

## News snaps

### 21 arrested on various charges

RANGAMATI, Feb 10: Rangamati police in a special raid have arrested 27 persons on various charges between January 31 and February 5, reports BSS.

Police also have recovered 12 light weapons from Garzantali area and have raided three country wine making factories in Vedvedi area. In another incident, police arrested an alleged extortionist from Banarupa area on Saturday. According to police source, the raids were conducted to free the area from the clutch of the anti social elements.

### Leprosy campaign in Jhalakati

JHALAKATI, Feb 10: A six-day leprosy eradication campaign began in four thanas of the district on Saturday, reports APB.

Launched under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare the campaign aims at creating awareness about the dreadful disease among the people. The programmes of the campaign include poster, miking, distribution of leaflets, orientation meetings in educational and religious institutions to disseminate information about the disease. Identifying of leprosy patients is also part of the campaign.

### Workshop on children reporting

COMILLA, Feb 10: A five-day long training and workshop on women and children reporting concluded on February 4 at the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) here, reports BSS.

Sponsored by the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), the workshop was participated by 20 journalists from Comilla and Brahmanbaria districts. Bazlur Rahman, acting Editor of The Daily Sangbad distributed certificates among the participants at the concluding function as the chief guest.

### Sweetmeat sellers evading VAT

SHRIATPUR, Feb 10: A number of sweetmeat sellers here in the town have reportedly been evading value added tax (VAT) for quite a long time, reports UNB.

There are over 200 sweetmeat shops in the town which sell on an average 125 to 130 maunds of sweetmeat every day. Local people said most of the shop owners do not feel the necessity of giving cash-memos to the customers to evade VAT. They further alleged that the shop owners are engaged in the malpractice in collaboration with a section of dishonest tax officials.

### Youth commits suicide

SHARIATPUR, Feb 10: Apparently failing to marry his beloved, a young man of Pora Kidaria in Naria thana here allegedly committed suicide at his residence on Monday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Shahidul Islam, 23, son of Abdul Munim Khan. Family sources said Shahidul had an affair with a class IX student of NIT school of the same area, but the girl's father fixed her marriage elsewhere. Hearing the news, Shahidul allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself, the sources added.

### Training for jobless youths

MAGURA, Feb 10: The Youth Development Directorate of the district had disbursed Tk 73 lakh to 858 unemployed youths to provide them with the means of livelihood, reports APB.

Sources in the department said that the money had been distributed for projects like poultry and cattle farming, fish culture, nurseries, tailoring, production of handicrafts and so on. The department is also training 4,089 young men and women in different professions to make them self supporting.

### Shurobhitto Bagerhat formed

BAGERHAT, Feb 10: An organisation called 'Shurobhitto Bagerhat' has been formed here to undertake literacy drives with a view to eradicating illiteracy from the district, reports APB.

Lists of 2.3 lakh men and women in the age group of 11-45 years of nine thanas and two municipalities have been prepared to bring them under the drive. As many as 6,767 centres have been set up for the purpose. One teacher in each of these centres will impart education to the participants for two hours a day. The programme, under the auspices of the Primary and Mass Education Department, is being implemented by various non-government organisations (NGOs) since 1993.

### 10 arrested from Sylhet

SYLHET, Feb 10: Police arrested 10 people including three fugitive convicts, from three thanas of the district last week, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested two people — Abul Kalam and Jasim Uddin — from Sardarmati village in Kanaighat thana on the night of February 1. The two, accused in a theft case, had escaped from police custody with handcuffs 17 months back, police said. On the same night, police nabbed Helaluddin of village Bani on charge of stealing. On secret information on the same night, police raided a house in Bani-bazar thana and picked up three fugitive convicts — Churnu Mia, Kanu Mia and Abdul Aziz Bashed. In Companyganj thana, 10 calls caught four cow-lifters red-handed at Kalasadek village on January 31. Later, the alleged thieves — Alauddin, Moinuddin, Farid Mia and Mongai — were handed over to the police.

### Rat killing campaign in C'nawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 10: A month-long rat killing campaign began in all the upazillas of the district this week, reports BSS.

A rally of the cross section of the people including farmers, NGO activists, social workers and staff of the agriculture department was held in the premises of the district Agriculture Extension Department. Harun-ur Rashid MP attended the rally as the chief guest and inaugurated the rat killing campaign. Ataur Rahman, Chapainawabganj Paurashava spoke on the occasion as the special guest.

### Construction work of roads begins

JESSORE, Feb 10: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has started reconstruction of 19 rural roads in the district, reports BSS.

