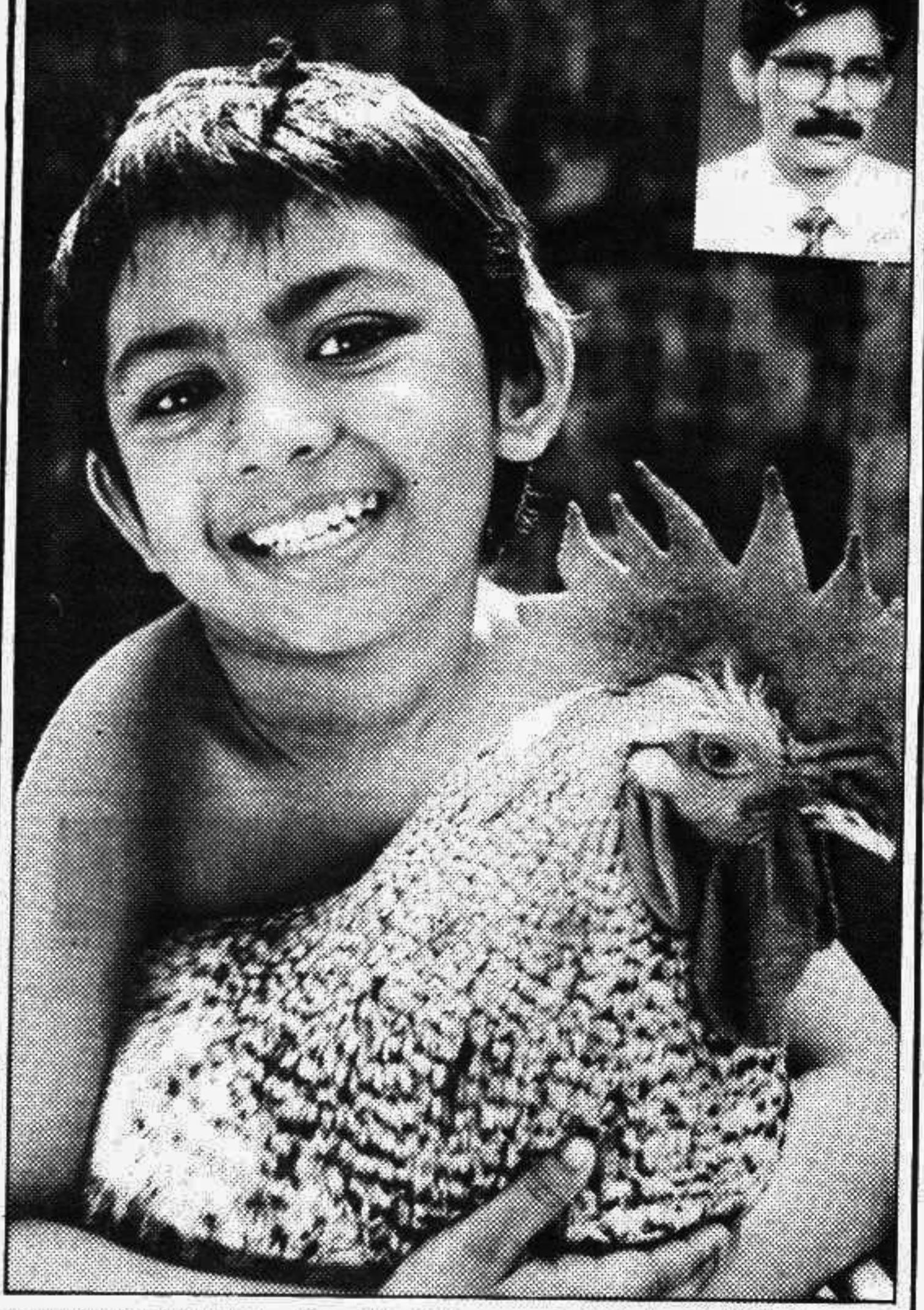


National

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 Natipara 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 Chaturdash 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 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 Raymonga river in Shyamnagar thana on Monday, reports BSS.

