Piracies on Ctg-Dhaka highway rise FENI, Feb 6: Nowadays journey through Dhaka-Chittagong highway in the district becomes risky at night, giving a rise to

road piracies, reports UNB. According to police reports, at least 11 dacoities were committed on the busy highway here in last three months. Of the incidents, three each took place in October, November and December, 1998 while two in January this year on Feni bypass of the highway. In the swoops, the highwaymen looted valuables worth about Tk 50 lakh from bus passengers, leaving an unspecified number of people injured. The dacoits also looted valuables from a number of trucks on the bypass during the period. Local people accused the surveillance teams of two police checkposts at Mohipal and Muhuriganj of not taking adequate steps to check the growing trend of road piracies. When asked police said some transport workers were engaged in road dapolice said some transport workers were engaged in road dacoities and hijackings

Rapist UP member gets 10yr RI

NAOGAON, Feb 6: A former UP member was sentenced to 10 years Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) by a court here on Sunday in a rape case, reports UNB.

The court found Sultan Ali, 38, of Jagadishpur Union Parisad guilty of violating Josna Banu, wife of Osiruddin of Jagadishpur village in Badalgachhi thana, on July 22, 1989. Ali was also fined Tk 20,000, in default, to suffer one year more imprisonment, court sources said.

Drains construction project

MAGURA, Feb 6: Public Health and Engineering Department under its water supply programme has taken up a Tk 26.58 lakh project to construct drains in the town during the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Officials said construction works on the 2-km drain would begin in the current month and are expected to be completed by June this year. Meanwhile, Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) has sanctioned Tk two crore for pavement and carpeting of two roads in the district during the current fiscal. Local MP Adv Biren Sikder has recently inaugurated the construction works on the two roads - Singra-Alamkhali and Rajapur-Baharbagh

UP member arrested

SYLHET, Feb 6: Police arrested a local UP member from Nayapara in Zokiganj thana here on Friday in connection with a murder case, reports UNB. Police said they nabbed the man, identified as Chunnu Mia,

for his involvement in the murder of Manik Mia, a member of Ansar and VDP, on August 29, 1998. Mother of the victim filed the case with the police following the killing.

Training course for Ansars

SATKHIRA, Feb 6: A 28-day long basic training course for Ansar and VDP members began at old Satkhira Jamidarbari Ansar headquarters on Saturday, reports BSS.

The training course was inaugurated by the District Adjutant of Ansars. About one hundred Ansar and VDP members from seven thanas have been participating in the training course. The training will be concluded on February 26.

Rickshaw vans distributed

JHENIDAH, Feb 6: Rickshaw-vans were distributed to some rickshaw-pullers by the Islamic Foundation in a simple ceremony held in its office premises recently, reports APB.

Prof Md Anwarul Islam, Principal of Government Nurunnahar Women's College, who attended function as the chief guest, handed over the rickshaw-vans to the rickshaw-pullers. The vehicles were donated by the Zakat Board. The function was presided over by Meer Monjur Mahmud, DD of Jhenidah unit of Íslamic Foundation.

Over 250 schools beset with problems

SATKHIRA, Feb 6: More than 250 non-government schools in seven thanas here are beset with manifold problems hampering education of 20 lakh students, reports UNB.

Official sources said deplorable condition of school buildings, shortage of teachers, furniture and accommodation including absence of necessary fund are hindering the academic activities of these schools. Many schools are holding classes in the dilapidated buildings, which may collapse at any time. Fifty per cent of the school buildings are tin-sheds. Guardians urged the authority concerned to take immediate steps for improving the condition of non-government educational institutions to ensure proper educational facilities for the students.

Rampant lifting of irrigation pumps MAGURA, Feb 6: Local farmers have complained of large

scale stealing of irrigation numps from the field in Sreepur thana, reports UNB. Some leading pump owners said at least five pumps were

stolen in the current month from the Amalsar union of the thana. An organised gang of lifters become active at night when the pump owners go home after supplying water to the crop fields. Separate cases were filed with the thana, but the farmers said none of the pumps have so far been recovered and no lifter

Textbooks distributed

JHENIDAH, Feb 6: Textbooks for primary students of Jhenidah Sadar thana were distributed in a simple ceremony held at the Sadar thana TEO office recently, reports APB.

