

kilometres and there are in total 3,352 acres of cultivable lands. But most of the lands are not much fertile. Per acre yield of paddy and other crops is very much poor.

A few number of destitutes got wheat and rice through VGF cards during the last two months while many others were deprived, it was alleged by Abul Mia, 50. Due to lack of work in the field and elsewhere the miseries of the day labourers and landless people have turned worst. The patgram thana headquarters is about 20 kilometres off from the enclaves. It is a hard task for a labourer to go to the thana headquarters on foot every day in search of work and return by 6 pm since the Tin-Boligha corridor gate is closed just at 6 pm. Anybody who fails to return in their houses from outside the enclaves, he has to stay at the corridor gate till its opening by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in the next morning at 7-30 am.

Lalmohirhat Deputy Commissioner Tarit Kanta Roy informed that the district administration had been trying its best to mitigate the sufferings of the destitutes of the enclaves and the test relief programme

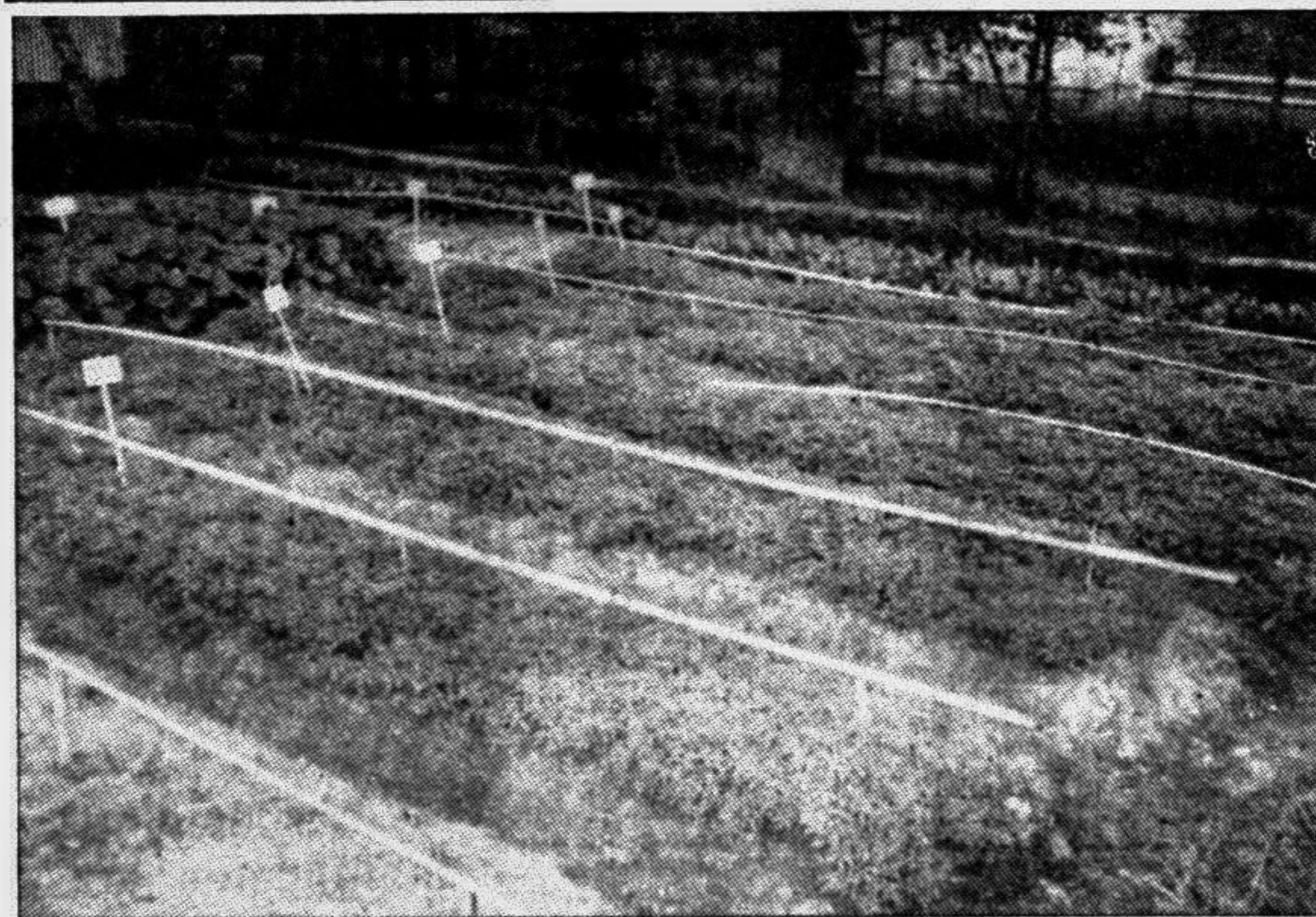
will be started shortly to provide job opportunities to the unemployed persons of the district including the enclaves.

