

News snaps

50 pc work on FWP completed

RANGPUR, Feb 17: About 50 per cent work on 723 Food for Work Programme (FWP) here has been completed, reports APB. Some 100 tonnes of wheat have already been used for the projects and rest of the work will be completed by the next month, sources in the district Relief and Rehabilitation office told. Out of these projects, 63 are in the sadar thana, 111 in Mithapukur, 115 in Piroganj, 102 in Pirogacha, 68 in Kauna, 89 in Gangachara, 98 in Badarganj and 52 in Taraganj thana. Fourteen projects are being implemented in Rangpur Municipality and another 11 in Haragachara Municipality. The work includes reconstruction of rural roads, re-excavation of canals and derelict ponds and earth filling of the grounds of different educational and religious institutions.

Poultry farm facing setback

MADRIPUR, Feb 17: The only government poultry farm here is facing serious setback due to many reasons including lack of repair, reports UNB.

The work in the farm remained virtually suspended for the last six months though the officials and employees are drawing their salaries regularly. Manager of the farm Abdul Mannan said two out of the three sheds for chickens are in dilapidated condition and became unfit for use. Doors, windows, wooden frames and other structures of the sheds were damaged due to lack of necessary repair. Roofs are also in bad condition and about 200 yards of wall also collapsed during the flood last year, he added. Security of the farm is being threatened due to the wall collapse. The farm level is two feet below the main road and water becomes stagnant during the rain causing serious problem in rearing the chickens and other birds.

Influentials grabbing jalmahals

PABNA, Feb 17: Fishermen are being dispossessed of jalmahals (fishing areas) here by fake fishermen's cooperatives, formed by non-fishing influential people, it is alleged, reports APB.

Sources in the fishing communities in Gang Bhanga Bil, Ghugudaha Bil, Garca Bil, Haludghar Bil, Gasna Bil, alleged that the fake cooperatives, registered with the Directorate of Cooperatives in connivance with some dishonest officials, have taken lease of the jalmahals by participating in tender bids. As per lease conditions, any registered fishing cooperative society can take part in tender bid and in the process, local influential people dominate the scene, they alleged. Most of the fishermen's cooperatives have no registration and there is no investigation by the government agencies, they said.

Work on uplift schemes progressing

CHUADANGA, Feb 17: The implementation of 275 schemes in all the four thanas and four pourasabhas here at a total allocation of 386 tonnes of wheat are now nearing completion, reports BSS.

The schemes are being implemented under the Test Relief programme of the current financial year. The four thanas and four pourasabhas are: Chuadanga sadar thana, Almudanga thana, Damurhuda thana, Jibannagar thana and Chuadanga Pourasabha, Almudanga Pourasabha, Darsana Pourasabha and Jibannagar Pourasabha. According to an official source, of the total schemes 57 schemes are being implemented in Chuadanga sadar thana, 90 schemes in Almudanga thana, 66 schemes in Damurhuda thana, 44 schemes in Jibannagar thana, 12 schemes in Chuadanga Pourasabha, one scheme in Almudanga Pourasabha, 3 schemes in Darsana Pourasabha and 2 schemes in Jibannagar thana.

Books distributed

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 17: Islamic Foundation, Kishoreganj branch has distributed books of about Taka 80 lakh among 16 mosque-based libraries in 75 mass education centres till December '98, reports BSS.

According to official sources, 75 mass education centres in four thanas have been performing mosque-based education satisfactorily. The four thanas are: Kishoreganj sadar, Bhairab, Hossainpur and Pakundia.

Boro farming on one lakh hectares

JESSORE, Feb 17: The Jessore Agriculture Extension Department has fixed a target of Boro cultivation on one lakh hectares in the current season, reports BSS.

According to the Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department, the expected production would be about three and half lakh tonnes of Boro rice. In order to achieve the target through mechanised cultivation, 1,200 power-tillers and 270 tractors are working, besides installation of requisite number of shall and deep tubewells. The farmers have also been given necessary training and motivation to increase the production by applying modern method of cultivation and proper use of fertiliser, insecticides and manure.