The books were distributed to 98 government and 86 nongovernment primary schools under the thana. The Sadar thana TEO handed over the books to primary school teachers in presence of ATEOs. This year about 50 per cent of the books distributed were old, and 50 per cent new, as per a government pol-

Valuables worth Tk one lakh looted

JESSORE, Feb 6: In a series of break-ins at a village in Avoynagar thana, armed bandits looted valuables worth about Tk one lakh from six houses early Monday, reports UNB.

According to a delayed report, armed ruffians stormed into the houses at Eyahia village at dead of night and made off with the booty, tying up the house inmates with rope. The house owners included Ramesh Biswas, Sushil Biswas and Dr Basudev Biswas. They filed separate cases with the local police.

Overbridge construction plan shelved KISHOREGANJ, Feb 6: A decision to construct an overbridge

at the west end of Bhairab Railway Station was taken in 1968 but the project could not be implemented in over 30 years for reasons unknown, reports UNB.

Locals said every day hundreds of people from Bhairab town, Kamalpur, Panchabati, Amlapara, Jagannathpur, Laxmipur have to cross 5-6 stationary trains risking their lives as there was no overbridge at the station. School going children were said to be the most vulnerable to mishaps. Railway sources said the plan to construct the overbridge had been shelved due to non-cooperation by a section of railway officials.

Rabi, Boro farming to exceed target PABNA, Feb 6: The cultivation target of Rabi crops including

Boro paddy and wheat is likely to exceed during the current season here, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said till Dec 21 Rabi crops on 44:735 hectares of land have already been cultivated in the district. AED has already taken up an extensive scheme of distributing the necessary seeds, fertilisers including cash among the affected farmers under its post-flood rehabilitation programme. Meanwhile, the decision was taken to cultivate Boro on 42,410 hectares, wheat on 48,221 hectares, potato on 2,200 hectares, sweet potato on 500 hectares and maize on 310 hectares. Besides, 33,170 hectares of land will be brought under cultivation of different varieties of pulses, 21,100 hectares under mustard seeds, 11,125 hectares under various spices, vegetables on 5,900 and sugarcane on 3,500 hectares.

Indian goods seized

COMILLA, Feb 6: BDR jawans in separate drives in frontier areas of the district seized Indian goods, including timbers,

worth over Tk 40 lakh in last one month, reports UNB. They also arrested a man on charge of smuggling. Officials said the BDR men arrested Basir Ahmad of village Azampur in Mirersharai thana with 585.15 cubic feet of Indian timbers worth about Tk 18.6 lakh from Raghupur area in Sadar thana recently. In another drive, a surveillance team of Amanganga BDR border checkpost seized a truck with 4,392 bottles of Indian horlicks, 25 kg of powder milk, 145 kg of cumin seeds worth Tk 20.97 lakh from Noapara area in Chowddagram thana. Besides, Indian sugar, saree, liquor, phensidyl, timber, cumin, turmeric, oil, medicine, spare parts worth about Tk one lakh were seized in different checkposts.

Acute scarcity of fodder

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 6: Acute scarcity of fodder in different thanas has been causing serious problem for 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. Flood also damaged many grazing fields. The pile of hey has gone up in the rural markets and 100 bundles of hay are being sold at Tk 130 to Tk 150 farmers said. Prices of oil cake, bran, bean and pumpkin have also gone up making it almost impossible for poor people in the villages to maintain their cattles. Many poor and marginal farmers could not buy fodder due to the price hike, said the sources adding that their cattles became bonny without supply of adequate daily intake.

Krishak Dal leader's mass contact programme

By Staff Correspondent Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal central leader and Brahmanbaria district unit convenor Takdir Hossain Mohammad Jashim conducted a 4-day hectic mass contact programme in Nabinagar thana from January

During the mass contact, the assistant general secretary of Krishak Dal also addressed a series of rallies, in which he urged the people to join in the current oust "subservient" government movement launched by BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, said a press re-

Jashim also attended three Islamic Jalshas at Kazimpur and Nazar Daulat villages, and Rasullhabad madrassah premises. Besides he exchanged views with people at Baish Mouzabazar, Nabinagar sadar and Bangurabazar.

