

## National

## News snaps



CHANDPUR: Readers Forum of Prothom Alo, a leading national daily arranged a cultural programme here recently. — Star photo

## Obscene view cards on open sale

NAOGAON, Jan 8: Obscene view-cards showing fully naked or half-naked photos of women and men are being sold almost openly in Naogaon town, reports APB.

These are available at stationery shops, bus stands, small retail shops in almost all areas of the town. People, specially parents and guardians are worried because most of the buyers are young students of both sexes. The cards, which normally are three inches long, can be kept hidden in their pockets. Since the prices are low, varying from Tk 2 to Tk 5, students can buy those by saving their tiffin money. The district administration has taken no step to stop printing or flow of these degenerating things from outside the country.

## Seedlings distributed among farmers

HABIGANJ, Jan 8: Agriculture Extension Department (AED) distributed cash, fertiliser and seedlings among the farmers in Sadar thana in the current 'aman' and 'rabi' season under its post-flood rehabilitation programme, reports UNB.

Official sources said, it distributed Tk 2.61 lakh in cash, 7,590 kg DAP fertiliser and seedlings free of cost among 675 poor and marginal farmers for transplanted 'aman' cultivation. Under Rehabilitation Programme-2, it also distributed cash, DAP and urea fertilisers, and seedlings of wheat, 'boro' paddy, maize and vegetables. Besides, under Rehabilitation Programme-4 and 6, wheat and hybrid maize seeds have been distributed among the poor and marginal farmers in the thana.

## Schools in bad shape

PIROJPUR, Jan 8: Education in the secondary high schools in different areas of the district has been hampered due to various reasons, reports UNB.

In Mothbaria thana, a good number of secondary high school and madrasah buildings are in dilapidated condition. Students and teachers of different educational institutions including KM Latif Institution, Shapla Model High School, Gulshakhal GK Union Secondary Schools are working under threat of collapse. Officials said the total number of high schools in the thana is 31 while there are nine Junior Secondary Schools and 47 madrasahs. Most of the schools in the rural areas are in very bad shape and these educational institutions have no science laboratory, library, auditorium and other necessary education equipment. Many schools lack supply of pure water in the compounds causing serious problems for the teachers and students.

## Tk 9.44cr loan disbursed

PIROJPUR, Jan 8: Local Krishi Bank disbursed agriculture loan over Tk 9.44 crore out of its total target of Tk 13.26 crore in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

The bank is distributing the loan among the farmers through its 21 branches, official sources said. Of the total amount, over Tk 1.28 crore has been sanctioned for 'AUS' cultivation, Tk 1.58 crore for 'Aman', Tk 3.77 crore for 'Boro', Tk 1.92 crore for potato and Tk 30 lakh for banana cultivation. Besides, Tk 53.20 lakh has been allotted for purchasing bullocks, Tk 2.30 crore for marginal farmers and Tk 1.92 crore for other purposes. Bank sources said the disbursement will be completed soon.

## 20 landless families rehabilitated

RANGPUR, Jan 8: A total of 20 landless distressed families have been rehabilitated in 'Asrayan Kendra', a shelter project on 80 decimal of lands at Rancharandrapur village in Pirojganj thana here, reports UNB.

Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Khan Shahabuddin inaugurated the project on Monday. Later, the documents of the allotment were handed over to the rehabilitated families. The inaugural function was presided over by Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur Moazzem Hossain. Among others, officials and local leaders addressed the function.

## Laksham Pourashava chairman sued

COMILLA, Jan 8: Anti-corruption Bureau here has filed three cases against Mostafa Kamal Khan, Chairman of Laksham Pourashava, on charge of embezzlement about Tk 4.95 lakh collected as value added tax, reports UNB.

Official sources said the chairman grabbed the money collected as VAT from the contractors in connection with different development works of the pourashava. The amount includes Tk 3.18 lakh in 1993-94, Tk 54,586 in 1994-95 and Tk 1.23 lakh in 1995-96. Under the existing rules, the VAT collected from the contractors should be deposited with the official account, but this was not allegedly done properly. After the investigation, the Bureau officials filed the cases against the chairman.

