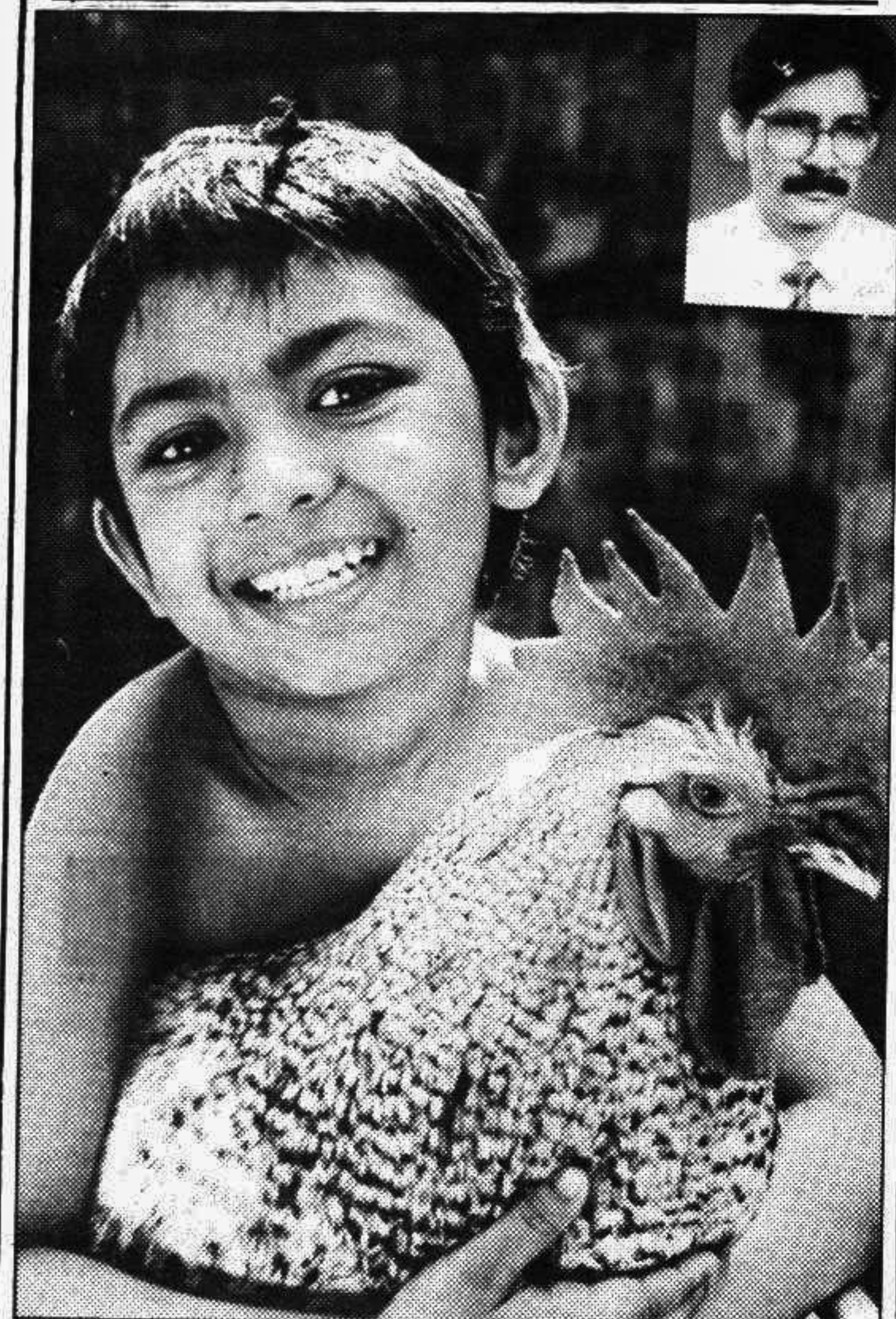


News snaps



NARAYANGANJ: 'Small Things of Life' of Md. Kamal Uddin (inset) received 'Honorary-4' prize in the 7th National Photographic Competition (black and white group) which was jointly organised by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and Bangladesh Photographic Society recently. One hundred and thirty-eight photographers participated in the competition with 609 photographs.

New citizens' body in Comilla

COMILLA, Feb 22: A 'citizens' committee' has been formed in Comilla to address various problems faced by residents of the town, reports APB.