He was accompanied by local BNP and its front organisations leaders Advocate M A Mannan, Jahangir Alam, Mohammad Shakil, Mohammad Helal, Jashimuddin and Nurul Amin Chunnu.

On Friday, Jashim attended a joint meeting of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote at thana BNP office. Local leaders at the meeting discussed about current movement and stressed the need for building a greater agitation against the government.

They expressed their deep concern over government's repression and oppression on opposition activists and urged the authorities concerned to stop all sorts of political harassment immediately.

Madhu Mela concludes in Jessore

JESSORE, Feb 6: A 5-day Madhu Mela concluded recently at poet Modhushudhan Dutta's village, Sagardari, to celebrate his 175th birth anniversary, reports APB.

A S H K Sadeque, Minister for Education, was the chief guest on the opening day. The opening session was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Abdul Malek Mia.

Discussions, poetry recitation, cultural function, drama and músical soiree were held every evening.

Noted intellectuals, educationists and literattures took part in the discussions on the life and works of Madhushudhan. They included Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University, Prof Hassan Azizul Huq of Rajshahi University, Dr Abul Ahsan of Islami University and S M Mohsin, Director of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Well-known singers like Ajit Roy, Shammi Akhtar and Akramul participated in the soirees along with local

Performers from Chander Hat Surobitan Sangeet Academy, Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, Bibartan, Tirjak, Uccharan, Jessore Shilpakala Academy, Manoj-Dhiraj Academy and Michael Sangeet Academy took part in the cultural functions and dramas.

In Khagrachhari 12 withdraw from pourasava polls race

KHAGRACHHARI, Feb 6: A total of 12 candidates, including three chairman contestants, withdrew from the race of coming pourasava election on Wednesday, the last date for withdrawal of candidature, reports UNB.

"Now five chairman and 44 commissioner candidates are now ready for the fray," said an officials.

Besides, 13 female candidates are contesting for the seats reserved for women as none withdrew from the race.

The chairman candidates who retreated from the race are Hazi Rafiquddin, Nirmalendu Chowdhury and Sathoa Marma while the Commissioner candidates are Abdul Gani, Mangshu Marma, Mohammad Ilias, Debsen Chakma, Sushit Kumar Dey Gaonmukul Chakma, Shubhashish Chakma, Abdus Slam and Rajab Ali.

Sitting chairman Mohammad Abul Kasem, Mohammad Zafarullah, Arun Udoy Chakma, Mo Kya Ching Chowdhury and Nirmol Das are now in the race for the post of chairman.

Birth anniversary of Jasimuddin

FARIDPUR, Feb 6: Different socio-cultural organisations and education institutions chalked out various programmes recently to mark the 96th birth anniversary of Palli Kavi Jasimuddin here, reports

BSS. Among the organisations were Ansaruddin High School, Jasim Uddin Gabeshana Parishad, Bahurupi Shahitya O Sangkiriti Sangstha, Faridpur Press Club and Faridpur district administration and Jasim

Foundation. The programmes included discussion meetings on the life and poetry of Jasimuddin, placing of wreaths at the grave of the poet at village Govindapur, two kilometres from here and cultural functions based on the works of Jasimuddin.



CHITTAGONG UNIVERSITY: Prof Abdul Manan, Vice Chancellor of the university handing over a check of Taka one lakh 50 thousand to Ali Akbur, father of Md Zainul Abadin, a third year honours student of Accounting Department who has been suffering from kidney disease. Prof Hasanuzzam Chowdhury, Dean of Social Science Faculty, Prof Khan Tawhid Osman, Proctor, Prof Mahabubul Haq Mojumdar Registrar Jakir Hossain, Assistant Prof of Law Department were also present. - Star photo by Offul Hasnat

21 killed in Faridpur last year

From Abdul Matin Fakir

from her father.

the rival faction.

FARIDPUR, Feb 6: The last year witnessed the highest record of murders during the last decade raising panic among

Twenty one persons were murdered in separate violences in six thanas last year.

It is learnt from police sources that one Babul Talukder, 25, of village Manikdi in Nagarkanda thana was killed in a bloody violence between two rival groups over irrigating an IRRI block on January 4, 1998.

In another incident Baka Munshi, 42, and Hinu Mia, 39, of village Rayerkandi in Nagarkanda thana were killed in a clash between two rival groups on February 3.

