Newssnaps

'Rabi' farming on 84,039 hectares

MADARIPUR, Jan 11: The Agriculture Extension Department has taken up a programme to bring 84,039 hectares under intensive 'Rabi' crop cultivation in Madaripur district in the

current season, reports BSS According to an official source, 22,869 hectares will be brought under 'Boro' cultivation, 6,764 hectares under wheat cultivation, 300 hectares under potato cultivation, 15,400 hectares under mustard cultivation, 35,006 hectares under different types of pulse cultivation, 3,000 hectares under vegeta-bles cultivation and 700 hectares under maize cultivation. About 2,07,044 tonnes of 'Rabi' crops are expected to be produced in the district during the season, office sources said.

Work on RCC pipe culverts completed CHUADANGA, Jan 11: The construction of 20 RCC pipe culverts on three roads in Jibannagar thana has just been completed by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) at a total cost of Taka 9,84,424, reports BSS.

According to an official source the three roads on which the RCC culverts have been constructed are Sontoshpu-Hashadah Road, Sontoshpur Road-Hasadah Bazar Road and Banka Road-Andulbaria Bazar road. Of the total culverts five culverts have been constructed on Sontosh-Hasadah road, nine culverts on Sontoshpur Road-Hashadah Bazar Road and six culverts on Banka Road-Andulbaria Road.

Pests frustrate mustard growers

SHERPUR, Jan 11: Mustard crop fields in Nakla and sadar thanas have come under massive pest attack, reports APB. Farmers say pests are eating up green mustard plants but pesticides are ineffective. The unions affected most are Fatiamari, Kamaria, Rouha, Chetmari, Ghugurakandi, Balayer Char, Bhatshala, Char Astadhar, Baneswardi, Pathakata and Chandrokona. Agricultural Extension Department officials said mustard cultivation exceeded the target of 500 hectares during the current season. Farmers said they cultivated it more this year to recover flood losses and also because the soil became fertile as floodwaters left alluvial deposit. They alleged that none from the AED visited the fields after repeated requests.

Smuggled goods recovered

SYLHET, Jan 11: Jawans of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) have recovered smuggled goods worth about Taka three lakhs from the border area of Companyganj, reports APB.

On suspicion, sources said, BDR men challenged a group of people who were allegedly carrying smuggled goods. As the members of the group attacked the BDR men with sharp weapons, the patrolling paramilitary forces fired on them. The smugglers fled the spot leaving 85 kgs of hemp, 42 bottles of whisky and huge number of bidis.

Pry education exhibition

NAOGAON, Jan 11: Primary education exhibition was held here recently at local primary training institute premises, reports BSS. District primary education office organised the exhibition. Awami League presidium member M Abdul Jalil inaugurated the exhibition. Among others, Superintendent, Primary Training Institute Syed Tariqul Alam, District Primary Education Officer Md Abdur Rashed spoke in the inaugural function. Eleven stalls were set-up in the exhibition.

Tubewells installation programme MAGURA, Jan 11: The Department of Public Health and En-

gineering has undertaken a programme to install 171 tubewells in the district in the current fiscal year, reports UNB.

Official sources said of the total, some 93 shallow tubewells and 43 Tara-pumps will be installed and some 35 choked up ones will be reinstalled under the post-flood rehabilitation programme. Of the total, 35 shallow tubewells and 15 Tara-pumps will be installed in sadar, 25 tubewells in Shlikha, 29 tubewells in Muhammadpur and 36 tube-wells and 28 Tara-pumps in Sripur thanas. After completion of the scheme over 1,000 families will get pure water facilities.

Farmers' workshop

CHANDPUR, Jan 11: A farmers' workshop on 'Increased Production of Crops through Integrated Use of Water and Fertilisers in Chandpur-Meghna-Dhonagoda Irrigation Project' was held at Matlab-Kalipur pump house premises recently, reports BSS.