The approximate cost of the work will be Tk one crore eighty lakh. According to the Executive Engineer of LGED, Jessore, the government is relentlessly working for rural development. The LGED has taken up the reconstruction of 19 roads out of the total damaged rural roads on the basis of preference. Fifty-four per cent of the total work has already been completed.

### Shortage of magistrates

RANGPUR, Feb 10: Judicial activities here have been delaying due to shortage of adequate magistrates, reports UNB.

A total of 7210 cases are lying pending in different courts here causing untold sufferings to the litigants. Of the total cases, 3,729 are lying pending for disposal in trial courts and the rest 3,481 are in the cognate courts. Official sources said seven magistrates — three first class and four second class — are now functioning in different courts in addition to their administrative duties. Immediate posting of at least 10 magistrates can expedite the disposal of pending cases mitigating sufferings of the litigants.

### Facilities Deptt schemes progressing

CHUADANGA, Feb 10: The implementation of two schemes by the Facilities Department in Chuadanga sadar thana at a total cost of Taka one crore twenty lakhs and seventy thousand is progressing satisfactorily, reports BSS.

The ongoing schemes include construction of a three storied academic building at Chuadanga Government College at a cost of Taka 54 lakh 20 thousand and construction of a 50-bed three storied students hostel at Chuadanga Government Girls College. According to an official source, about 50 per cent work of the schemes have been completed and the rest is expected to be completed by June next.

### Loans disbursed among farmers

PIROJPUR, Feb 10: Four nationalised commercial banks have disbursed Tk 8.70 crore loans out of targeted Tk 18.90 crore among farmers in the district so far during the current financial year, reports APB.

As per the target, Bangladesh Krishi Bank will disburse Tk 14.58 crore, Sonali Bank Tk 2.71 crore, Agrani Bank Tk 90.68 lakh and Janata Bank Tk 79.75 lakh, sources in the banks said. The loans are being given for cropping, buying agricultural and irrigation instruments, dairy and poultry farms, pisciculture and marketing of agricultural goods. The banks also recovered Tk 4.5 crore during the period.

### Tk 390.33 cr railroad renovation project

KUSHTIA, Feb 10: A Tk 390.33 crore project to renovate railroads in western region of the country has got underway, reports UNB.

Officials said 157-km railroads on Khulna-Ishwardi route, 82.50-km on Santahar-Banarpara, 15.75-km on Kania-Lala-minirhat, 87-km on Poradaha-Gaolonda, 41-km on Rajshahi-Abdulpur and 15-km on Parbatipur-Syedpur routes will be renovated under the project. The renovation works include replacing wooden slipper with steel ones, refitting new nuts and bolts, earth filling, spreading pebbles. Meanwhile, a 35-km track in Khulna-Ishwardi section has been renovated with 50,000 new sleepers and a tender has been invited for supply of one lakh steel sleepers.



JHENIDAH: Books were distributed free of cost recently among the students of Islamic University (IU) School. Photo shows Prof Mohammad Kayesuddin, Vice-Chancellor of IU, Prof Ashraf Ali and Prof Mahtabuddin speaking at the book distribution ceremony. — Star photo

## Tough contest likely in pourasabha elections in Moulvibazar

From Rajat Kanti Goswami

MOULVIBAZAR, Feb 10: Campaign for the three pourasabhas here have been gaining momentum.

All the candidates have become busy in trying to draw sympathy of the general voters. They have been arranging tea parties at their respective residences and elsewhere in the towns. Most of the candidates have been visiting their areas for mobilising support of the voters.

In this district there are three pourasabhas. These are Moulvibazar, Srimongal and Kulaura. Kulaura is a new pourasava where election will be held for the first time. Moulvibazar is a century old pourasava while Srimongal pourasava was established during the Pakistan period.

According to the Return Officer's office, a total of 15 candidates have been contesting for the post of chairman in three pourasabhas. Of them five candidates have been contesting in Moulvibazar Pourasava, six candidates in Srimongal Pourasaba and four in Kulaura Pourasaba.

In Moulvibazar pourasabha, the candidates for chairman are Syed Mohsin Ali (Awami League), Mahmudur Rahman (Independent), Motiur Rahman Moshik (JSD), Monwar Ali Chowdhury (Gonotontri Party) and Shahbuddin Ahmed (Independent).

Syed Mohsin Ali, who is the district commissioner president of Awami League was elected chairman for the last three times. Now he is contesting again. In his campaign, he is being identified as AL nominee. As a chairman for the last 15 years, he is still popular among a section of general voters.