On February 6, Nur Mohammad, 40. a model technician of Faridpur River Research Institute (FRRI) in the town was murdered by some miscreants and later on his body was found floating in the river Kumar. Kaiyum Sheikh, 25, of vil-

lage Chandidashdi in Nagarkanda thana was beaten to death over a trifling matter on March 13. Saleha Khatun, 25. mother of two children was beaten to death by her husband Jahangir Fakir, 35, of village Char Madanpur in Ambikapur union in sadar thana on April 12. It is learnt that the murder

was committed when the victim in Char Bisnapur union in Sadarpur thana. On October 10, failed to fetch dowry money a youth named Babu, 22, was killed in a gun battle lasting for In another incident, Nazma two hours between two rival Begum, 35, was murdered near groups in day light in Alipur the railway track at Keshabpur area of the town. The battle was in Gerda union of sadar thana. a sequel to the long standing On July 8, Haidar Sheikh, 35, of village Yusufdia in enmity and blood-shed. On the Bhawal union of Nagarkanda night of October 22. Raisuddin thana was killed by his cousin. Farazi, 35, a labourer of a bak-On the night of July 24, Abery at Malanga in Kanaipur dul Mannan, 35, of village Apaunion in sadar thana was murnia in Dhewkhali union of dered. On October 25, Barek Molla, 55, Chairman of Sadarpur thana was found killed in his bed-room. On Au-Kanapir union parishad in sadar thana was chopped to gust 13, Shahida, 18, wife of Abdeath in presence of hundreds dul Aziz of village Gunbahar in of peole at Faridpur court com-Boalmari thana was slaugh-

pound during court hours by tered to death allegedly by her some known niscreants. On husband. On September 18, Bashir Mia, 25, was murdered November 5, the dead body of an unidentified youth with several at the house of his father-inlaw at Dighalbana in Alfadanga bullet injuries was recovered thana. On September 27, from a place called Naoga in Bhanga thana. On Novemeber 7 Biswanath Ghose, 37, a Jubo Monzila Begum, 28, was beat-League activist, of East Khabashpur in the town was ento death by her husband shot dead by some activists of Jasim Hossain of village Hatkhola in Boalmari thana On October 6, Kuddus centring a family feud. Sheikh, 29, son of Sokel On December 21, Motaleb Sheikh of village Decreer Char

Matabbar, 40, of village Kapurpara in Bhanga thana was killed by his neighbours over a poultry birds.

Sadarpur thana succumbed to injuries by his rival group. On brawl from crop damage by the 9th of the same month. Asma Begum, 20, was kicked to Separate murder cases were death by her husband. Sobhan lodged with the respective Sheikh of village Jariperdangi thanas of the district.

Growers expecting bumper output of mango this year mango researchers.

in Bhasan Char union in

NATORE, Feb 6: It's now a place for poet, for nature lovers and others as spring, the Falgoon in Bengali calendar, gives a new dimension to the nature of some northern districts, reports UNB.

Natore, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts have now assumed a panoramic view with fragrance and colour of mango groves with the advent of the spring. The nascent buds of mangoes

are being frequently visited by the humming bees and butterflies giving an inspiration to the nature lovers and poets. The owners of mango gar-

dens are getting themselves prepared including possible precautions for the timely flow-

This year, growers are expecting bumper production of mango as the year has been termed as the "On Year" by the

As per the yielding nature of the mango trees, bumper production occurs every alternative year and the last year was "Off Year" with a poor yield. A source in Mango Research

Institute at Chapainawabgani said the condition of budding of mango trees in this region is really inspiring. More than 80 per cent of the trees have already their budding

within the month of January while the rest 20 per cent will sprout within this month. Last year, the mango production was very poor due to un-

favourable climate. Only 60,000 to 70,000 metric tons of mangoes were produced in Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Natore and Naogaon districts, said a senior official of MRI. The prospect of mango pro-

duction is far better this year than the previous years, said

the official adding if buds are not disturbed by seasonal hailstorms, storms, dense fog, the green mangoes will have smooth growth and the pest attack will be minimum. About 40 per cent of the total

mango production of the country are produced in Chapainawabganj and 25 per cent in Natore, Rajshahi and Naogaon districts while 35 per cent produces in other parts.