The main objective of the workshop was to create awareness among the farmers on how to increase food production by introducing modern techniques in agriculture. About 2000 farmers of the project area participated in the workshop. The workshop was organised by Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Ki Hee Ryu of Asian Development Bank mission chief in Bangladesh attended the workshop as the chief guest. The workshop was addressed, among others, by AFM Nurul Alam, member, BWDB, Abu Taher Chowdhury, Superintending Engineer, BWDB, Azizul Hoque, Director, BWDB,

AGM of Chandpur Press Club

CHANDPUR, Jan 11: The annual general meeting (AGM) and election of Chandpur Press Club was held on December 30 at Chandpur Press Club auditorium, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by club president Quamruzzaman Chowdhury. Quamruzzaman Chowdhury (Bangladesh Observer), Ahsanuzzaman (Bangladesh Radio), and M A Masud Bhuiyan (Rupushi Chandpur), were elected president, general secretary and treasurer respectively. The election was conducted by Mohammad Hossain Khan as the chief election commissioner. Besides, seven more office-bearers were elected for the next two years.

Advocacy meeting

HABIGANJ, Jan 11: An advocacy meeting on national leprosy elimination campaign was held at local circuit house on January 4, reports BSS.

Organised by district health department the meeting was presided over by Dr Shafiqueuddin Ahmed, Civil Surgeon, Habiganj. M A N Siddik, A D C (Gen), advocate Shafiqur Rahman, president, Habiganj Press Club were present as special guests. The meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr Wali Mahmud Khan, Deputy Civil Surgeon, Dr Rafiqul Islam, T H and FPO Madhavpur, Dr Shafiqur Rahman TH and FPO Baniachong, Mufazzal Haque area manager, BRAC, Dr Tauhidul Islam T H and FPO, Nabiganj and Abdul Quader, Senior Health Education Officer. Speakers in the meeting stressed the need and importance of creating awareness among the general peo-

Ansar-VDP confce

NAOGAON, Jan 11: Mohadevpur thana Ansar-VDP conference was held at thana auditorium recently, reports BSS. Thana Nirbahi Officer Md Fardous Alam presided over the

conference. District Ansar-VDP Adjutant Md Abdul Quddus attended as the chief guest. Among others, Assistant Commissioner A K M Masudur Rahman, thana engineer Mahmood Huq, Agriculture Officer Rabindra Nath Kundu spoke in the meeting. About 500 Ansars and VDP members participated in the conference. A colourful sport was held in the three day-long programme.

Dead'pangas' floating in rivers

SHARIATPUR, Jan 11: A mysterious disease has broken out in Pangas fish in the rivers Padma and Kirtinasha in an alarming proportion, reports UNB.

Hundreds of dead pangas are seen floating every day which are unfit for human consumption, local fishermen said. Pangas of the rivers Padma and Kirtinasha surrounding Shariatpur district cover demands of Chandpur, capital city Dhaka and other districts, local fish traders said. If immediate measures are not taken to combat the disease the pangas variety of the fish will extinct in near future, apprehended the local fishermen community. Meanwhile, the officials of the local fisheries department said there is no specific medicine for the disease. They suggested spraying of potash in the affected water bodies. Local fishermen and traders urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to diagnose the disease and take steps to save the variety of the fish without further delay.

Three shops gutted

TANGAIL, Jan 11: Three shops in Panchani bazaar of Tangail town were fully gutted on Sunday, reports BSS. The fire, reportedly originated from electric short circuit, came under control by the joint efforts of the local people and Fire Service.

Number of cattles decreasing

NATORE, Jan 11: The number of cattlehead in the district has decreased drastically due to shrinking of pasture land and scarcity of cattle-feed, reports APB.

Lands are not kept fallow after IRRI-Boro cultivation which started in the 1980s. Cattlehead have declined sharply in Baraigram, Gurudaspur, Shingra, Lalpur, Bagatipara and Natore Sadar thanas as the areas of pasture lands have almost depleted. Farmers say, increasing use of pesticides, especially after the introduction of high-yielding varieties of rice, are causing death to cattlehead. These pesticides get mixed with soil and the grass that grows on the land becomes poisonous. This causes disease and many other physical complications to cattlehead. they said. Even the straw available from the paddy grown in farmlands where chemical pesticides have been used is harmful for cattle.

Eid shopping gaining momentum in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Jan 11: Brisk Eid shopping is gaining momentum

in the town. The rush of customers in the shopping centres is increasing

from morning to night. Markets of the tiny town have an abundant stock of fancy goods. The goods vary from luxurious goods to house-

hold essential items. There is an abundant supply of Indian goods in the markets. One can buy Indian goods of various qualities. Import in private sector other than smuggling is the reason for abundant

supply of Indian goods. Tailoring shops, virtually are over burdened with orders.