The committee was formed with Advocate Ahmad Ali as the convener at a meeting held at his residence recently. Other members include Comilla Municipal Chairman Kamaluddin Choudhury, Abdul Awwal, Advocate Abdul Latif, Advocate Abdus Sattar, Muhammad Abdur Rab and Golam Mostafa Choudhury.

Bamboo production declines

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 22: Bamboo production in all the 13 thanas has declined sharply due to indiscriminate uprooting of the clusters, reports UNB.

Construction of thatched houses and production in bamboo based cottage industries are seriously being hampered for shortage of bamboo. Local people said thousands of clusters on a vast tract of land are gradually decaying for lack of proper maintenance and systematic plantation causing a price spiral of bamboo in the local markets. Most of the cluster owners ignorant about the scientific methods of plantation are reluctant to take necessary measures to save their clusters. Using of clusters as firewood for cooking and in the brick field has aggravated the situation.

Student killed in road accident

TANGAIL, Feb 22: Ali Azam, a 17-year-old student of Mirzapur College was crushed under the wheels of a rush driven passenger bus on Saturday at Tangail bus stand, reports BSS.

The accident occurred when the student, Ali Azam of village Natiapara in Delduar thana was crossing the road. The driver of the killer Chapainawabganj-bound bus from Dhaka fled away. The bus was seized by Tangail police.

Agri-loan disbursed

BHERAMARA, Feb 22: A total of Taka eight crore, has so far been disbursed here as agri-loan under the post-flood rehabilitation programme, according to official sources, reports BSS.

The loans have been disbursed for cultivation of various crops, irrigation, poultry, fish-farming, cow fattening, tailoring and setting up nurseries. Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Agrani Bank, Sonali Bank and Janata Bank disbursed the loan.

Shib Utsab in Barisal

BARISAL, Feb 22: Shib Chaturdashi Utsab and mela was held on Sunday at Shib Bari Mandir premises here, reports BSS.

Devotees of the Hindu community visited the Shib Mandir and offered prayers there. A two-day mela was held on the occasion. A large number of people from home and abroad participated in the festival.

Site for varsity being selected

BARISAL, Feb 22: An eight-member high powered team led by cabinet secretary visited Dumki in Patuakhali district last week for selecting a site for the establishment of a science and technology university, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the team included Cabinet Secretary Kazi Shamsul Alam, Education Secretary Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed, university representative Prof R I M Aminur Rashid, Barisal Divisional Commissioner Yeahia Mollah, Deputy Commissioner, Patuakhali, University Grant Commission Secretary, Public Works Department Chief Engineer and Superintending Engineer of the Facilities Department.

Four fire arms recovered

SATKHIRA, Feb 22: Shyamnagar police recovered four fire arms from the deep Sundarbans area under a *keura* tree on the bank of the Raymangal river in Shyamnagar thana on Monday, reports BSS.

According to police sources Shyamnagar thana police arrested one Indian dacoit, Mondranath (Tetuli dacoit) of village Amtoli in Goashaba thana of 24-Pargona district of West Bengal from Noabanki Bazar in Shyamnagar thana recently. Acting on the confession of Monindra Nath Shyamnagar police, led by Sub-Inspector Enamul Haque raided the Sundarbans area and recovered one revolver and three pipe-guns kept under the *keura* tree on the bank of Raymangal river, near Kasikata.

Open sale of non-iodised salt

SHARIATPUR, Feb 22: Non-iodised salt is being sold extensively in the hats and bazars of six thanas here for a long time, reports APB.

According to sources, 75 per cent of the people of remote areas do not use iodised salt because it costs almost double the normal variety. Iodised salt costs Tk 11 to 12 per kg while the latter Tk 6 to Tk 7. A large number of people of the area are consequently suffering from iodine deficiency which causes, among other diseases, goitre and mental deficiency.

178 arrested in Meherpur

MEHERPUR, Feb 22: Police in separate raids arrested 178 persons in January in connection with different cases and charges, reports BSS.

Of them, sadar thana police nabbed 75 alleged criminals, wanted in dacoity, theft and other criminal cases, from Buripota, Mahjanpur, Rajnagar, Monabkhali and Mujibnagar. According to police sources, Gangri thana police also arrested 103 persons from different areas of the thana. Of the total arrested persons, 32 are alleged members of an outlawed party. Police, in the same time, recovered 188 arms, foreign made revolver and 38 rounds of bullets.