Another powerful chairman

candidate Mahmudur Rahman has no political identity though his elder brother former MP Azizur Rahman is the central joint secretary of Awami League. As he is the brother of the AL central leader, a large number of local AL leaders and workers have extended their support to Mahmudur Rahman who is known as Mr Clean. He may attract the support from other anti-AL leaders.

Motiur Rahman Moshik is a top ranking leader of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) here. He was also an elected commissioner of the pourasabha. Now he is contesting for chairmanship.

Shahbuddin Ahmed is known in the town as a cultural worker. He is an artiste here. His father late M A Rashid was the Chairman of Moulvibazar Pourasabha.

Monwar Ali Chowdhury, another chairman candidate is the leader of Gonotontri Party led by Peer Habibur Rahman. This party have no base in this district.

According to observers of the pourasava election here, a neck to neck fight may take place for the post of chairman in Moulvibazar Pourasava between Mahmudur Rahman and Syed Mohsin Ali.

However, a total of 40 candidates are contesting for nine posts of commissioners. Of them seven in Ward No-1, five in Ward No-2, eight in Ward No-3, two in Ward No-4, four in Ward No-5, three in Ward No-6, five in Ward No-7, five in Ward No-8 and one in Ward No-9.

In the meantime, Commissioner Candidates Masud Ahmed have been elected commissioner uncontested from Ward No-9 as there was no contestant in this ward.

Besides this, 16 candidates have been contesting for the three posts for women reserve seats of commissioner. Of them six candidates are in Seat No-1, four in Seat No-2 and six in Seat No-3.

In Srimongal Pourasabha, the chairman candidates are Mohsin Miah Modhu (BNP), Ismail Hussain (AL), M A Mosabbir (BNP), Monsur Bakht Chowdhury (JSD), Abdul Malik (Independent) and Arphan Miah (Independent).

Mohsin Miah Modhu, was elected chairman in 1993. After elected chairman, he joined BNP from BAKSAL. After joining BNP, he made convener of Srimongal thana committee of BNP. This year Mohsin Miah Modhu resigned from BNP to contest the pourasabha election as BNP has been boycotting this election. He is being treated as a strong candidate.

Ismail Hussain is the General Secretary of Srimongal thana Awami League. He was also elected chairman of the then Srimongal Upozila Parishad.

According to voters, though there are six chairman candidates in the election race, Mohsin Miah Modhu and Ismail Hussain are two main contestants.

However, a total of 42 candidates have been contesting for the seats of commissioners. Of them four candidates are in Ward No-1, five in Ward No-2, four in Ward No-3, five each in Ward No-4, 5 and 6, four in Ward No-7, six in Ward No-8 and five candidates in Ward No-9.

Besides this, 10 candidates have been contesting for three posts of women's reserve seats of commissioners. Of the three candidates each in Seat No-1

and three and four in Seat No-2.

In Kulaura Pourasabha, election will be held for the first time. The chairman candidates are M A Malek (AL), Syed Jamal Uddin (Independent), Gias Uddin Ahmed (JSD) and Niamul Islam (Independent).

M A Malik is the President of Kulaura thana Awami League. He has popularity among a section of voters.

Another powerful candidates Syed Jamal Uddin is the President of Kulaura Businessmen's Association. As a business leader and social worker he has also popularity in the pourasabha area.

Gias Uddin Ahmed, is a senior leader of JSD. He was associated with JSD politics from its very beginning. So he is a well known political leader in the area.

A triangular fight may take place for the post of chairman of Kulaura Pourasabha among Syed Jamal Uddin, M A Malek and Giasuddin Ahmed.

However, a total of 38 candidates are contesting for nine seats of commissioners. Of them five candidates are in Ward No-1, four in Ward No-2, three each in Ward No-3 and 4, two in Ward No-5 and six candidates each in Ward No-6 and 8.

Besides this, eight candidates have been contesting for three posts of women's reserve seats of commissioners. Of them, two candidates are in Seat No-1 and three each in Seat No-2 and 3.

It may be mentioned here that election of Moulvibazar Pourasabha will be held on February 23 and election of Srimongal and Kulaura will be held on February 25.

### Prices of fertilisers up in Kushia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Feb 10: Prices of chemical fertilisers have shot up in all the markets here.

Farmers said some dishonest traders have created the artificial crisis to earn windfall profit.

The flood-hit farmers in the shoal areas are buying a 50kg bag of urea between Tk 320 and Tk 350 as against the normal rate of Tk 240 to Tk 250.