## Timbers seized

HABIGANJ, Jan 8: Special team of the Forest Department here in separate raids seized huge quantity of teak timbers worth about Tk 3 lakh in the last month, reports UNB.

According to the official sources, some 261.65 cft timbers valued at Tk 2.50 lakh, furniture of Tk 40,000 and two trucks loaded with timbers were recovered from different areas of Chunardiagh, Madhabpur and Bahubal thanas and Dhaka-Sylhet highway during the period. Another report from Sylhet says, BDR jawans recovered Indian wall-clocks worth about Tk one lakh from frontier Sakia area in Kazirganj thana on Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, BDR seized the smuggled goods while being brought into the country. The goods were deposited with the local Customs office. Another report from Comilla adds, police arrested 10 people along with huge Indian smuggled sarees from a truck on Dhaka-Chittagong highway on December 31.

## 3,000 acres of land remain fallow

SHERPUR, Jan 8: At least 3,000 acres of land remained fallow in different areas of the district this year because poor farmers could not bring those under cultivation due to high input cost, reports APB.

Prices of fertiliser, seeds, draft animals and the rate of electricity for irrigation is beyond their reach, some of the farmers said. The number of deep tube wells is also inadequate. Farmers irrigate their lands with the help of shallow tube wells and power pumps but the cost of running diesel-driven pumps have also gone up in recent days. Pump owners usually charge Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 for irrigating one acre of land, which is too high for marginal farmers.

## 10 uplift projects undertaken

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 8: Facilities Department undertook 10 development projects in the district in the 1997-98 fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the projects included construction and reconstruction of various educational institutions of the district. The institutions are Gurudyal Government College, Mukti Jiddha College, Haji Zafar College, Mithanpur Degree College, Kishoreganj Government Boys School, Kishoreganj Girls' High School, Bajitpur RN Girls' High School, Hossainpur Pilot High School, Sajali Shaheed Gurutan Senior Madrasah and SV Government Girls' High School. A total of Taka 2,37,73,000 was allocated for the implementation of the development activities.

## Chandpur press Club EC poll held

CHANDPUR, Jan 8: Election of the Executive Committee of Chandpur Press Club was held recently, reports APB. Quamruzzaman Chowdhury of Bangladesh Observer and Prof Ahsanuzzaman of Radio Bangladesh were re-elected president and general secretary respectively for the 1999-2000 term. Other office bearers are: Shankar Chandra Dey of BNS and Golam Kibria Jibon of Ittefaq and BTV — vice-presidents; Delwar Ahmed of The Independent and APB — joint secretary; Alhaj M A Masud Bhuiyan editor of Rupashi Chandpur — treasurer; Shah Md Maksud of Sangbad — literary and sports secretary and Partanjan Chakrabarty — office secretary. The election was conducted by a three member election commission led by Prof Mohammad Hossain Khan, Chairman of Political Science Department of Chandpur University College.

## Chandpur hospital ailing

From Shirin Akhter

CHANDPUR, Jan 8: Chandpur Sadar Modernised Hospital is beset with manifold problems.

Shortage of doctors, medicines, beds, equipments, nurses and other staffers has been hampering proper treatment of large number of patients.

The 50-bed hospital is unable to render proper treatment to the increasing number of patients. The existing number of beds can only meet 20 per cent requirement of the patients seeking admission in the hospital.

This is the only hospital in the district headquarters having a population of more than twenty lakh. There is one bed for about forty thousand people which is impossible to meet minimum requirement of pa-

tients. Most of the bed sheets have become unfit for use and those are rarely being replaced.

Most of the patients who come from remote villages return home without proper treatment for want of accommodation.

The only ambulance of the hospital remains out of order most of the time. In emergency cases the people are compelled to hire vehicles at high rate.