Aman output may fall short of target

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 22: There may be a production shortfall of 8 lakh tonnes of Aman paddy, in 16 northern districts this year, agriculture officials and experts fear, reports APB.

The target was fixed at 28.5 lakh tonnes from 14,10,000 hectares of land. The shortfall may be due to damage of crops in about two lakh hectares of land because of pest attack, high prices of fertiliser and lack of irrigation facilities and other support services from relevant government departments, they said. Against this apprehended shortfall, there are only 1,17,000 tons of foodgrains in government godowns in 16 northern districts, they said. According to them, eight northern districts are food deficit areas. The surplus in the other eight districts is not sufficient to compensate the deficit.

Fight will be between 2 AL leaders in B'baria

Preparations afoot for holding polls in three pourasabhas of Barisal

From Aroop Talukder

BARISAL, Feb 22: A total of 130 candidates are contesting for the posts of Chairmen, ward commissioners and women commissioners in three out of five pourasabhas here namely Banaripara, Gournadi and Bakerganj.

The municipal elections will be held on February 23, 24 and 25.

Of the total candidates, eight will fight for three chairman posts, while 101 for 27 commissioner posts and 21 women for nine reserved woman commissioners' posts. A total of 31,228 voters will exercise their voting rights in the elections.

In Banaripara Pourasabha four contestants are vying for the post of chairman, 29 for the posts of commissioners and eight for the posts of woman commissioners in the Tuesday election here. The number of centres are nine and the number of voters are 3,470.

In Gournadi pourasava two candidates are contesting for the post of chairman, 44 for the posts of commissioners and four women (one elected uncontested) for woman commissioner posts in the Wednesday's election here. The number of centres are 10 and voters 18,266.

In the Bakerganj Pourasava two chairman candidates, 28 commissioner candidates and eight woman candidates are in the electoral race of Thursday's poura election here. Number of centres are nine here and the number of voters are 9,492.

Meanwhile, 10 presiding officers, 51 assistant presiding officers and 102 polling officers have been appointed for conducting Gournadi Pourasabha elections, while nine presiding officers, 18 assistant presiding officers and 36 polling officers for Banaripara Pourasabha elections and nine presiding officers, 30 assistant presiding officers and 60 polling officers have also been appointed for Bakerganj Poura polls.

Besides, 10 polling centres and 51 booths were set up in Gournadi poura area, nine polling centres and 30 booths in Banaripara pourasabha area and nine polling centres and 30 booths have also been set up in Bakerganj poura area.

A total of 31,228 voters will cast their votes in these three pourasabha elections of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Administration has taken up all necessary measures to hold the elections peacefully. Our Brahmanbaira correspondent Sk Shahidul Islam says: Election in Brahmanbaria Pourasava is going to be held on February 23.

The real electoral fight will be held between two Awami League (AL) leaders-existing Chairman Al-Mamun Sarker Organising Secretary of District AL and Helal Uddin, convener of Dist. Juba League. On the other hand the oppositions are trying to resist the elections at any cost.

According to District Election Office sources, a total of 570 officials including 36 Presiding Officers, 165 Assistant Presiding Officers and 330

Polling Officers have been appointed to hold the elections peacefully. Five candidates are contesting for the post of chairman. A total of 54 candidates are vying for 12 posts of Ward Commissioner and 18 women are in the race for four reserved female seats in Brahmanbaria Pourasabha. The total number of voters in this municipality are 60,075. Of them 30,850 voters are male and 29,225 voters are female.

The Chairman candidates in this municipality are: Al-Mamun Sarker (Al-Umbrella), Helal Uddin (Al-Bicycle), Hafizur Rahman Khasru (Independent-Rickshaw), Bashir Ullah Jaru (Independent-Bullock Cart) and SM Sayed Alam (Independent-Wall clock).

Of them, three candidates who are contesting as independent candidates. Tension maximum voter will not go to election centre. He will not go to centre to avoid the all kinds of risk.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent Aminul Islam says: Women candidates here are not lagging behind. The election of seven municipalities will be held between February 23 to 25.

In the seven municipalities of the district a total of 93 candidates are contesting for 25 reserved seats for women.

Of the total, 33 candidates are contesting in the Mymensingh Municipality for seven seats, 11 candidates in Muktagacha, eight candidates in Trishail, 11 candidates in

From Our Correspondent

this year also. BNP central leader Moudud Ahmed during his visit to Saidpur on February 12 requested him and his followers who are contesting for the posts of commissioners to withdraw from the polls race.