Pistol recovered from youth

MANIKGANJ, Feb 17: Police arrested one young man at Aricha launch terminal recently and recovered a pistol from him, reports BSS.

Police sources said, acting on a tip-off they caught a young man with arms. The arrested person was identified as Selim Hossain, (22), son of Jalal Ahmed of village Hontala, in Manikganj thana of Jessore district. An arms case has been registered with Shibalay police station in this connection.

Body to protect Guthail from erosion

JALALPUR, Feb 17: A voluntary committee has been formed to protect Guthail in Islampur thana from erosion by the Jamuna, State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharaf said, reports APB.

The committee will begin work very soon with the help of local people, he said while visiting the erosion-hit area. The state minister said the present government has taken steps to protect different areas from river erosion. Later, he visited Islampur College.

Students get free books

CHHAGALNAYA (FENI), Feb 17: Free distribution of books among the students of 89 primary schools in Chhaglanayya thana has been started from January, reports BSS.

Students reading in government, non-government and NGO-run primary schools received books free of cost on subjects like Bengali, English, Arithmetic, Social Science and classics. A total of 4,505 students of class two, 4,262 students of class three, 4,229 students of class four and 2,936 students of class five have been provided with these books.

Tubewells installation programme

NARSINGDI, Feb 17: The Public Health Engineering Department has taken up a programme to sink 94 Tara tube-wells and 179 shallow tube-wells and re-sink after repairing 62 shallow tube-wells under the post-flood rehabilitation programme in six thanas here, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 55 Tara tube-wells and 131 shallow tube-wells have already been installed. Re-sinking of 44 shallow tube-wells has already been completed. The sinking of the rest tube-wells will be completed by April next. Meanwhile, mechanics of the department have visited different areas to see the condition of 20,525 tubewells. They repaired 4,120 tubewells in the district.

Loan distributed among jobless

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 17: Youth Development Directorate, Kishoreganj has distributed a total of Taka 97.67 lakh as loan among the young men and women in 13 thanas, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the loan has been given among the unemployed young men and women for starting various projects like poultry, dairy, cultivation of vegetables, tailoring and pisciculture. Unemployed young men and women have started their own projects with the loan money under the supervision and guidance of the assistant director, Youth Development Directorate. The directorate also recovered arrear loan of Taka 64.66 lakh. The recovery is about 68 per cent.

Natore Bar election held

NATORE, Feb 17: The annual election to Natore District Lawyer's Association was held recently, reports APB.

ABM Akram was elected president bagging 103 votes. His nearest rival, Shakhat Hossain, secured 92 votes. Asadul Islam, who received 103 votes, became the general secretary by beating his rival Ruhul Amin Talukdar who secured 92 votes. Tofazzal Hossain became the senior vice-president by getting 107 votes and Jogandranath Ray, who got 99 votes, became the junior vice-president. Moselem Uddin, with 110 votes, became the assistant general secretary. The post of the treasurer went to Shahidul Islam, who got 105 votes and Makbul Hossain became the library secretary with 102 votes.

Japanese teacher robbed

CHANDPUR, Feb 17: A Japanese teacher fell prey to pickpockets and lost Tk 45 thousand at the local launch terminal on Saturday night, reports APB.

Police said Dr Shiro Mukai, a teacher of International Institute for Advanced Studies in Kyoto, Japan, was robbed of his money before his departure to Dhaka by a launch. Mukai came to Faridganj thana of the district for research work on rural development a couple of days ago. Later, he left for Dhaka with the help of the local administration. Police have filed a case, but could not yet arrest anyone in this connection.

National

Opposition to resist poura polls in Natore

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, Feb 17: Opposition leaders here have decided to resist forthcoming municipal elections at Natore and Gurudaspur municipalities here.

While interviewing some of the opposition leaders here, this correspondent was given the hint of violence to foil the poura polls.