About 225 kinds of mangoes have so far been detected in Rajshahi region, sources in MRI informed this correspondent. A mango researcher said

most of the brick kilns of these districts are beside the mango gardens. The smokes from the kilns cause various kinds of diseases of mangoes. He called for necessary measures to save the mango gardens from such adverse effect.

Bus journey has become hazardous in Netrakona

From Habibur Rahman

NETRAKONA, Feb 6: Bus journey along five routes in the district has become perilous and uncomfortable due to deplorable condition of plying buses and pitiable condition of

The downstream areas of the district were backward in communication with only 60 km railway line from Mymensingh to Mohongonj. The main means of communication between the district headquarters and other thana headquarters were the river routes.

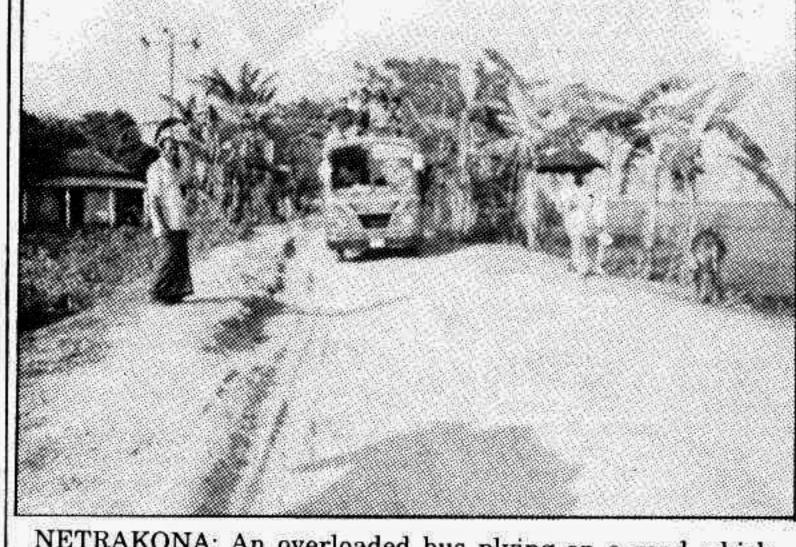
The bus service has started along five routes after the upgradation of Netakona into a district. The five routes are Netrakona-Madan, Netrokona-Mohangonj, Netrakona-Netrakona-Kendua. Kalmakanda and Netrakona to Durgapur via Joria.

The roads for bus services are substitutes for river routes which shrank with the silting ter. Those are needed to be filled by earth the next time.

Bus service along the routes though scheduled for the whole year remains operative only for a few months in the dry season. Old and worn out buses with faulty brake, gear and steering are plying on the roads much to the sufferings of passengers who have no other alternative means of journey expect small launches and engine driven boats. Its services remain operative only for two to three

months. Meanwhile, most of the buses are ramshackle with haphazard seating arrange-ment. Water trickles down the windows and roofs of these buses during the rainy season. The reconditioned engines of the buses very often go out of order and the passengers have to wait on way for hours toegther till the engines are set

Besides, the buses remain



NETRAKONA: An overloaded bus plying on a road which is in bad shape along Netrakona-Kalmakanda route.

up of rivers. The roads were constructed in an unplanned way with some bridges and culverts, that are not fit for heavy vehicles.

Most parts of these routes are kutcha, but the remaining parts are brick soled and not bituminized. The roads running through marshy lands have not been raised high enough to remain safe from water caused by flood and heavy downpour. The roads are exposed to flood waovercrowded with pssengers frequently. The drivers stop buses everywhere according to their will and pick up passengers. As a result, journey by buses has become very risky.

The bus pasengers are in great trouble when the buses cross diversion points which have been created by washing away of some portion of roads by rain or flood waters. The roads have become

death traps for passengers.



MAGURA: Acute scarcity of straw has been prevailing here following last year's devastating floods. Straw is used as fodder and house building materials by most villagers. - Star photo

Tk 2 cr power bills lying outstanding in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Feb 6: Electricity bills amounting to about Tk two crore are lying outstanding with both the private and public sector subscribers in Bhairab, reports APB.

A total of Tk 1.5 crore bills is outstanding with commercial consumers and the rest is with domestic consumers including religious institutions, PDB sources said.

