

News snaps

Irrigation hampers farming

PANCHGARH, Jan 29: Cultivation of IRRI, Boro, wheat and other cash crops on at least 70,000 acres of land is being hampered during the current season due to non-operation of 946 deep tubewells in the district, reports APB.

Sources claimed that the water resources minister gave directives on October 4 for re-commissioning of the deep tubewells, but nothing has been done yet. Of the deep tubewells, 746, sunk by the Water Development Board, are inoperative either for technical fault or for non-payment of irrigation charges. WDB charges Tk 1,440 for irrigating one acre of land for one crop, which farmers say, is too much. Another 200, supplied by the Rural Electrification Board, are inoperative due to theft of transformers and metre boxes.

Drinking water supply scheme

HABIGANJ, Jan 29: Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has taken up a number of projects to ensure the availability of pure drinking water and improve sanitation in eight thanas of the district, reports UNB.

DPHE, under its GOB-4 project, will install 16 Tara pumps, 25 shallow tubewells and 32 sanitary latrines in the current fiscal at a cost of Tk 6.5 lakh, officials said. They said eight sanitary latrines would be installed in Sadar and Lakhai thanas costing Tk 52,800 while four each in Madhabpur, Chunarughat, Azmiganj, Baniachang, Nabiganj and Bahubal thanas, involving Tk 1.56 lakh. Besides, 15 shallow tubewells will be installed in Madhabpur thana at a cost of Tk one lakh while 10 Tara pumps and 10 tubewells in Chunarughat and six in Nabiganj thanas costing Tk 2.52 lakh and Tk 91,359 respectively.

Girl killed in road accident

NAOGAON, Jan 29: A girl was crushed under the wheels of a bus at Naohata-crossing in Mahadebpur thana on Monday, reports UNB.

Police said Arati Rani, 8, met the tragic end of her life as the Naogaon-bound bus ran over her while she was crossing the road. She died on the spot. Driver of the bus managed to escape the scene along with the vehicle. Angry people blocked the road for several hours after the accident.

Chinese silk yarn seized

RAJSHAHI, Jan 29: Police seized three-kg Chinese silk yarn after raiding the city's Motihar area on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said police raided Hariyan Rail Station and recovered the yarn worth of Tk five lakh. The yarn was kept to smuggle to India, they added.

Businessman rescued

MAGURA, Jan 29: Police rescued a businessman from Sreefaltala village in Sadar thana on Thursday, four days after his abduction, reports UNB.

Family sources said Shamsuddin Ahmed, 45, a businessman of Dhaka, was kidnapped on Sunday by a gang for a ransom of Tk 5 lakh after he came here to trace out his missing baby-taxi. Police said acting on a tip-off, they raided the house of one Ikram Ali and rescued Shamsuddin. A case was filed with police.

Agri-loans disbursed

SHERPUR, Jan 29: Agricultural loans amounting to Tk 5.4 crore have so far been disbursed in the district under the post-flood rehabilitation programme, official sources said, reports APB.

The loans have been disbursed by Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and four nationalised commercial banks. Besides, 453 metric tonnes of wheat have been allocated under the Test Relief programme for implementation of 221 projects in four thanas and one municipality. The projects include reconstruction of roads, re-excavation of canals and repair of educational institutions. The Roads and Highways Department has also allotted Tk 9,164,000 for repair of roads, bridge culverts.

Wheat farming programme

BHERAMARA, Jan 29: District agriculture extension department has taken up a programme to bring about fifty thousand hectares under wheat cultivation in six thanas of Kushitia district in the current season, reports BSS.

The thanas are Bheramara, Kushitia Sadar, Mirpur, Daulatpur, Khoksha and Kumarkhali. One lakh twenty thousand tonnes of wheat is expected to be produced by this cultivation. The authority concerned has already taken all steps to supply seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and loans among the farmers to make the programme a success.

Int'l workshop at KU

KHULNA, Jan 29: A two-day international workshop on "Research Methodologies on Mangrove Ecosystem," began here on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University (KU) Prof Dr S M Nazrul Islam inaugurated the workshop at the university academic building on January 27. Academicians and scientists of various universities, including Oxford, will present papers in the workshop. Hundreds of experts, educationists, researchers and officials from different government and non-government organisations and universities from home and abroad will participate in the workshop.