Though it is a 50-bed hospital, about two hundred patients are usually admitted in the hospital.

Most of the patients are staying on the floor and corridor of the hospital. The water supply is almost absent and if it is supplied it is very irregular. The outdoor patients visit the hospital during office timings, but they can not meet the doctors on the plea that the doctors

are visiting wards or some times doctors remain busy in meetings.

Dogs, cats are found moving freely in different floors of the hospital. Some patients complained that both indoor and outdoor patients are provided with only prescription. The poor indoor patients are to purchase medicines from outside at a high rate.

It is alleged, doctors, nurses and other staffers are insufficient. There is no children's ward in the hospital. The post of medicine consultant has not yet been created in the hospital.

The patients further complained, most of the doctors remained busy with their private practice. The people of the district have urged the government to immediately turn the hospital into 200-bed hospital.

## Madaripur Amir of Jamaat sued

MADRIPUR, Jan 8: A case was filed against the District Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Dr Fariduddin Ahmed Khan and Secretary of the party's district unit Moulna Abdus Sobhan on charge of embezzling party fund, reports UNB.

Secretary of Jamaat Poura Committee and member of the district Majlis-e-Shura of the party Mohammad Solaiman Khan filed the case with the magistrate court on December 29 charging the two leaders of spending Tk 2,76,421 from the party fund without proper resolution.

The money was part of the fund of Anjuman-e-Kheda Khalk, a social welfare organisation run by the Jamaat people.

When contacted, District Amir Dr Farid termed the allegations as false and fabricated. He said both the plaintiff and the witnesses of the case have been fired from Jamaat-e-Islami for anti-party activities.

Dr Farid also said the money has been spent according to the resolutions of the concerned committee and he was ready to show these papers even to the journalists.

## Scarcity of wheat seeds

NETRAKONA, Jan 8: Farmers of the district are facing problems to cultivate wheat in the current season due to acute scarcity of the seeds, reports UNB.

Farmers said the scarcity cropped up from mid-November when untimely rainfall damaged the wheat plants extensively.

At least 60 per cent farmers of the district sowed wheat seeds before the rainfall.

Local Agriculture Extension Department said about 1,000 hectares of wheat plants were damaged by the downpour.

Admitting shortage of seeds in the local market, the local AED officials said the deadline for sowing wheat seed has already been over by December 15.

They said they were motivating the growers to cultivate pulse instead of wheat in their land to get better harvest.

Besides, AED has set up a target to produce additional 25,000 tons of foodgrains during the current wheat and 'Boro' season in the district to cover up the deficit caused by the last devastating deluge.

This year's target of 'Boro' cultivation has also been fixed on 1.75 lakh hectares of land which is 10,000 hectares more than the previous year.

## Fishermen of Kishoreganj in miseries

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 8: Thousands of fishermen here have been facing manifold problems owing to lack of fund, scarcity of fishing materials like net, boat and price hike of inputs, reports UNB.

As many as 60,000 fishermen of Karinganj, Bajitpur, Kuliarchar, Itna, Bhairab, Nikli, Mitamoin, Astagram, Hossainpur and Tarail thanas, famous for fish production, have been facing serious problems due to gradual drying up of rivers, haors, ponds and canals.

The fishermen cannot buy the necessary fishing appliances due to financial stringency. Finding no other alternative, they are forced to take money from the local money-lenders at high rate of interest. Some of them alleged that they could not avail of the bank loan facilities due to complex procedures and demand for bribe.

Moreover, a section of people who are not fishermen by profession have established their total monopoly over it causing great concern among the genuine ones. As such many genuine fishermen had been forced to leave the profession.

The suffering fishermen community urged the authority concerned to provide them with financial assistance and lease out the jalmahals to the genuine fishermen so that they can carry out their age-old profession.

## Tk 5cr allocated for construction of Magura Shishu Palli Complex

MAGURA, Jan 8: The government has allocated Tk 5 crore for the construction of Shishu Palli Complex in the district headquarters, reports UNB.