The local office of the Power Development Board (PDB), in a desperate bid to realise these outstanding bills, has started lodging cases against the de-

Warrants of arrest have been issued against 150 defaulters and six of them have been arrested. But some subscribers alleged

that comparatively smaller defaulters are being harassed because the bigger ones can not be "touched". Some domestic consumers complained that they were not

served with any prior notice.

Much to their surprise, PDB

men, accompanied by policemen, appeared at their doorsteps with warrants of ar-There are nearly 2,000 commercial and 5,000 domestic consumers in Bhairab, an im-

portant business centre of the -country. Allegations also have it that a large scale pilferage of elec-

tricity has also been going on in Bhairab area.

In Sherpur 25 govt deptts do not have own office bldgs

SHERPUR, Feb 6: Some 25 government departments operating in the district town do not have their own office buildings, reports APB.

Many of the departments are dispersed widely, with sections in different areas of the town, making it difficult for people to locate.

Since these offices do not have their own buildings, the government has been spending lakhs of taka as house rent every month.

Offices of the District Controller of Food, District Cooperative Officer, District Registrar, District Family Planning Deputy Director, District Narcotics Control Directorate, Customs and Excise, District Social Welfare Department, District Secondary Education Department, BADC (Irrigation), Sonali Bank Regional Branch, Krishi Bank and the like are in rented

Besides, many of these offices are shifted from one building to another frequently. Although Sherpur was up-

ago, no accommodation for offices have been built over the Local people alleged that

since these offices are widely dispersed, higher authorities can not always keep track of the progress of work at different sections.

Making fortune out of 'magic plant root'!

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, Feb 6: Many patients are being cheated for the last one year by one Fazar Ali of village Horoddah in sadar thana in the name of "plant

Ali is cheating people by applying "plant root" for treating different diseases like cancern, heart diseases, paralysis and asthma. The cheating practise has been going by him on at random.

Fazar Ali, who is a notorious smuggler announced that his 11-year-old daughter Nilufar Parvin, came to learn about "plantroots" through dream. By its application all kinds of diseases are cured. He had already engaged a good number of brokers to make a good publicity. Following this publicity people from all areas of the country have been rushing frantically to the hut of Fazar Ali alias

It is to be mentioned, the location of Fazar Ali's house is only 200 yards away from the zeroline of India and Bangladesh. So hundreds of Indian nationals are also crossing the border illegally for receiving 'plantroot'. Besides. hundreds of reserved buses full

Nilufar and her father have been distributing "plantroots" to the pateints or their guardians free of cost. The patients, however, are donating money as they like. Brokers of Fazar Ali, however, managed to collect a good amount of money from the patients with a plea that due to great rush, people would get the 'root' at later dates. At this announcement patients both male and female paid a huge money in exchange of prompt receiving of 'plantroot'



SATKHIRA: Nilufar Parvin distributing 'plant roots' to the patients. - Star photo

of patients are also plying every day. The buses are coming from different districts of Kushtia, Meherpur, Chaundanga, Jessore, Khulna, Bagerhat, Narail, Jhenidah, Magura, Pirojpur, Barisal, Jhalokati, Pubna and Rajshahi. They are crossing Satkhira town at dead of night. The buses are creating jams at the point of Bhomra Land port. It is also alleged that the visitors have to stopover at Fazar's house. Several women were also raped during night haltage The entire environment has already been polluted. The local union parishad

chariman has announced that no night haltage of visitor women will be allowed. But yet Fazar and his men are not following the chairman's advice. Local people also alleged that people are also going to India illegally. During the last one year three persons includ-

ing two unknown women were killed here. Brokers of Fazar Ali are involved with these killing incidents, local people alleged People of the area have already complained that the 'plantroot" is not at all fruitful in curing diseases. They have now realised that have been

cheated. Locals said Fazar Ali

is collecting roots of diferent

plants like coconut, mango, date tree and jackfruit at a cost of Taka 50 per kg and these roots are being distributed among the pattents. In the meantime, Fazar Ali who was landless poor man and a professional smuggler has become a rich man after this cheating practise. His hut has already been turned into a beau-

structed a godown.

graded to district some 14 years

houses.

tiful building. He bought a vast tract of paddy land and con-