150 school teachers, staffers in misery

NARSINGDI, Jan 29: A mistake by a government office has led to holding off salaries of six non-government high schools in Belabo thana, leaving 150 teachers and employees in serious economic hardship, reports UNB.

The schools are South Dhuru High School, Patuli High School, Binnabadi High School, Kasimnagar High School and Chandipara Junior Girls' School. Teachers of the schools alleged that the disbursement of their regular salaries from the Monohordi branch of Sonali Bank had been put off as the Director of Secondary and Higher Education made a mistake in writing the name of the thana in its MPO. The teachers and employees of the schools urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to solve the problem and thus mitigate their sufferings.

Scarcity of fodder

KISHORGANJ, Jan 29: Acute scarcity of fodder in different thanas of the district has been causing serious problem to the farmers, reports UNB.

Farmers and local sources said the scarcity was created following the deluge last year as the floodwater engulfed vast areas damaging standing 'Aus' and 'Aman' paddies and other crops and they could not preserve hay, the main fodder. The flood also damaged many grazing fields in the district. The price of hay has gone up in the rural markets and 100 bundles of hay are being sold at Tk 130 to Tk 150, the farmers said. The vendors are also selling oil cake, bran, bean and pumpkin at higher prices making it almost impossible for the poor people in the villages to maintain their cattle.

Rice distributed

SHARIATPUR, Jan 29: A total of 40 metric tons of rice were distributed among 1,500 destitute families in two thanas of the district under VGF programme in last two months, reports UNB.

Officials said 25 tons of rice were distributed among 800 families in Ganigani and 15 tons among 700 families in Sadar thana. They said each of the families received 16 kg of rice through 20 centres of the district.

Annual Urs Sharif in B'baria

BRAHMANBARIA, Jan 29: The 34th annual Urs of Maulana Haji Mohammad Lal Shah Baba of village Bariura in Sarail thana will be held on January 31 at the Darbar Sharif, reports BSS.

Eminent ulemas and religious scholars will participate in the urs. Devotees have been requested to attend the function.

Wheat for uplift projects

COMILLA, Jan 29: The government has sanctioned 6,376 tonnes of wheat for implementation of 1,165 uplift projects in the district in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

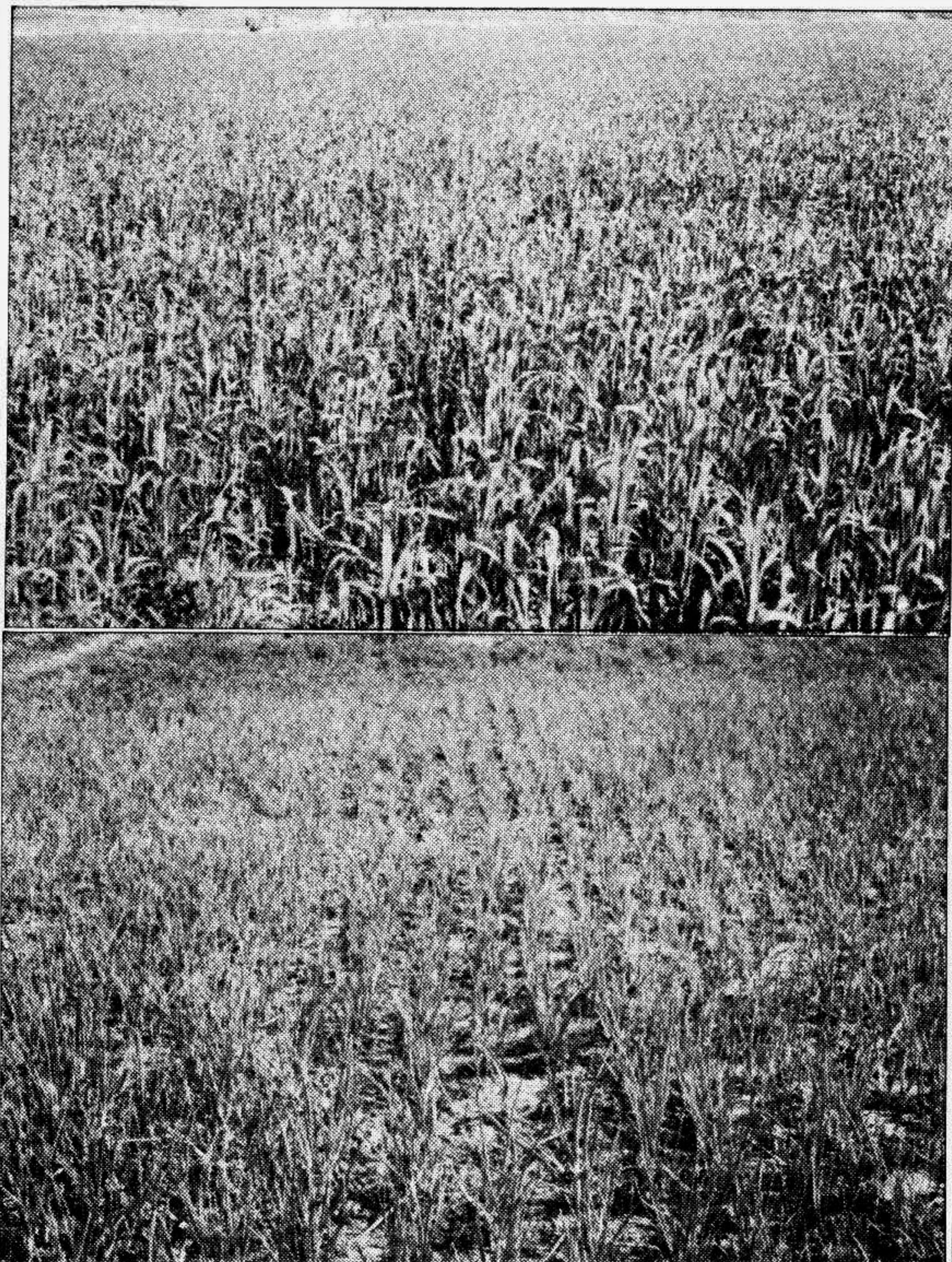
According to an official source, 4,800 tonnes of wheat has been sanctioned for 303 projects under Food for Works Programme and 1,576 tonnes of wheat for implementation of 862 projects under Test Relief Programme.