They are working almost round the clock. Tailoring charges have also gone up remarkably this year. In many cases they are refusing new orders.

Both urban and rural people are now crowding the local markets for Eid shopping. Street shops are found more crowded than big shopping arcades. Buyers, most of them from middle class are found moving from one shop to another asking the price of goods. Readymade garment shops and shoe stores are seen much

more crowded. Price of different varieties of clothes particularly cotton, silk and synthetics have registered a

slight rise though the shops are stocked with large varieties of

Volume of transactions this year is less than that of the preceding years as the ordinary buyers belonging to different fixed income groups can hardly buy a choiceable one due to inflation.

Meanwhile, many of the rural people are yet to make up the loss they suffered following the century's worst flood last year. This was followed by a dismal harvest of 'Aman' paddy.

However, the shrinkage in buying capacity has not kept any impact on the crowds of shopping centres.

Winter brings misery to them

From Aroop Talukdar



BARISAL: Shelterless people passing their night in severe cold under the shed of a building here. — Star photo

BARISAL, Jan 11: With the advent of winter season miseries of lakhs of helpless and shelterless people have increased.

The well-to-do people who have enough money can buy necessary clothes to protect themselves from the biting cold. But the distressed and people from very low income group are becoming prey to the shivering cold. They have actually no clothings by which they can protect themselves in the winter season. They are really helpless, their distress is end-

Old people, both male and female including the children of poor families and street dwellers are the worst sufferers in this winter season.

Meanwhile, cold wave in the northern region is paralysing the normal life. Days are coming when the cold wave would be more biting. It will bring more distress to the poor people across the country.

Several thousands of poor people and beggars including the shelterless both male and female are passing their miserable days with their children at

stations, launch ghats and bus terminals. Sometimes they have no food. Their miseries are endless. Who will help them? There is no reply to this question.

Memo submitted

to Satkhira DC

SATKHIRA, Jan 11:

Satkhira conscious nagorik

committee handed over memo-

randums addressed to Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina and

the home minister through the

deputy commissioner of

Satkhira on Tuesday, reports

Deputy Commissioner Sai-

ful Islam received the memo-

randum. Nagorik committee

demanded in the memorandum

to attach all the moveable and

immovable property of the ter-

rorists, freeze their bank ac-

counts, cancel their arms li-

cences and arrest immediately

all the terrorists with their

Adviser of the nagorik

committee, Syed Kamal Bakth,

MP, Asadul Haque, convener of

the committee, Kamrul Islam

Faruque, Nazrul Islam, member

secretary of the committee

Sheikh Nizamuddin and

Anisur Rahim signed in the

gang-leader Abdur Rouf.

memorandum.



BARISAL: Two shelterless boys sleeping at Barisal steamer ghat in this biting winter season. Star photo

In Cox's Bazar

Telephone subscribers facing problems

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 11: Telephone subscribers in the district are facing problems as the local telephone exchange is overloaded, reports APB.

T and T Board sources said the exchange has 1,380 connections against a capacity of 1400. This is causing problems, they

Subscribers alleged that they have to dial hour after hour to get an expected number and when they get it the conversation is inaudible.

The worst sufferers are local journalists. Due to problems with telephones, they have to depend on fax and telex but this is also difficult as the line gets disconnected again and again. The problem has been acute since 1995 when a 4-kilometre underground junction cable from the local exchange to the microwave centre became defective while digging of soil during repair of Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway.

properly repaired. This is causing noise in telephone lines during phone-call.

However, T and T Board has taken steps to increase the capacity of the exchange adding 300 more lines although about 3000 applications for new connections are pending with it.

Abdul Mannan MP. State Min-

ister for Foreign Affairs Abul

Hassan Chowdhury, Abdul Latif

Siddique, the Director (Adm) of

the Directorate of Health Ser-

vices and the Civil Surgeon also

formed the meeting that the

100-bed Tangail Sadar Hospital

would be upgraded to a 200-bed

one in phases and a Trauma

priority to the health sector to

ensure 'health for all' by the

year 2000. He urged the people

concerned to reach governmen-

to attain the goal.