Farmers in Sadar, Kumarkhali, Bheramara, Mirpur, Daulatpur and Khoksa thanas complained that they were not getting any TSP fertiliser in the market for more than a month. They could not use it in their potato fields.

Most of the fertiliser traders are selling banned Indian SSP fertiliser to farmers at an exorbitant price. The SSP fertilisers are less effective than TSP.

Most dealers are selling fertilisers of their quotas in the mill gate instead of lifting it for farmers. Dealers with the help of dishonest officials of the concerned department are also hoarding fertilisers creating an artificial crisis. Local farmers urged the government to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers at fair prices and called for stringent action against the persons responsible for creating artificial scarcity.

### Passengers suffer as engine of ferry inoperative

SYLHET, Feb 10: Passengers on Sylhet-Companiganj road have been suffering seriously due to problems of ferry service at two points, reports UNB.

The engine of the ferry at Chengerkhal remained out of order for long due to negligence of the concerned officials and employees.

On the other hand, there is to engine in a ferry operating at Kalakhal and the men working at the ghat use to ply the ferry by dragging it with the help of a rope.

Some passengers said their sufferings know no bound due to these problems. They said they have to spend a lot of time at the ferry ghats.

Local people urged the authorities to take immediate measures to solve the problems without further delay.

### Elected unopposed

SHERPUR, Feb 10: A female candidate was elected unopposed as commissioner of ward number-2 in the upcoming election of the newly set up Nalitabari Pourasava here, reports UNB.

According to district election office sources, Anwara Begum was elected Ward commissioner unofficially from the reserved seat as her lone opponent candidate Chhammarin Begum withdrew her candidature on February 3.

## Work on voters' ID Card Project in Kurigram stopped

KURIGRAM, Feb 10: Work on Voters' Identity (ID) card project is stopped in the district for long due to a legal battle between two contractors following alleged irregularities in issuing work order, reports APB.

The number of voters in the district is about 8.97 lakh now, but only 3.5 lakh ID cards have been prepared, out of which 2.59 lakh have so far been distributed. Election Commission sources said.

EC gave the responsibility of preparing 847,027 ID cards in nine thanas to one Data System International Ltd on September 9, 1995. The company signed an agreement with the district administration and started work.

Their work, however, stumbled into political instability, featured by hartals, siege and the like. EC also could not supply relevant papers. As a result, the company could not complete the work within the stipulated time of June 30, 1996.

Later, on August 4, 1996, the then Deputy Commissioner of Kurigram, revised the work order and assigned one North America Computer Data Incorporated the task of preparing 448,565 ID cards and distributing those among voters in Chilmari, Nageswari, Bhurangamari, Ulipur and Rajpur thanas.

On August 29, the Additional Project Director of the Voters'

ID project in an official order asked the Deputy Commissioner not to assign any other firm.

Following this, the Data System filed a case. Both the firms now demand that they are valid contractors for the job.

Meantime, the Additional Project Director and the Assistant Director of the project conducted an investigation in Rourmari thana where cards were distributed.

Irregularities were detected and the team has already submitted its report to the EC.

### Discussion about poura poll

TANGAIL, Feb 10: District administration held a meeting on Monday at local Bhasani Hall to discuss about coming pourashava election, reports BSS.

Political leaders, district level officials, journalists and elite attended the meeting.

Abdus Sattar Khan, Deputy Commissioner presided over the meeting.

The meeting stressed the need for peaceful atmosphere during the pourashava election.

The meeting also urged all concerned to work for the successful holding of the election.

## CHT's Sericulture Project remains suspended

RANGAMATI, Feb 10: The activities of Chittagong Hill Tract's Sericulture Project remain suspended for the last eight months due to lack of approval of the ministry concerned, reports UNB.

Officials here said the project is now facing setback as the newly established Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs Ministry making unnecessary delay in approving the enhancement of the duration of the project proposed by the Textiles Ministry.

Textiles Ministry had undertaken the three-year long sericulture project at a cost of Tk 3.48 crore during the fiscal 1994-95.

Accordingly, Bangladesh Sericulture Board appointed 12 employees besides appointment of other officials.

The board also involved 7,500 people with sericulture project and planted over 11 lakh mulberry plants in the three hill districts — Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

After successful completion of the first three-year term, the project was extended for another year upto July 1998, officials said.

During the period, some 17,000 kilograms cocoon were also produced.