On that day till late at night his followers held meetings and processions to show Moudud Ahmed his popularity. This time he has a bright prospect for winning the pourasabha elections as an honest, brave, highly educated candidate.

Mozammel Haque, a new comer in politics and General Secretary of Nilphamari District Truck Owners Association is contesting with Awami League ticket. Though a new comer, yet he is spending a good amount of money in this election. There are many Awami League workers here who are working hard in his favour. Moreover, his supporters believe, the administration will also back up him.

Saidpur is a busy city in the northern region. Frequently a boy of 10 to 12 years also earn money doing some labour here. He is a factor here to win in the ensuing municipal election. This is also a plus point for Mozammel Haque to win the election.

Former Pourasabha chairman Bakhtiar Kabir is contesting as an independent contest following his failure to get nomination for Awami League. His father who was a former member of parliament Zikrul

Haque was brutally murdered by the Occupation Pakistani Army in 197. As the elder son of such a distinguished martyr of the Liberation War he has won public respect. Moreover, he has a great contributions in many social works including construction of libraries in the area. Once as a pourasabha chairman he did many development works here. After the liberation of Bangladesh he contributed immensely in restoring peace and discipline in this Bihar dominated city.

He is very much optimistic to win this year's pourasabha polls after proper evaluation of his past contributions. Non-Bengali leader Izahar Ahmed is now contesting with Jatiyo Party ticket. During the Liberation War he lead the Bi-hari community and actively supported the Occupation Pakistani Army. Following independence of the country he was jailed on various charges, but ultimately he was released following Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's amnesty. He is the founder president of Bi-hari Welfare Association in Saidpur. He is very vocal in establishing the rights of the Bi-hari community. It is apprehended, the Bi-hari community will vote for him unitedly. It is worth mentioning, Bi-hari people are majority in Saidpur Pourasabha.

However, the February 25 elections will say who will be the ultimate winner.

Bhaluka, 14 candidates in Iswaganj eight candidates in Gouripur and 12 candidates in Nandail Municipality are contesting for three reserved seats each. District Election Office (DEO) sources said, the women candidates have been continuing their door to door campaign after getting symbols.

BSS from Faridpur reports: Forty-three chairman candidates and more than a hundred commissioner candidates are contesting in the pourasabha of greater Faridpur consisting of five districts Faridpur, Rajbari, Gopalganj, Madaripur and Shariatpur.

Some chairman candidates, when contacted for their comments on the opposition hartal call on poll dates described it as 'unfortunate' and termed it as a part of destructive politics that are being carried by the opposition parties. Even some candidates who belong to opposition parties strongly disagree with the decision of hartal call and also termed it as unnecessary when the people are so much enthusiastic about poll. According to the candidate the hartal call would certainly not be able to disturb the election process nor restrain the voters from casting their votes. Some candidates rejecting the hartal call with indignation expressed their resentment in critical language and termed the attempt as aimed at destabilising the democratic process in the country. According to them, it would not hamper the poll process because if there is any absence of rickshaws due to hartal the voters would reach their polling centres on foot because it is within walking distance.

In Netrakona: An election preparatory meeting sponsored by Netrakona district administration was held at Mohua auditorium.

Leaders of different political parties, professional groups, local elite, journalists, municipal chairmen and commissioner candidates and government officials attended the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner, Netrakona Ali Akbar Hussain Akhand presided over the meeting which was addressed among others, by Additional District Magistrate Amir Hussain, Police Super Abul Khasem Ferdous and District Election Officer Mahfujul Islam Khan.

The meeting was informed that one Returning Officer, 18 Presiding Officers, 76 Assistant Presiding Officers, 158 Polling Officers have already been appointed for 18 centres of the three pourasabhas in the district.

APB from Jhalakati: The district administration has identified nearly all the polling centres in two pourasabhas in Jhalakati as vulnerable.

A concerned source in the administration said that of the total 28 polling centres covering the pourasabhas, 23 have been pointed out as vulnerable.

Among the 18 voting centres in Jhalakati Pourasava, 13 have been marked with red-ink while the same ink was used in underlining the names of all the 10 centres of Nalchhity Pourasava.

The source further revealed that the administration has taken widespread security measures to ensure fair polling at the centres which have been marked with red ink.