The projects include construction and reconstructions of roads earth filling, development of playground and education and religious institutions.

Contraceptive pills distributed

CHUADANGA, Jan 29: The Family Planning and Population Control Department has taken up a programme to distribute 50,494 contraceptive pills among fertile married women in the four thanas of the district in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the pills are being distributed free of cost. The thanawise break-up of distribution of pills is as follows: Chuadanga sadar 13,639 pills, Alamdanga 17,447 pills, Damurhuda 12,101 pills and Jibannagar 7,307 pills. More than 50 per cent pills have already been distributed among the poor eligible mothers.



JHENIDAH: A bumper production of wheat and onion is expected this season in the district. Photo shows (Top) a wheat field and (Bottom) an onion field at village Kabirpur in Saikupa thana. — Star photo

Road accidents claimed 28 lives in Faridpur last year

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Jan 29: A total of 28 persons were killed and 748 others injured in 21 road accidents in eight thanas of the district during the last year.

On February 1, Shahid Ali, 36, was killed in a bus accident at Nai Rashid in Sadarpur thana. On 26th of the same month Jasim Khan, 35, and Dilip Rishi, 20, were killed in a bus accident at Chaitor Kol in Sadarpur thana. Anil Shah, 40, was crushed under the wheels of a bus at Bhanga road crossing near Faridpur bus terminal on March 7.

Shamsur Rahman, 40, was killed at Shibarampur in Sadar thana when he was knocked down from behind by a speeding bus on April 14. Kamala Kundu, 60, wife of Sailesh Kundu was run over by a truck at Golechamot area in the town on May 12.