After expiry of the project time, the Board proposed one

year's further extension and the Textiles Ministry and Planning Ministry also approved the proposal, the officials said.

The Textiles Ministry also sanctioned Tk 1.25 crore for continuation of the project, they said.

But the CHT Affairs Ministry is yet to make a final approval to the proposal which created uncertainty about the fate of the project.

Sources said if the project could not be extended further, some 7,500 silk producers in the hill regions would become jobless. Besides, 11,000 mulberry plants would be destroyed due to lack of maintenance and care.

### Female teacher commits suicide

JESSORE, Feb 10: A female teacher of Madhusudan Tara Prasanah Girls High School of the town here allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself in her residence on Friday, reports UNB.

Family sources said Shila Aditya, 58, wife of Joy Gopal Aditya of office para in the town was suffering from gastric pain for a long time and at the same time she was also facing family problem.

Mystery shrouded behind her alleged suicide.

### In Barisal

## Work on construction of office blocks, residents completed

BARISAL, Feb 10: About fifty per cent work on construction of office blocks and residential facilities for the newly set up divisional headquarter here has been completed, reports APB.

These, together with some other development projects, are being implemented by the Public Works Department at a cost of Tk 16.50 crore.

Construction of the office of the divisional commissioner at a cost of Tk 6 crore is going on at Ichhakati, some 3 km from the town.

The residence of the divisional commissioner has been completed and that of the DIG of Barisal Range is expected to be started soon, according to sources in PWD.

Construction of two Police Investigation Centres at a cost of Tk 2.14 crore at Sarshi and Banaripara and of three sub-registrar offices at Hizla, Mehendiganj and Banaripara involving Tk 1.11 crore is going on in full swing.

Two fire brigade stations in Gourmadi and Banaripara municipal areas are being constructed at a cost of Tk 1.42 crore.

A Tk 1.40-crore rehabilitation centre for socially handicapped and distressed women is being constructed at Jagua on the outskirts of Barisal town.

About 60 per cent work on expansion of intern doctors' hostel at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla

Medical College Hospital has been completed. It will cost Tk 4.5 crore.

### Housewife beaten to death

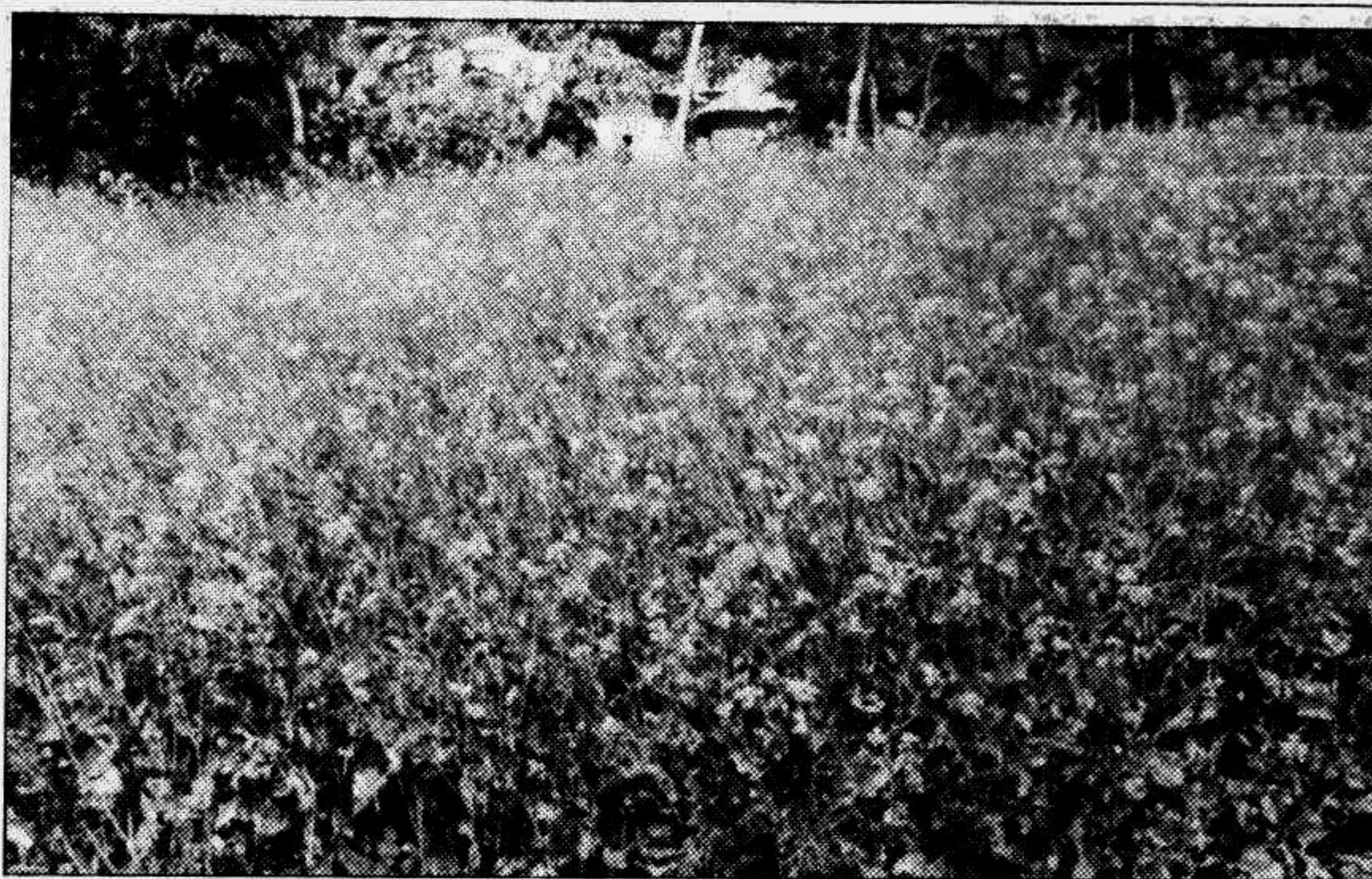
JESSORE, Feb 10: A young housewife of Jhikorgachha thana was allegedly beaten to death by her husband for dowry, police said, reports UNB.