The leaders said they were ready to resist the municipality polls at any cost. The first thing they planned to do was that they would hold rallies, processions, public meetings and go door to door to drum up people's support against what they said, 'farcical polls.'

The central BNP leader, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP, said, 'we have already had green sig-

nals' from our high command to start an allout movement and we will follow the directions as we think the upcoming 'mock-elections' will bring no welfare for people.'

Patal, however, hinted that, if necessary, the contesting candidates would be forced to refrain from the polls.

The district BNP president Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu MP, told that no opposition men excepting two Jatiya Party (JP) workers were participating in the polls. He warned that the participating candidates would be chased out of the town as the then opposition did to us, said the influential BNP leader while he was on a visit to Natore.

The present chairman of Natore Pourashava and JP leader Khondokar Jubair Hossain said AL has been going to do the same fault what BNP did earlier. He feared the outburst of people's rage against the government within a short time.

Jamat-e-Islami leader Afsar Ali Master said that they would resist the 'farcical' election at any cost.

Present chairman of Gurudaspur Pourashava and BNP leader Moisur Rahman Bablu also reiterated the same decision.

Frequent pre-poll clashes at Kaliganj Pourasabha

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Feb 17: Pourasabha elections in four municipalities have been gaining momentum in the district.

Tea stalls, shops, roadside gossipping centres have become lively.

This year a good number of female candidates have been contesting for the reserved seats of female candidates.

According to the district election office sources, election in Kaliganj Pourasabha will be held on February 23, in Jhenidah on February 24 and in Kotchandpur and Mothespur on February 25.

A total of 858 officials including 73 Presiding Officers, 295 Assistant Presiding Officers and 690 Polling Officers have been involved to hold the elections peacefully.

In Jhenidah Pourasabha 36 centres, in Kaliganj 17 centres and in Kotchandpur 11 centres and in Mothespur nine centres will be opened.

According to local people and elite, though the opposition parties have officially boycotted the pourasabha polls, they have reportedly set their own candidates both for female (reserved) and male ward commissioners.

In Jhenidah, the voters of the pourasabha have become confused as the Awami League district committee gave nomi-

nation to Dr Azizur Rahman while Amir Hossain Annur, the AL central leader and coordinator of the pourasabha election committee nominated the existing poura chairman Anisur Rahman Khoka. As a result the supporters of AL are in a fix. Both the candidates are bringing out processions in favour of themselves.

Mosharraf Hossain Mosha, a popular JP leader and ex-poura chairman has been fighting from the same area. He has been expelled from the party.

A total of 46 male and 18 female candidates have been fighting as ward commissioners from the pourasabha.

In Kaliganj, Alauddin Ala, Joint Secretary of AL was nominated as AL candidate while the existing pourasabha chairman M A Mannan has been contesting as an independent candidate as he failed to get his party's nomination.

Serajul Islam, another candidate is fighting for the chairmanship as an independent candidate.

Here clashes have been occurring frequently between the supporters of Alauddin Ala and M A Mannan. Now tension has been prevailing at Kaliganj which may turn into fierce gunbattle at any moment. A total of 20 male and 10 female candidates have been contesting as ward commissioners in Mothespur Pourasabha.