Nurjahan Salma and Janatul Ferdous, two students of a Kindergarten School, Shishu Niketan at the outskirts of the town were killed when the rickshaw van carrying them was dashed past by a speeding truck on May 28. Majibar Rahman, 30, a truck passenger was killed on the spot when the truck he was riding on fell into roadside ditch at Badarpur in the Sadar thana on July 2. On 6th of the same month, an unidentified person was killed in a bus accident at Shankerpasha bridge on Faridpur-Barisal highway. Three unidentified persons were killed in a bus accident at Laskerdia in Madhukhali thana on August 8. On the same day, Sumon, 7, son of Majibar Rahman was run over by a micro-bus at Golechamot area in the town. On 9th of the same month, Shahidul, 20, a labourer of a sugarcane carrying trolley was killed on the spot when the trolley collided head-on with a speeding truck at Ganganandapur in Alfadanga thana. One Ketabuddin Sheikh, 65, of village Masanandapur died when the rickshaw he was riding on was capsized. On the 24th of the same month, an unidentified bus passenger was killed at Keshabnagar in Nagarkanda thana when the bus met with an accident. Shikha Rani Biswas, 22, a student of Krishi College was run over by a micro-bus at Gangabardi in the sadar thana on October 10.

Erosion takes alarming turn in Patuakhali

PATUAKHALI, Jan 29: Erosion by rivers has assumed alarming proportions in the district, especially in Galachipia, Kalapara, Dashmina, Bauphal, Dumki, Mirzaganj and Sadar thana areas, reports APB.

About 3,000 families have lost all or part of their lands to the ravenous rivers, official sources and local people said.

The worst affected areas in Galachipia are Panpatty, Gormordon, Bibir Hawla, Tunjibaria, Katakhal, Felabunia, Taktabunia, Chalitabunia, Chenabunia, Charkazal and Char Mohiuddin.

In Dashmina thana, the biggest loss of lands took place in Changer Char, Pater Char, Bholiasingh, Hajirhat, Char Muni and Bashbaria.

The Agni Mukha river is causing extensive damage to the Panpatty embankment. The Andharmanik is eroding the Kalapara township and two villages in Nilganj Union. Four villages are gradually being devoured by the Ramnabad river. The Payra river is washing away vast areas in Pangasia, Aigi, Lebukhali and Dumki.

Vast areas in Mirzaganj, Sundra, Pipra Khali, Rampur and Deuli are also being eroded by Sreemonta and Payra rivers.

In Kurigram town

Over 100 acres of govt land illegally occupied

KURIGRAM, Jan 29: More than a 100 acres of government land is now under illegal occupation in the town, reports APB.

Most of illegal occupants, numbering about 100, belong to the Motor Malik Samity, Motor Sramik Union, Landless Society, Shopkeepers' Association and various clubs and organisations.

The occupied land is part of the 302.45 acres area acquired by the then government in '58-'59 for Kurigram New Town Project. The Public Works Department (PWD) was given the task of looking after the land.

PWD has long been trying to evict the illegal occupants. It recently gave them seven days' time to vacate the land, but they held a protest meeting in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office and demanded allocation of land elsewhere. The meeting was addressed by Municipality Chairman Kazul Islam and Ward Commissioner Nazrul Islam.

The occupiers while talking claimed that in 1976 a survey of the land was carried out by the municipal authorities, and by March of that year, they were allocated plots on a temporary basis and made to pay regular rent.

PWD sources, however, said that following and eviction order of the sub-divisional engineer, the shopkeepers had gone to the then Additional District and Sessions Judge on November 11, 1982, and signed a bond that they would vacate the land whenever asked by PWD.

In Natore schools
Alleged irregularities in distribution of text books

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Jan 29: Lakhs of primary students in the northern region of the country have not yet obtained text books free of cost due to mismanagement, irregularity and poor supply.

The free distribution work of the text books among the students of primary schools was started on January 3 last. But some 19 lakhs of primary students of the northern Bangladesh have not received free text books so far.

The distributed books are reportedly being sold at local markets. Besides, many school authorities are allegedly selling the text books to the local busi-

nessmen. The school authorities obtained some additional number of text books by showing false demand. It was also alleged.

There are at least 45 lakh 95 thousand 330 students in 9,262 government and 6,988 registered primary schools in 16 districts of this region this year.

For distributing free text books among the primary students of this region, one crore three lakh 94 thousand 538 text books were allocated against the demand of about 1.21 crore books.

According to official sources, 50,63,830 text books,

out of the total allocation, have been supplied so far to distribute among more than 45.95 lakh primary students of the northern districts. There is, however, possibility of more supply of books soon.

There are allegations of irregularities and mismanagement regarding distribution of the supplied books. The free text books are being sold at the libraries of Natore, Rajshahi, Pabna and Bogra. Many schools show the number of primary students more than the actual number and sell the additional books to the owners of the libraries.