According to police, Asadur Rahman, 27, of Shirdah village of the thana married Morzina Khatoon, 22, of the same village three years back. Her father also gave him bicycle and cash as dowry.

But after a year of their marriage Asadur demanded Tk 40,000 as dowry from the parents of his wife. But when his father-in-law expressed his inability the greedy Asad started torturing her mercilessly.

Later, she managed Tk 5,000 from her poor parents and handed the amount to him during the last Eid-ul-Fitr. But after some days he again started torturing her for the rest of the money.

On last Wednesday, he picked up a quarrel with Morzina and at one stage beat her to death. Later he put poison to her mouth to prove that she committed suicide and went into hiding.



JHENIDAH: Mustard cultivation is very popular everywhere. Photo shows a plot of full bloom HYV mustard at village Paikpara in Sailkupa thana. — Star photo

## Rajshahi flood victims living under sky in cold weather

RAJSHAHI, Feb 10: The prolonged flood came to an end a few months back, but not the sufferings it caused to the people in the affected areas, reports UNB.

The damages inflicted by the flood and the problems created due to this are multi-dimensional, hampering the normal life in many areas despite the government's post flood rehabilitation programme.

Many people could not rebuild their houses damaged partially or completely during the flood, as the allocation from the government for this purpose is too inadequate to meet the requirement.

Besides the employment opportunities for the poor people in the rural areas reduced substantially following the flood. The problem intensified with the price hike of construction

materials in the local markets. Many people still living under the sky or under only a thatched roof have been suffering in the cold weather.

Official sources said a total of 82,600 houses of about 52,000 families were damaged completely during the flood while the number of partially damaged houses was 1,23,000.

The government allocated only Tk 35 lakh in three phases for house building purpose against a request of Tk 12.80 crore from the district administration.

The administration could only distribute the money among 7,000 affected families. Many of the remaining families could not rebuild their only dwelling house due to lack of allocation from the government.

District Relief and Rehabilitation office sources said in the

worst affected Godagari thana, the allocation was Tk 10,22,500 and only 2,045 families could be given house building assistance under the rehabilitation programme.

But the total number of affected families in the thana was about 28,000.

In Charchat thana, the allocation was Tk 5,52,500 and the amount was distributed among 1,105 families.

In Bagha, Tk 8,57,500 was given to 1,795 families while in Puthia, Tk 85,000 was distributed among 170 affected families.

Besides, in Poba Tk 6.72 lakh was given to 1,345 families. In Durgapur the allocation was Tk 85,500 and was distributed among 171 families and in Baghmara Tk 28,500 was given to 57 families.

### In Netrakona

## Joint programme to eradicate leprosy by 2000

NETROKONA, Feb 10: The Damien Foundation has taken up a joint programme with the government to eradicate leprosy from the district by 2000, reports APB.

The programme includes creating awareness and knowledge