Meanwhile, the people of the enclaves pointed out that the miseries of the people here had been intensified following complete non-cooperation of BSF. In this regard they said that people of the enclaves did not get any concession from the BSF regarding keeping the corridor gate open at the time of any emergency. They keep the gate open in alternate one hour for six times every day from 7-30 am to 6 am.

If the day labourers, cart and other vehicles drivers comes to the corridor gate even at one minute past 6 pm, they will find it closed and no request touches the heart of the BSF men, sufferers narrated.

This rigid arrangement has been causing a great hardship for the enclaves people. They cannot go far away out of the enclaves in search of work. As a result, many of them can never earn money.

People of the enclaves have raised a strong demand to keep the corridor gate open for 24 hours every so that the people could easily use it at any moment according to their need.



CHANDPUR: Many seedbeds have been created in Chandpur Padma Oil Depot area. About 24 lakh winter vegetable seedlings have been distributed among the farmers free of cost from the seedbeds. — Star photo

Proper preservation of Mohasthan antiques sought

From Our Correspondent

BOGRA, Dec 20: Most of the archaeological antiques of historic Mohasthan Garh are being damaged for lack of proper protection.

Thousands of years old antiques are being partially or completely destroyed for want of proper preservation.

A total of 40 archaeological sites including Gobinda Vita cannot be preserved due to want of manpower, modern technology and fund constraint.

Today's historical Mohasthan Garh was originally the oldest town of 'Poundra Nagar' City. Archaeologist Naranjit Lahiri, discovered, on the basis of archaeological resources and data processing, the existence of a trade route through northern India enroute to Taxila. There is sufficient proof that there was human habitation and growth of art and culture there since long ago. The ruins of a brick built road of 500 years old have been discovered at Mohasthan Garh. But the Archaeological Department could not protect the ruins and delapidated buildings due to legal problems and non-availability of fund including other difficulties.

Former British Major General Kanningham ascertained from an obscure Brahmi inscription that Poundra Nagar was once the provincial capital of Emperor Ashoka 300 years BC during the Mourja period. Eminent archaeologist Rakhil Das published in his book 'Banglar Itihas', that there was once a naval port on the northeastern side of Mo-

hashthan Garh. A fleet of Naval force led by Bijoy Sinha set sail from this port and conquered Cylon at about 700 BC.

Former Director General of Archaeological Department of India Debela Mitra published in her book that Chinese traveller Huen Shung visited the area in 638 A.D. He described in his travel story that Goutom Buddha had come to Poundra Nagar and lived there for three months to preach religion. Emperor Ashoka built an Ashoka Stupa in Poshipo Bihar in his honour. The Ashoka Stupa was said to have been built on one of the villages either at Bihar or Bhashu Bihar. At that time the distance of Poshipo Bihar from Poundra Nagar was about 10 kilometre by river

journey.

Through research the Archaeological Department could not yet know the correct history of Poundra Nagar, a town of thousands of years which was developed, eight kilometre in length and seven kilometres in breadth.

The ruins of various articles and buildings of Mourja, Sunga, Kushan, Shashanka, Paul, Sen and Muslim period were unearthed. The history of Mohasthan is so wide that the archaeologists and the historians apprehend that development of its art and culture can be unveiled within the next 200 years. The main reasons are lack of manpower, modern technology and fund constraint.



BOGRA: A replica of monogram of the then government. — Star photo

No timber processing facilities in northern region

PABNA, Dec 20: Timber worth crores of taka is being spoilt due to lack of proper processing and seasoning facilities in the northern part of the country, reports APB.

There are quite extensive forests in Bhawalgar Gar in Gazipur, Madhupur Gar in Tangail and Mymensingh districts, Netrakona, Sherpur and 15 other districts.

The predominant genus of trees is the Gajari, a valuable hardwood used in furniture, construction materials and other articles.

Though a considerable amount of wood is produced, very little is seasoned properly and thus the articles made out of them get warped soon and do not last long, experts said.

There are two processing and seasoning facilities in Khulna and Kaptai, both in the southern parts of the country.