He said the government gives

Centre would be set up there.

The health minister in-

addressed the meeting.

Tangail Sadar Hospital to be upgraded

TANGAIL, Jan 11: Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuff has given directives for completion of repair and reconstruction of all flood-damaged health complexes within the scheduled time.

Sirajganj BRAC distributes Tk 1.6 cr among

flood victims

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 11: The regional office of BRAC has distributed Tk 1.6 crore in nine thanas of the district under its flood rehabilitation programme, reports APB.

About 1.20 lakh people of 21,490 families have been brought under the programme. It has disbursed the amount under heads like repair of houses, rehabilitation of agriculture, pisciculture, social afforestation and money for work.

Besides, saplings are being supplied to the people from nurseries for afforestation.

The defective cable was not

Indiscriminate He gave the directive while addressing a meeting of the Tangail District Health Develuse of loud opment Committee at the conference room of Tangail Sadar speakers in Hospital on January 9. He also asked the relevant

Sherpur authorities to strengthen their supervision to ensure that the SHERPUR, Jan 11: Life in work is completed by the stiputhe town is being greatly disturbed due to indiscriminate The meeting was presided use of loud speakers by owners over by chairman of the comof movie houses, reports APB. mittee former health minister

Town dwellers complained that owners of cinema halls compete with each other in using foud speakers for publicity of movies being screened in their halls. The publicity begins at about 9 am and continues until late at

night, with a break for one to two hours at noon. Songs are played over loudspeakers, much to the inconvenience of members of the public. Particularly affected are of-

fice-goers, school children, hospital patients and those attending congregations atmosques.

They said complaints were t's health services to the people lodged with the district administration but to no affect.

Gunny sacks recovered

JHALAKATI, Jan 11: Police recovered 10,660 pieces of stolen gunny sacks from a godown in the town's Fariapatti

area on Thursday, reports APB. Police said some 200 bales gunny sacks - 101 bales from MV Sharp-1 and 99 bales from MV Saiton - were stolen while being sent to the Mongla port for shipment to an African

The two cargo vessels were carrying some 1,750 bales and 1,850 bales of sacks from Karim Jute Mills and Bawani Jute

As the vessels reached Mongla port on January 5 and 6, the port officials unearthed the theft and filed two cases with Mongla police in this connection.

Acting on a tip-off, Mongla police in cooperation with the local law enforcers raided the godown of salt trader Rafiqul Islam Haq at Fariapatti and recovered 200 stolen bales.

The recovered gunnysacks were kept at sadar thana.

2 dacoities on Dhaka-Ctg highway

COMILLA, Jan 11: Two dacoities were committed on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Chowddagram thana here on Thursday night that left at least 10 people injured, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a group of bandits in the guise of passengers boarded a Chittagongbound bus from Dhaka and when it reached at Paduar Bazar the muggers swooped on the passengers. They beat them indiscriminately and decamped with the valuables leaving seven people injured.

Of the injured, Anwar, 15, of Noakhali district and Abid of Chittagong were given treatment at Chowddagram Thana Health Complex.

In another incident, a group of robbers in disguise boarded a Dhaka-bound coach and looted goods from the passengers in Bhazankara area. At least three people were injured in the at-

2 killed in Sylhet road accidents

SYLHET, Jan 11: Two people including a woman were killed in separate road accidents in the district on Tuesday, reports

Police said Akbar Ali, 80, of Burhabpur village in Chhatak thana died on the spot when a Sunamganj-bound bus knocked him down in Alapur area on Sylhet-Sunamganj road.

Karimunnesa, 52, of Fakirabad village in Balaganj thana was killed near Sadipur bridge on Sylhet-Dhaka road when a

speeding truck ran over her. cle along with its driver and

In another incident,

Local people seized the vehihanded over to the police.

In Nilphamari, 15 other N-dists

Rice, paddy procurement target may not be achieved

From A Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Jan 11: The government's rice and paddy procurement target in the district may not be achieved this season as their market prices are higher than the official

The government's rate is Taka 760 per quintal of paddy and Taka 1,200 per quintal of rice, but the market prices are much higher.