The construction works, expected to start in next February, include administrative building, children's hostel, school building and training centre.

Official sources said Public Works Department would supervise the construction work, which is expected to be completed by December this year.

On completion, the complex will house 200 destitute and orphan children and they will be provided with food, shelter, education and vocational training.

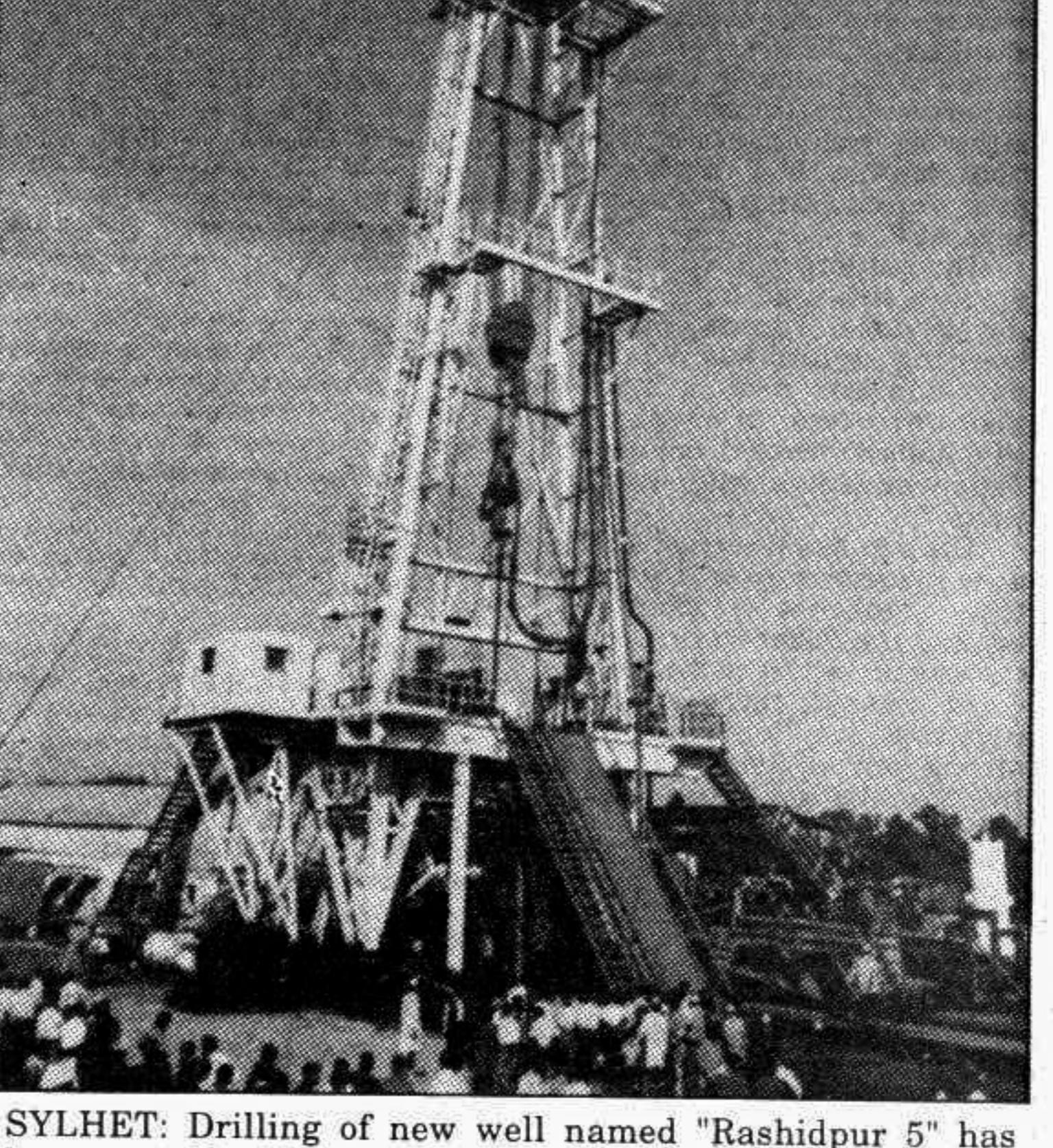
Another report said the construction of 200 low-cost sanitary latrines will begin in the municipal area at a cost of Tk 6.20 lakh.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) provided financial assistance to Ashahi, a non-government organisation, for constructing the latrines to help provide the poor families with improved sanitary system.