Rly track mileage decreases by 145-km after liberation

PABNA, Jan 29: Railway track mileage instead of increasing after liberation, has actually decreased by 145-km, according to informed sources, reports APB.

This has happened in spite of the fact that train journey is much cheaper, safer and environmentally less harmful than in other forms of transport.

Two-thirds of the railway lines in Bangladesh were laid between 1862 and 1922. Bangladesh inherited 2858-km of tracks.

By 1984 the track mileage was, however, increased to 2891-km. But by 1996 it decreased by 166-km to 2725-km, the sources claimed.

Tough officials of the Bangladesh Railways claim that track mileage increased by 52-km after liberation, informed sources told that the mileage actually decreased by 145-km due to decommissioning of certain branch lines.

The mileage diminished at

the rate of 12-km per year in 12 years between 1984 and 1996.

A survey in the SAARC region found that the average cost of carrying a passenger a distance of 25-km is 35 paise per km by road, 31 paise by road and only 20 paise by rail. For a distance of 50-km the costs decrease to 26 paise per km by water, 29 paise by road and 15 paise by rail.

As distance increases the cost per km decreased. To carry a passenger a distance of 400-km, the cost per km is 19 paise by road and 11 paise by rail, the sources said.

The cost per km to carry 1 ton of cargo is Tk 5.24 by road, Tk 6.71 by water and only Tk 3.80 by rail. If the distance exceeds 50-km, the cost by rail decreases to Tk 3.49 per km.

UNB reports from Kishoreganj: Travelling without ticket in trains by a section of passengers is an alarming rise in the northern region depriving the government of a large amount of revenue.

The routes from where this malpractice was reported are: Bhairab-Mymensingh, Mymensingh-Dhaka via Bhirab Bazar-Mymensingh-Bahadurabad, Mymensingh-Mohanganj, Mymensingh-Jaganathganj and Mymensingh-Jariatjhangail.

"These dishonest people travel by trains without tickets on the routes everyday in collaboration with a section of Railway officials and employees, aggravating the sufferings of genuine passengers," said a passenger.

He said Travelling Ticket Examinees (TTE) were found unwilling to be serious in performing their duties in fear of harassment by the ticketless passengers.

Allegations are also there that ticket counters in railway stations are opened just before the arrival of trains, forcing many a passengers to travel without tickets.



NATORE: Some women collecting seedlings from seedbeds recently in Borovita village in the sadar thana. — Star photo

Prices of paddy seedlings falls
Production cost of 'Boro' farming comes down in Natore

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Jan 29: The prices of paddy seedlings have marked a fall throughout the district during the current 'Boro' season. The price fall will reduce the production cost of 'Boro' paddy this year.

According to some field supervisors of the local Agriculture Extension Department (AED), sufficient supply of 'Boro' seedlings from the local seedbeds this season have made the pricefall. Earlier, a favourable weather prevailed during this 'Boro' season which helped the local farmers prepare satisfactory seedbeds.

The seedbeds are now supplying abundant 'Boro' seedlings. The prices of 'Boro' seedlings this year have reduced by Taka 150 to Taka 250 per 'katha' of land comparing to that of the previous year. The biting cold of last year hindered the growth of 'Boro' seedlings raising the prices of seedlings up to Taka 600 per 'katha'. This year the cold is not much bitter. Abundant supply of seedlings from these seedbeds have kept the prices between Taka 250 and Taka 350 per 'katha' of

land. Growers said, nearly 12 or 15 'kathas' of land could be brought under 'Boro' cultivation with a 'katha' of seedlings during the last year. But this year the same quantity of seedlings would be sufficient for some three or four 'kathas' of land more, they said.

The agri-experts in the local AED said the growers of the district are being encouraged to cultivate 'Boro' paddy on their lands this season because of low price of seedlings. This has already lessened the production cost.

However, the AED here has fixed the 'Boro' cultivation target on about 51 thousand hectares of land in this district. The officials said more than 60 thousand hectares of land would be brought under 'Boro' cultivation this season.

Pourasabha polls
181 file nomination papers in Madaripur

MADARIPUR, Jan 29: A total of 181 candidates with their affiliation in both the ruling and opposition political parties submitted nomination papers for the elections in three pourasabhas in the district, reports BSS.