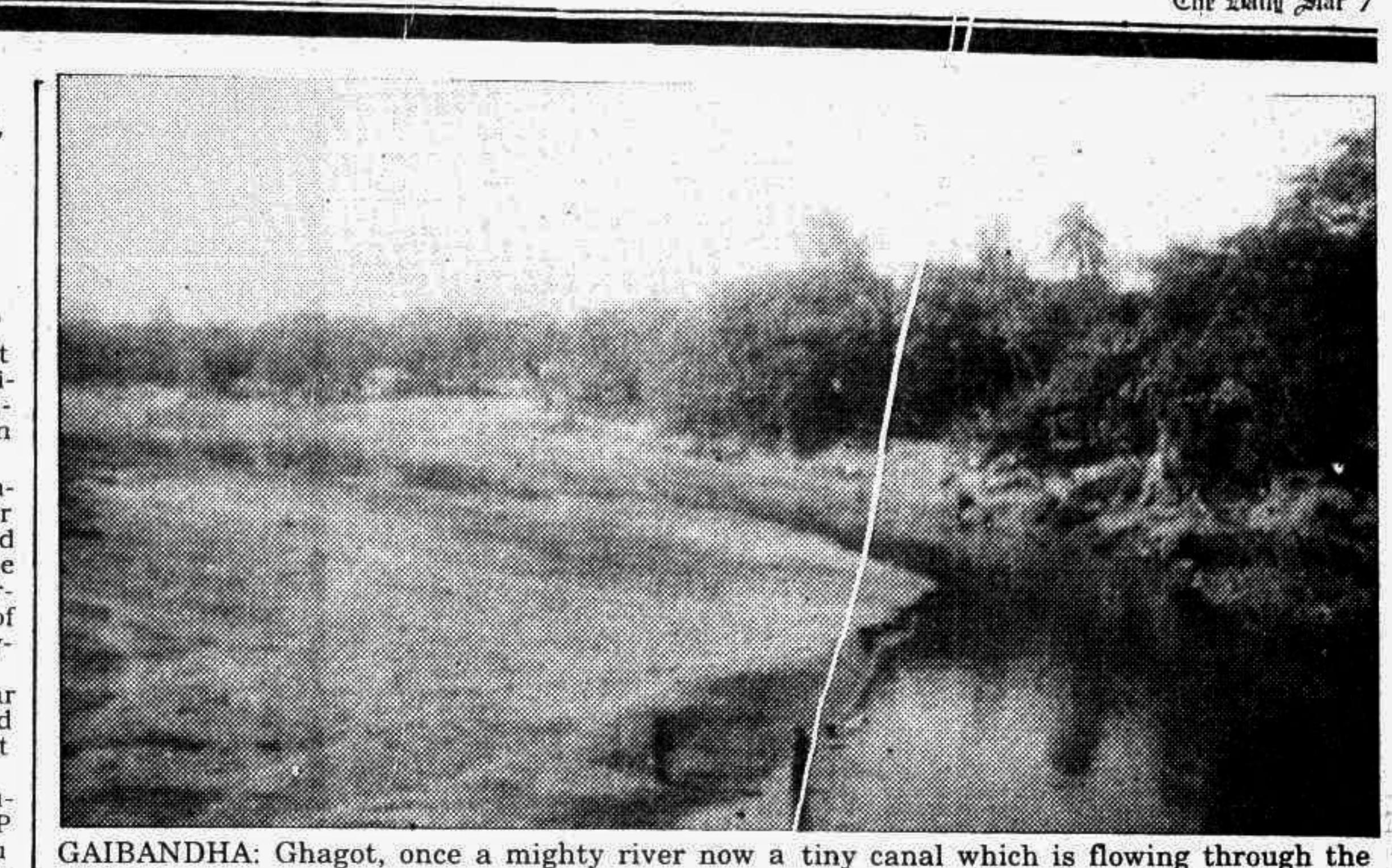
In this seat there will be fighting likely between the existing poura chairman Azizur Khan and Advocate Sajiqu Azam Khan (Chanchal).

In Mothespur, three candidates have been contesting as chairman. The existing chairman of Mothespur Pourasabha and BNP leader Azizul Haque Khan is contesting as an independent candidate as BNP had expelled him earlier. Advocate Sajiqu Azam Khan Chanchal has been contesting with AL ticket and Dr Sajiqu Rahman has been fighting as an independent candidate. A total of 42 male and 12 female candidates have been contesting as ward commissioners in Mothespur Pourasabha.

In this seat there will be

fighting likely between the existing poura chairman Azizur Khan and Advocate Sajiqu Azam Khan (Chanchal).

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: A new press club namely Metropolitan Press Club has been set up recently at Boalia in the heart of Rajshahi city.