According to police sources Shyamnagar thana police arrested one Indian dacoit, Mondranath (Teful dacoit) of village Amtoli in Gooshaha 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 Raymonga river, near Kasikia.

Open sale of non-iodised salt

SHARIATPUR, Feb 22: Non-iodised salt is being sold extensively in the hats and bazaars 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, Mahanpur, Rajnagar, Monabkhali and Mujibnagar. According to police sources, Gangni 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

SIRAGANJ, 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 four pourasabhas here namely Banaripara, Gourabari 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 Gourabari Pourasabha two candidates are contesting for the post of chairman, 44 for the posts of commissioners and four women (one elected uncontested) for woman commissioners' posts.

The real electoral fight will be held between two Awami League (AL) leaders-existing Chairman Al-Mamun Sarker (Al-Umrella), 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 woman.

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

fifteen, 51 assistant presiding officers, 102 polling officers have been appointed for conducting Gourabari 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 Gourabari poura area, nine polling centres and 30 booths in Banaripara pourasabha area and nine polling centres and 30 booths 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 Brahmanbaria correspondent Md Shahidul Islam says: Election in Brahmanbaria Pourasabha is going to be held on February 23.

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

Five candidates are contesting for the post of chairman. A total of 54 candidates are vying for 12 points 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.

BSS from Faridpur reports:

Forty-three chairman candidates and more than a hundred commissioner candidates are contesting in the purasabha 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 Akhund presided over the meeting which was addressed, among others, by Additional District Magistrate Amir Hussain, Police Super Abul Kasem Ferdous and District Election Officer Mahfuzul 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 pourashavas 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 pourashavas, 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 Nalchity 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.

Tough contest likely in Feb 25 Saidpur Pourasabha polls

From Our Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, Feb 22: Election campaign has gained momentum at Saidpur Pourasabha, a class one municipal thana town in the district.

There will be a tough contest likely here in this year's poura elections. All the candidates here have allegedly been spending money in a lavish manner this year.

The total number of voters are 47,914 and the total number of wards are 15 here. Four candidates are contesting for the post of chairman. They are the sitting chairman Amjad Hossain Sarker (Bhojey), Md Mozammel Haque, Izahar Ahmed and Bakhtria Kabir. A total of 95 candidates are contesting for 15 posts of ward commissioners and 22 are contesting for five posts of women reserved seats. The candidates remain engaged in the election campaign till late at night. They are trying to woo voters with new pledges.

The sitting chairman Amjad Hossain Sarker (Bhojey) has already served as an elected chairman for the last two terms. This time he is contesting for the third term. Earlier, he won the elections as a Communist League candidate. Later on he joined BNP and contested in the last Jatiyo Sangsad elections, but he was defeated. Though his party has boycotted the ensuing poura election, yet he has been contesting with BNP ticket. His father who was a former member of parliament Zikru

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

Non-Bengali leader Izahar Ahmed is now contesting with Jatiyo Party ticket. During the Liberation War he lead the Bihari 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 Bihari Welfare Association in Saidpur. He is very vocal in establishing the rights of the Bihari community. It is apprehended, the Bihari community will vote for him unitedly. His supporters believe, the administration will also back up him.

The former Pourasabha chairman Bakhtria Kabir is contesting as an independent candidate following his failure to get nomination for Awami League.

His father who was a former member of parliament Zikru

Haque was brutally murdered by the Occupation Pakistani Army in 1971. 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 a pourasabha chairman he did many development works here. After the liberation of Bangladesh he contributed immensely in restoring peace and discipline in this Bihari dominated city. He is very much optimistic to win this year's pourashava polls after proper evaluation of his past contributions.

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Was born in 1935, TSP (US) Tk 700 to Tk 750, TSP (local) Tk 550 to Tk 600, potash 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 of 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.

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