There, the wood is subjected to treatment, which reduces its water content from 100-40 per cent and increases its longevity from a few years to many. The cost is less than 10 per cent of

the purchase price of the unseasoned wood.

Experts say properly treated and seasoned wood should last for more than a hundred years.

But in the northern areas the wooden furniture or other articles last only 15-20 years and in many cases even less. This speeds up deforestation because the wooden articles, which have become unusable, have to be replaced.

The government set up two timber processing plants after liberation in Khulna and Kaptai, but though more than a quarter-century has elapsed, it has not yet established any in northern Bangladesh.

If the timber is sent from there to the northern plants for processing, the cost incurred becomes prohibitive due to the transport cost and the prices jump up to unacceptable levels.

Entrepreneurs in the furniture and construction industries complain that it has become almost impossible to get properly seasoned and pro-

cessed wood at normal prices. This crisis can only be removed with the establishment of some wood processing plants in convenient locations in North Bengal.

Sarinusia BCL confce

NETRAKONA Dec 20: A conference of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Sarinusia union unit was held at Aboypasha Government Primary School premises under Alpara thana of the district recently, reports BSS.

A presidium member of Bangladesh Awami Jubo League, Monjur Kader Quraishi attended the conference as the chief guest while president of Sarinusia union BCL Sanjoy Chakrabarti presided.

The conference was addressed, among others, by President of Netrakona district BCL Prasanta Ray, president of Alpara thana BCL Abul Kalam Azad and Vice President of Netrakona Government University College Students Union Shamsur Rahman Khan Liton.

Maize to be cultivated in 6 Narsingdi thanas

NARSINGDI, Dec 20: The Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a programme for extensive cultivation of maize in six thanas of Narsingdi district this year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 300 hectares have been brought under maize cultivation in the district this year and the production target had been fixed at 700 tonnes.

Last year maize was cultivated on only fifty hectares in two thanas of the district. Cultivation of this crop has been gaining popularity in Narsingdi because of favourable market price. The soil of the area is suitable for maize cultivation, farmers and agronomists say.

Maize is being cultivate in comparatively high fallow land where scope of other crops cultivation is limited. Maize has been introduced in this district recently. Farmers are eager to grow more maize because it is profitable, an agriculture department officer opines.

Scarcity of fodder in Narail

NARAIL, Dec 20: The flood-affected farmers have been selling their cattle at throwaway prices due to unprecedented scarcity of fodder, reports UNB.

Most of the farmers in 37 unions and two paurashavas of the district have been badly affected by the prolonged flood this year, which also damaged standing crops, seedlings and fodder for cattlehead.

Local farmers said that they have been passing their days in hardships for want of food, shelter as well as fodder for their cattle.

At least Tk 80 to Tk 100 is needed per month for buying fodder for a pair of bullocks, which is a burden for them during the post-flood crisis period.

Moreover, various cattle diseases like 'Khura' and 'Black Quarter' have broken out throughout the district and has claimed a number of cattle in Kalia and Lohagara thanas.

Most of the cattle became weak for want of fodder and pure milk has become scarce in the local markets.

Cultivation of 'Rabi' crops is being hampered due to the cattle diseases, scarcity of fodder and selling of cattlehead during the current cultivation season.

Agriculture experts have underscored the need for power tiller to cover the losses and ensure the cultivation of 'Rabi' crops in the district.

The farmers urged to authorities concerned to take necessary and immediate steps to mitigate their sufferings.

Pol Sc hons Results yet to be published after 14 months

PABNA, Dec 20: Results of final year examination of honours course of the department of Political Science of Pabna Edward University College have not yet been published even after 14 months, reports APB.

Students of the college alleged that the part-3 examination of 1992-93 session was held on October 2 in 1997.

The result of other subjects of the same session came out five months ago.

About 1,000 students of Political Science appeared in the examination under the National University according to the syllabus of Rajshahi University. Of them, 25 were from the Edward College.

The students who alleged this to the local newsmen include Dipali Sarkar, Rabiul Islam, Hasanuzzaman, Hafizur Rahman, Firoza Khatun, Suruchi Sultana, Momena Khanam, Nasreen Ara, Eshan Kabir, Nuruzzaman, Aftab Hamid, Kazi Husne Ara and Kallol Hossain.

Outlaws have unleashed a reign of terror in N-dists

KUSHTIA, Dec 20: Activists of outlawed political parties have unleashed a reign of terror in the northern districts including Kushtia, reports APB.