Executive Director of the NGO Nasirul Islam said the work is expected to be completed by June this year.

SYLHET: Drilling of new well named 'Rashidpur 5' has begun at Rashidpur gas field in Habiganj district on Tuesday afternoon. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation of India which was given the contract of drilling brought the rig from India.

— Star photo



## Date expired seeds distributed Farmers of North Bengal frustrated

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 8: Frustration gripped the farmers in North Bengal including Sirajganj for fear of abnormal shortfall in production of wheat this year due to low quality of seed, reports UNB.

Farmers in the region complained that the wheat seeds, distributed among them by the government and different NGOs, did not germinate in most of the fields in the region.

Government had sanctioned seeds and fertilisers worth about lakhs of taka to boost the wheat production in the region and distributed these among the flood-hit farmers free of cost through Agriculture Extension offices to recoup the losses caused by the last prolonged deluge.

He, however, declined to comment on the allegations of corruption, nepotism and irregularities.

Different NGOs also distributed wheat seeds and fer-

tilisers among the farmers to boost the production.

Criticism sparked off in the region following the distribution of wheat seeds even after the expiry of the time of cultivation.

Besides, there are massive allegation of corruption, irregularities and nepotism in process of the procurement and distribution of fertilisers and seeds.

Deputy Director of district AED Abdul Aziz told that was no problem with the government seeds and germination problem occurred in case of the farmers who used seeds distributed by the NGOs.

According to local agriculture extension officers, many people were attacked by diarrhoea.

The number of diarrhoea patients has increased in the thana health complexes of these areas.

The worst affected villages of Sadarup thana are Majkandi, Ramchandrapur, Nijgram, Purabandi, Krishnapur and Dangi and Fulsti of Nagarkanda thana.

Local people have urged the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to tackle the out break of the disease.

The deceased were identified

## Malaria, diarrhoea spreading in Bandarban hill dist alarmingly

BANDARBAN, Jan 8: Outbreaks of malaria and diarrhoea are not uncommon in Bangladesh. But this time the two disease are spreading in the hill district in an alarming proportion, reports UNB.

Doctors attributed the rapid spread of diarrhoea to acute scarcity of safe water and ignorance of the people to contain the water-borne disease.

Meanwhile, local people alleged that the steps taken by the government contain the outbreak of malaria are too inadequate as the disease has already taken an alarming turn.

They further alleged that diarrhoeal patients in remote areas of the hill district were being deprived of medical treatment even though 10 medical teams working there to contain the outbreak of the disease.

Another report from Joypurhat adds: Diarrhoea broke out in an epidemic form in Panchbibi thana while claiming three lives and attacking 711 people in last six days till Thursday.

The deceased were identified

higher than the official one.

Doctors attributed the rapid spread of diarrhoea to acute scarcity of safe water and ignorance of the people to contain the water-borne disease.

Meanwhile, local people alleged that the steps taken by the government contain the outbreak of malaria are too inadequate as the disease has already taken an alarming turn.

They further alleged that diarrhoeal patients in remote areas of the hill district were being deprived of medical treatment even though 10 medical teams working there to contain the outbreak of the disease.

Another report from Joypurhat adds: Diarrhoea broke out in an epidemic form in Panchbibi thana while claiming three lives and attacking 711 people in last six days till Thursday.

The deceased were identified

higher than the official one.

Doctors attributed the rapid spread of diarrhoea to acute scarcity of safe water and ignorance of the people to contain the water-borne disease.