Of them 15 candidates filed nomination papers for the posts of chairman while 128 filed for the posts of commissioners and 38 women for the reserved women seats.

The candidates submitted nominations to the assistant returning officers in three thanas — Sadar, Kalkini and Shibchar without any hindrance.

District election office sources said, in Madaripur pourasabha, two candidates have filed their nomination papers for the post of chairman, while 46 candidates for the posts of commissioners and 16 candidates for the posts of reserved seats for women.

Six candidates have filed their nomination papers for the posts of chairman while 45 candidates for the posts of commissioners and 13 candidates for the posts of reserved seats for women in Kalkini pourasabha.

Seven candidates have filed their nomination papers for the posts of chairman while 37 candidates for the posts of commissioners and nine candidates for the reserved women seats in Shibchar pourasabha.

Son kills mother

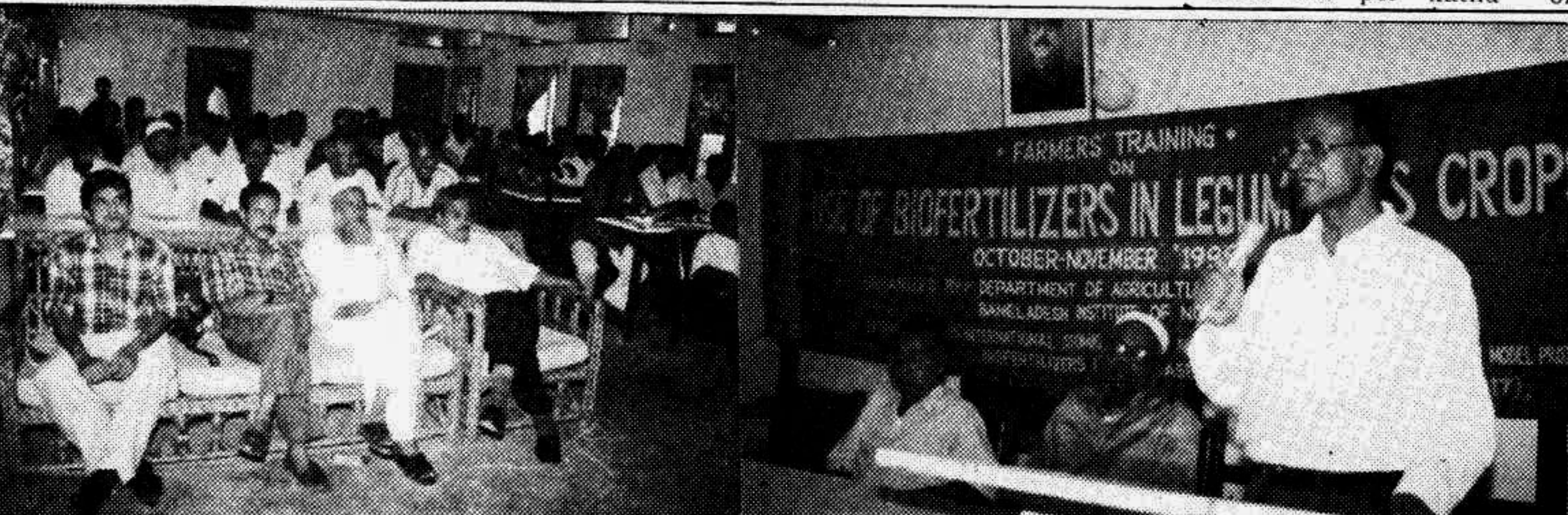
SATKHIRA, Jan 29: An old mother was allegedly killed by her son at Lashkarpara in Sadar thana on Tuesday morning reports BSS.

Police sources said, the old mother Zorina Khatun, 75, was killed by her son Ataur Rahman Popin on Eid day at Lashkarpara.

Popin demanded some money to his mother which she collected as fitra before Eid-ul-Fitr. When his mother Zorina denied to pay the money, Popin became angry and bit his mother with a stick mercilessly.

His mother was injured seriously and immediately taken to sadar hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

Police arrested Popin in this connection.



MYMENSINGH: Director General of Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) Dr M Idris Ali speaking at the inaugural function of the farmers' training course on 'Use of Biofertiliser in Leguminous Crops' which was jointly arranged recently by BINA and Agriculture Extension Department (AED). — Star photo