They killed 29 people, mostly farmers, kidnapped 14, burnt over 22 houses and looted 50 others in Kushtia district in the last four months, police said.

They are activists of Purba Bangla Communist Party (PBCP), the Biplabi Communist Party (BCP), JSD Gano Bahini, Sramajibi Andolan and the Sarbahara Party.

Sources said the BCP recently held a meeting in an undisclosed place in Kushtia and formed a committee and 'killer squads' to 'eliminate class enemies'. Members and activists of the party from Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Pabna, Rajbari and Jessore districts also attended the meeting.

Over one and a half crore people of the northern and southern districts have been passing their days in panic due to the terrorism, loot, arson, torture, and toll collection by these elements.

The terrorists also threaten members of the families of the killed persons of dangerous consequences if they inform police about it.

Kushtia district police, meantime, carried out several raids at some places since Au-

gust 20 and arrested 23 activists and 385 fugitives. They recovered over 100 firearms and huge quantities of narcotics.

Some 25 cases under the Narcotics Act, nine cases under the Arms Act and one case under the Explosives Act have been registered during period, police said.

Influentials occupy 60,000 acres of khas land illegally

NAORE, Dec 20: About 60,000 acres of khas-land worth Tk 750 crore in 16 districts have been occupied illegally by a section of influential quarters, reports UNB.

A source of National Board of Land Reforms in Dhaka on condition of anonymity said due to absence of proper decision of the ministry concerned a section of influential people have been grabbing the land through fake documents. No initiative has been taken so far to recover the occupied khas-lands, he added.

According to an official statistics, of the total 3,69,080 acres of khas land in 16 northern districts about 3,09,083 acres have so far been distributed among the landless and destitute families.

In greater Khulna region Rains, gusty squalls damage crops on 35,901 hectares

JESSORE, Dec 20: Crops on 35,901 hectares of land in greater Khulna region were damaged by excessive rainfalls and gusty squalls in recent times, reports APB.

The damaged crops included 'Rabi' crops, mostly winter vegetables, and paddy and some others as well.

The extent of loss in terms of money could not be ascertained, but the farmers were harshly affected by the calamitous damage, according to local and Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources.

The sources informed that the total disaster-affected area comprised 302,720 hectares. Crops on nearly 12 per cent of the land got damaged.

District-wise breakup is as follows: Jessore — 775 hectares, Jhenidah — 470 hectares, Magura — 170 hectares, Narail — 250 hectares, Khulna — 14,768 hectares, Bagerhat —

12,870 hectares, Satkhira — 6,380 hectares and Kushtia — 218 hectares.

No substantial damage to crops was reported from the other two districts of Khulna division — Chuadanga and Meherpur.

Meantime, excessive rainfalls damaged nearly 75 per cent of the standing 'Rabi' crops in 10 districts of the division. Farmers apprehend that their production would be far less than the target during the season.

The production target of these 10 districts have been set in the following manner: Wheat — 123,373 tonnes, Potato — 13,200 tonnes, Mustard — 673 tonnes, 'Musur' pulses — 979 tonnes, Gram — 473 tonnes, Onions — 73 tonnes, Garlic — 58 tonnes, Chillies — 317 tonnes, Ginger — 4,356 tonnes, Turmeric — 32 tonnes and winter vegetables — 50,200 tonnes.

Indian arms, goods seized: 8 arrested

FENI, Dec 20: Detective branch police and surveillance team recovered a number of arms, Indian drugs and sares and arrested eight people in separate drives during the last month here, reports UNB.

BD police in a raid recovered 50 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from Jail road of the town on November 26.

In another drive police recovered 32 bottles of Gold Ribbon wine and 34 Indian sares from Chowdhury Market area of Trunk road in the town on the same day.

Police recovered the smuggled goods in three separate drives and arrested two people.

Separate cases were filed in

this connection. Another report says, police arrested six dacoits in two separate drives with arms while preparing to commit a dacoity at Chhagalnaya thana recently.

Police arrested Nurul Amin, Rezaul Karim Shamim and Abul Kalam and recovered one revolver from Nurul Amin on November 29.

The team in another drive also arrested Enamul Haq, Obayed Ullah and Abul Hasem and recovered one country-made LG and a ram dao while preparing to commit a robbery at Bashpara area in sadar thana on the same day.