GAIBANDHA: Ghagot, once a mighty river now a tiny canal which is flowing through the district.

Inadequate flow of water

Irrigation affected seriously in 12 thanas of 3 dists

PABNA, Feb 17: Irrigation in

12 thanas of Pabna, Sirajganj and Natore districts has seriously been affected due to inadequate flow of water at the pump stations at Bera and Koitala constructed at a cost of Tk 400 crore, reports UNB.

The pump stations were constructed as part of the Pabna Irrigation and Rural Development Project (PIRD) covering nine thanas of Pabna, two

thanas of Natore and one of Sirajganj districts.

The first phase of the project was completed in the fiscal 1991-92 costing Tk 1,000 crore, said official sources of Water Development Board.

Under the project, two pump stations, 157.55 km flood protection embankment, 145.21 km drainage canal, 23 sluice gates, 42.28 km main irrigation

canal, 212.48 km branch canal, 629 other irrigation structures, 29.92 km metal road, 12 culverts, eight bridges and 36 foot bridges were constructed.

It covered nine thanas of Pabna-Bera, Sujanagar, Sanchia, Chatmohar, Faridpur, Bhanga, Ishwardi, Atgharia and Sadar along with Gurudaspur and Baragajam of Natore district and Shahjadpur of Sirajganj.

Asian Development Bank and other donors provided assistance for the project, said sources.

The main objective of the project was to protect the vast area from water logging and flooding and provide irrigation facilities to these areas for better cultivation.

The rivers Padma, Jamuna, Baral and Hurasagar surrounded the project area. But at present, the project faces set back in supplying water to the crop fields due to water crisis at the mouth of the two pump stations.

Project Director Ahsanullah said five pumps at Bera station were pumping out only 1,000 to 1,500 cusec water instead of its capacity of 2,500 cusec.

He said the situation was the same at Koitala station adding that it was mainly due to silting up of the river Jamuna at Bherkhola and Pechakhola.



MAGURA: Cultivation of winter crops such as cabbage, cauliflower, potato, brinjal, radish, tomato, spinach, bean and pumpkin has become more popular among the farmers as those are more profitable. Photo shows such a field of cabbage at village Chaturia here. —Star photo

Chandpur-Shariatpur ferry service likely to start soon

From Shirin Akhter

CHANDPUR, Feb 17: Chandpur-Shariatpur ferry service on the river Meghna, the long felt desire of the local people is expected to be started very soon.

According to reliable sources, Taka 22 crore have already been sanctioned for the purpose. Alurbazaar in Haimchar thana, about eight kilometres south of Chandpur has been selected as the suitable site of the ferry ghat on the Chandpur district side. Bherdiganj of Shariatpur district has been selected for the ferry ghat on Shariatpur district side.

The width of the river Meghna between Alurbazaar to Bherdiganj will be about 10 kilometres. The construction work of the eight kilometres long connecting roads between the ferryghats have already started.

If the project is implemented it will usher in a new era in the economic development of the southern districts of the coun-

try. As a result the distance will be reduced by 150 kilometres from Khulna to Chittagong. At present vehicles from the eastern districts of the country have to ply a long way through Dhaka city to reach Khulna and other southern districts of the country. This creates traffic jam in Dhaka city. The proposed ferry service, if inaugurated, will greatly ease the traffic congestion in Dhaka. This ferry service will again reduce fuel consumption to a great extent. If the new ferry service is started, it will greatly improve the economic activities in the districts of Chandpur and Shariatpur.

It is further learnt that necessary steps have already been taken to acquire five acres of land for each of the ferry ghat at Alurbazaar and at Bherdiganj. People are eagerly waiting to see the implementation of the long cherished dream of direct ferry service between Chandpur and Shariatpur.

Dr Younis Mizi, President, Chandpur Chamber and Commerce welcomed the introduction of the new ferry service. He told that the economic activities of the area would further be developed if the project is implemented.