Violence feared in Bogra during elections

From Hashibur Rahman

BOGRA, Feb 22: Voters candidates as well as the local administration are anxious about apprehending violence during the pourasabha elections.

The district administration sources said, necessary arrangements have been made to keep the situation under control. As security measures three platoons of Army and three platoons of BDR will be deployed along with, police and Ansars. The administration is apprehending deterioration of law and order due to the arrest of Jalyotabadi Dal central leader and convener of Bogra district unit M R Islam (Sadhin).

Meanwhile, some commissioner candidates including the chairman candidate Jahangir Hossain (Total) withdrew their candidatures. They have mentioned the cause of family affairs for their withdrawal. But the administration sources have opined that they withdrew from the polls race out of fear due to the anti-election activities of the opposition parties.

A total of 72 thousand 4 hundred 42 voters are supposed to exercise their franchise in Bogra Pourasabha on February 23 in 34 polling centres.

The election of Sherpur Pourasabha is scheduled to be held on February 24. A total of 13 thousand 5 hundred 38 voters are supposed to cast their votes in Sherpur Pourasabha in nine polling centres.

The election of Santahar Pourasabha will be held on February 25.

It has been learnt that about two hundred terrorists are being prepared to commit terrorism as a part of anti-pourasabha election activities.

Police and CID sources said that the terrorists went underground when police started a crackdown on terrorists at the end of last month.

However, an officer of the administration set aside the probability of terrorism in Bogra district.

In Narsingdi

Boro output may fall short of target

NARSINGDI, Feb 22: Crop production in the current Boro season is likely to face a serious setback due to the machination of dealers and retailers who have raised the prices of various kinds of fertilisers, reports APB.

A bag of urea costs from Tk 310 to Tk 335, TSP (US) Tk 700 to Tk 750, TSP (local) Tk 550 to Tk 600, pomph Tk 500 to Tk 520 and phosphate (powder) Tk 260 to Tk 325.

The farmers are also being cheated by unscrupulous retailers who are selling adulterated fertiliser which, instead of increasing the yield, have long-term harmful effect on the soil.

The Boro crop needs three applications of urea, from January to February, to ensure good yields. But the exorbitant prices being charged have taken urea beyond most of the farmers' reach. Consequently the Boro crop production is likely to be far below the target.

Many desperate farmers have invited disaster by using low-quality smuggled TSP that has been adulterated with ASP. Informed sources say that the markets of the district are filled with adulterated fertiliser.

Commenting on the shortage and high prices of fertiliser, a member of the District Fertiliser Dealers Society said the crunch of fertiliser is due to the fact that double the land area has been planted this season with various crops, so the quantum of allocated fertiliser is far less than the demand for it.

Another reason, according to him, is that well-to-do farmers have made advance purchases of fertiliser, depleting the present stock.

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Price of onion comes down in Faridpur

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 22: The price of onion has come down to taka eight per kg as against Taka 60 per kg a few weeks ago.

The newly harvested onion in the local markets has attributed to this phenomenon.

Though Char Bhadrassan thana is considered as one of the best onion producing area in the country. The newly harvested onions locally called 'Murikata' have not grown well like that previous year.

One onion grower Md Siddique of village Hazidang in Char Bhadrassan thana said that he had spent nearly Taka 10 thousand on a small plot of land in this season.

Another onion grower of village Mulamer Dangi in sadarpur thana said that the rainfall of November 22 and 23

caused heavy damage to onion plants in the field hampering the production.

The price of onion will come down to Taka five per kg if the onion locally called 'Hali Paki' which will be harvested soon grows well in the district, an elderly onion grower opined.

Body recovered

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Feb 22: Godagari police have recovered a body of an unidentified young man recently from a sugarcane field in Saidpur village adjacent to Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj highway. The victim was undressed and his face was burnt completely with acid beyond identification.

Vast tract of khas land under illegal occupation in 16 dists

RAJSHAHI, Feb 22: A vast tract of khas land and vested properties in 16 northern districts are under illegal occupation of vested quarters owing to massive irregularities and corruption of the officials concerned, reports UNB.

With the connivance of a section of dishonest officials of Land and Revenue office, the vested quarters are trying to grab these land perpetually through forged documents.

Sources in Land Office said, over 2.65 lakh acres of khas land out of 3.21,508 acres in the northern districts are under the occupation of influential quarters since long depriving the government of huge amount of revenue.

Most of the leaseholders transferred the ownership by selling khas land to others although there is no provision for selling of the leased land.