The procurement began on November 1. Not a single kg of paddy and rice was procured by the Food Department from the very beginning of Aman harvest. Two months have already been passed since then, but no tangible progress is in sight till filing of this report.

APB from Pabna says: The Food Department had set a target for procurement of 80 thousand tonnes of paddy and 50

thousand tonnes of rice from 16 northern districts. The procurement began on November 1. Food Department sources said, only about 40 per cent of

the paddy procurement target

and 20 per cent of that of rice have been achieved so far. The sources said hoarders, rice mill owners and fariahs (middlemen) started purchasing rice and paddy from the very

beginning of Aman harvest. Owners of more than one thousand rice mills in the region have hoarded paddy this year, resulting in a price-hike,

they said. Agricultural Extension Department (AED) sources told that despite devastating floods, 29.44 lakh tonnes of paddy is expected to be produced on some 16.4 lakh acres of land during the Aman season.

From Khagrachhari-Hathazari

Electric wires stolen by organised gang

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 11: Electric wires from Khagrachhari-Hathazari power supply line were stolen three times by an organised gang during the last two months, reports UNB.

Police and local authorities said the culprits stole the wire by disrupting power supply creating short circuit of 33 KV line. Due to the reason, the power supply remained suspended for about 23 hours from midnight Wednesday in eight thanas

Baghaihat and Marishya in Rangamati district. Police arrested six people and recovered stolen wires from a microbus from in front of Jhankar cinema hall on Thursday morning.

along with a vast area of

The arrested were identified as Abdul Motaleb, Abdus Sukkur, Fazlu, Abdul Malek,

Abdus Salam and Ershad Ali Police said the accused disrupted power supply at about 11:25 pm by creating electric short circuit in the supply line at Dolubil in Fatikchhari using rope and pieces of brick.

PDB sources here said they took away 1,000 metres wire from the place and loaded these in two microbuses. On suspicion, police challenged one of the vehicles. Following this, a team of highway police chased and arrested them.

Local subscribers said they have been suffering much due to the disruption in power supply caused by the gang.

The group stole about one maund of wire, worth about Tk 30,000, from the same area of Fatikchhari on December 28 and 900 metres wire on November 28, said PDB sources.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Prof Julfikar Matin of Bangla Department giving the inaugural address at a function arranged by Sanan, an organisation of poetry recitation here. Sanan celebrated its 17th founding anniversary recently - Star photo

Adverse effect of Farakka

700-km river routes closed down

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Jan 11: Eight rivers here have silted up due to the effect of Farakka. As a result about 700 kilometres long river routes have closed down.

The river Padma is the main source of water in eight small rivers such as Chitra, Bhairab, Kapatakkha, Begabati, Nabaganga, Kali and Gorai. Recently the water level of the Padma has fallen remarkably. It affected all the branches of the river Bhairab. Moreover, flow of water has been stopped due to construction of a regulator at Gangarampur in India. Another cross dam was built at the source of the river Bhairab. As a result from the fountain at Darsana in Chuadanga district to Nowapara in Jessore district. the 120-kilometre long river line of the river Bhairab have dried up emerging numerous

shoals. The river Kapatakkha is a branch of the river Bhairab which originated in Chuadanga district. It flowed through Mohespur and Kotchandpur thanas. Due to continuous drying up of Bhairab, the Kapatakkha also faced the same fate and about 145 long river line have been turned into crop

fields. The river Chitara is the branch of the river Ichhamati which also dried up. The Chitra was once a mighty river, now

turned into merely a a canal. Farmers of both the sides of the Ichhamati have been cultivating theriver bed as their crop

The Begabati, another river has also dried up like the rivers Bhairab, Chitra, Kapatakkha. It flowed through Bishoykhali in Jhenidah sadar thana, Naldanga and Kaliganj in Kaliganj thana. The 95-kilometre long river bed of the Bagabati is now being used as farming land for the local people for the last two

The Nabaganga, a mighty river ran through Jhenidah town marking a border line between Jhenidah sadar and Harinakundu thana. It joined with the rivers Madhumati and passed through Magura and Narail districts. About 115kilometre long river routes have virtually been turned into

The Kumar, another river originated from the Padma and flowed into the Madhumati in Magura district. It passed through Kushtia and Chuadanga districts. But due to construction of a dam on about 150-kilometre long Kumar river and another 50-kilometre dam on the river Kali, both the rivers have turned into small