Kurigram Civil Surgeon asks restaurant owners

Refrain from using chemical in cleaning dishes

KURIGRAM, Dec 20: Indiscriminate use of liquefied sulfuric acid in the hotels and restaurants of northern districts, including Kurigram, to clean up the dishes has been causing health hazards, reports UNB.

Civil Surgeon of the district warned the hotel and restaurant owners to refrain from using the chemical in cleaning the dishes, but use one paid any heed to the warning.

The hotel owners said that the utensils are covered by a layer of iron as water of these area contained with high quantum of iron. So the consumers often show their disinterest to take food in these plates and glasses.

Finding no other way out, they have compelled to use sulfuric acid for cleaning up the utensils making these glittering like new ones.

But the owners expressed their ignorance about the bad effect of using the chemical.

Taking food in these dishes, consumers are being attacked by different skin and intestinal diseases, said a local physician.

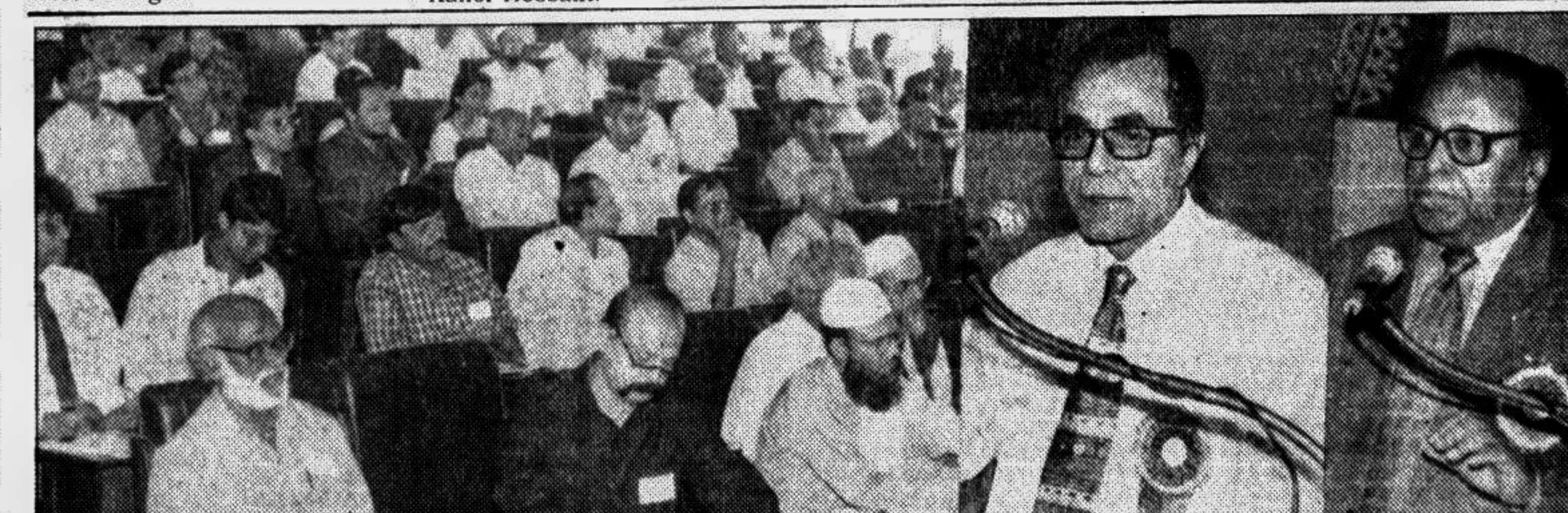
He informed that during last few months, 40 per cent of patients came to him with intestinal diseases like pain in abdomen and throat, stomach trouble, acidity, vomiting tendency, cough and peptic ulcer caused by the acid.

Not only the consumers, but also the workers who are involved in cleaning the dishes in the restaurants are suffering from skin diseases. But they are not aware of the reason behind their disease.

'Lack of modern ferryboats'

RAJBARI, Dec 20: Ferry service across the Padma, connecting Jaukura at the border point of Pabna and Bashmara in Rajbari is reported to be handicapped due to lack of modern ferryboats, reports APB.

The three ferryboats that operate at this point are outdated and usually take 40 minutes to cross a distance of only six kilometres. The small ferryboats cannot accommodate more than three small vehicles at a time.



AGRI-VARSITY (Mymensingh): Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid delivering his address as the chief guest at the first workshop on National Animal Breeding held recently at the university campus. Vice-Chancellor Prof Muhammad Hossain was the special guest. The workshop was sponsored by the Faculty of Animal Husbandry. — Star photo