Official sources said there are 26,920 acres of agricultural khas land in Rajshahi, 45,993 acres in Naogaon, 32,300 acres in Natore, 13,000 acres in Pabna, 4,650 acres in Sirajganj,

20,474 acres in Rangpur, 29,500 acres in Kurigram, 27,070 acres in Gaibandha, 12,962 acres in Lalmonirhat, 17,443 acres in Dinajpur, 11,900 acres in Thakurgaon and 11,943 acres in Panchagarh.

Of the above khas land, 4,690 acres were leased out among the farmers in Rajshahi district, 5,432 acres in Naogaon, 100 acres in Natore, 4,450 acres in Pabna, 3,040 acres in Sirajganj, 3,500 acres in Rangpur, 1,686 acres in Kurigram, 4,032 acres in Gaibandha, 4,072 acres in Lalmonirhat, 3,324 acres in Dinajpur, 9,489 acres in Thakurgaon and 9,500 acres in Panchagarh till December 1998.

According to a source, there are 3,465 vested property holders in 16 districts under the supervision of land and revenue department.

Of those, 2,190 houses were leased out while the remaining 1,275 are lying idle. A good number of applications were submitted to the land office for allocation of those houses.

Growth of newspaper readership depends on level of literacy

RAJSHAHI, Feb 22: Growth of newspaper readership depends largely on the level of literacy, on the contrary growth of circulation of a particular newspaper in the country hangs on the readership that can be eloped by means of quid-pro-quo of sister publications, of course, of the same language, reports BSS.

The growth of circulation is a combination of factors like objectivity of reports, its style of writing based on language and diction, and finally the art inherent in the lay-out or make up that is 'skill necessary for production of beauty' in the newspaper. Objectivity is classified as truth-festive, joyous or tragic, styles of writing-language and diction and presentations — are subject matter of

truth and beauty of literature, and lay-outs or make-ups are defined as art consisting all of the quadrangular virtues like poetry, music, painting and sculpture. All these maligned conditions truthfully depicted together in a sheet of paper make a good newspaper, the consequential return of the work — art and science — of journalism.

This was the observation of the chairman of the Board of directors of the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

Prof AAMS Arifin Siddique at a discussion in Rajshahi University on Monday. The teachers of the university including those taken from the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, the local representatives of the na-

tional dailies and office bearers of Rajshahi Press Club including its general secretary Saidur Rahman attended the discussion.

Chairman of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Rajshahi University H Ferdousi who subscribing her idea to the observations of Prof Arefin Siddique said that the rate of literacy is an indispensable sine qua non to the growth of readership. Economic condition is obviously the other factor, she however, volunteered to say. The size of literacy determines the aggregate readership. In this connection she referred to some newly published newspapers and narrated her impression about the tolerance of the readers with regard to the make-up of a newspaper and said that

some of the newspapers of very recent origin could hardly have up-kept the pledges they had dishied out before their debut only because of the multi-colour uncommon mast-head.

Hussain-uz-Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director and Chief Editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) who was the organisational tour of the area spoke on these powerful agencies that is mass communication media as the fourth state.

Newspapers can facilitate thoughts and discussions. They can stifle it. They can advance the progress of civilisation. They can thwart it. They can endanger the peace of the world. They can play up or down the news, its significance, foster fear and emotion, create complex, mislead the ignorant and uphold empty slogans. Added to it are the powerful representatives of newspapers in the periphery who are said to play more of a proprietor than of a staff reporter," he said.

He said that a newspaper is able to earn credibility after years of trial and tribulation.

Chowdhury corroborated M Robert Hutchins, Vice Chancellor of Chicago University who, while making his report on the Freedom of Press in the United States in 1948 had observed that freedom of the press 'was in danger not so much from the government as it was from the owners themselves' who controlled the agency of mass communication. It is now at the hands of the peripheral representatives.

If the breaking of these powerful agencies with regard to freedom of the press is left to the government the danger is that freedom of the press might itself become a casualty in the process. For freedom of the press is essential to political liberty, you must be able to convey your thought freely to other — where freedom of expression exists the beginnings of a free society — are already present, Hutchins observed in his reports.



JHENIDAH: Indiscriminate cutting of trees going on unabated here defying government ban on it. Photo shows a truck is being loaded with such fuel woods made by cutting date trees recently at Royerah bazaar in Saikupa thana.