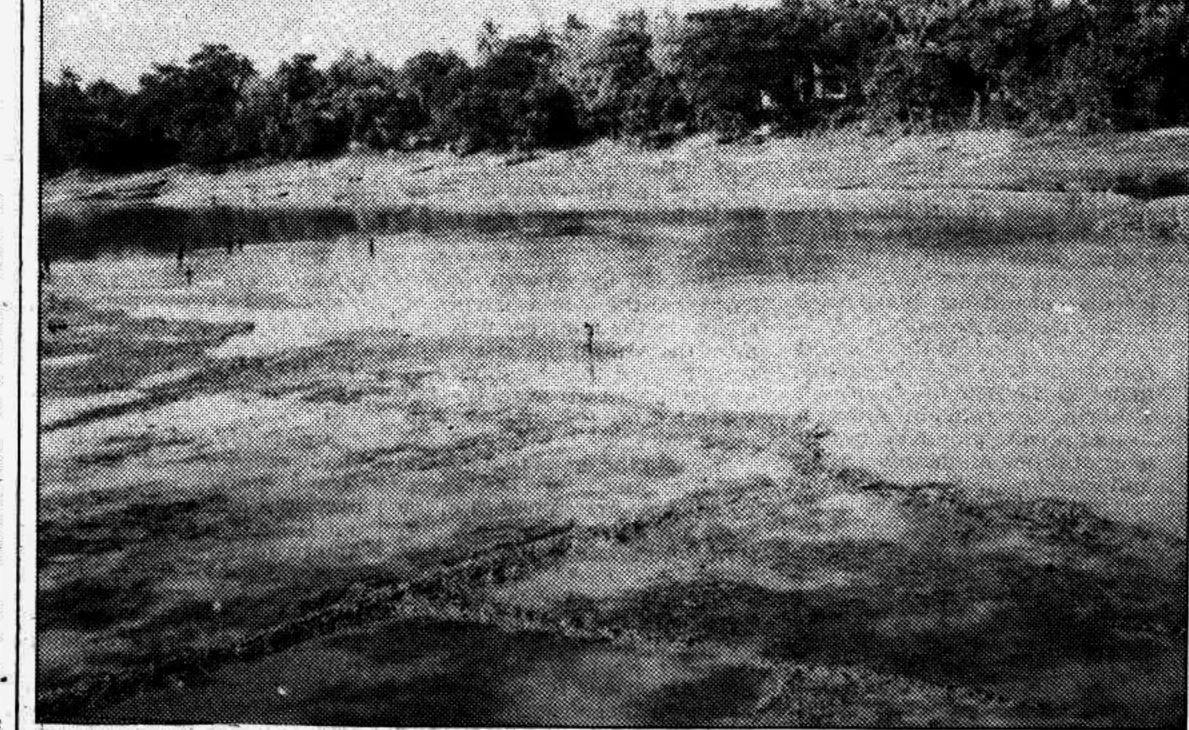
The river Gorai joined the hood.

river Madhumati at Kumarkhali in Kushtia district and Sailkupa in Jhenidah district. But for want of sufficient water in the Gorai, the Kumar has dried up, Small and big shoals have emerged in the river bed. It flows now like a canal.

Due to siltation of the rivers the life style of the people on both sides of all the rivers have almost changed. Some farmers who were mainly dependent on farming said that they have to face water crisis for processing jute. Moreover, they also suffer in the rainy season as the areas are submerged even after a slight rainfall due to siltation of rivers. Croplands on both sides of the rivers go under water in the rainy season as the depth of all the rivers decreased

severely. Dhananjoy Biswas, 52, a fisherman at village Jhaudia in Sailkupa thana said they have been passing their days in hardship due to water crisis. But fishing was the only source of their livelihood.

Hundreds of boatmen have also become jobless due to siltation in rivers, said Manahar Majhi ,45, of village Naopara in Sailkupa thana. He said many of them deprived them have no alternative to earn their livel-



JHENIDAH: Numerous shoals have emerged in the river bed of the Kumar. The picture was taken recently from Kabirpur in Sailkupa thana. - Star photo