

News snaps

Tension over delimitation

PATUAKHALI, Mar 12: Tension has been prevailing at Charhadi in between Dasmina thana here and Lalmonahar thana of Bhola over establishing of an Adarsha Gram due to delimitation conflict, reports UNB.

Sources said that the claim and counter-claim of the two district administrations over the area has been a long-standing feud between the two neighbouring districts. A negotiation was held on January 10 between the two sides in presence of Barisal Divisional Commissioner and an agreement was reached for taking no decision about any permanent project at Charhadi before the completion of the Diara survey. The survey will determine the ownership for certain, said official sources. But district administration sources here said Lalmonahar thana administration in Bhola has taken up the initiative of setting up a Adarsha Gram in the area ignoring the decision of January 10 meeting. They started earthwork at the spot from March 6 and did not pay any heed to the objection raised by Dasmina thana land office.

10 killings in two months

FENI, Mar 12: Ten incidents of killing were committed here in the last two months, reports UNB.

According to police sources and reports published in different newspapers, some 253 other crimes were also committed during the period. Other crimes included dacoity, snatching, stealing, rape, clash, highway robbery, kidnapping and incidents of arms snatching from police. Maximum crimes were committed in Sadar thana. At least 123 incidents of crime, including three killings were committed in the thana in January while 29 incidents, including two killings, in February. The reports claimed that cases in less than half of the incidents were registered with police.

Four with fertiliser held

NARSINGDI, Mar 12: Police arrested four people with huge quantum of urea fertilisers from a cargo on Shitalakhya river in Polash thana on Monday, reports UNB.

Police said Shamsuddin Ahmed, 45, Shafiqul Islam, 21, Jahir, 20, and Masud, 19, were arrested while they were trying to smuggle the fertilisers by cargo MV Muguni. The four lifted 8,050 sacks of fertilisers, allocated for the dealers of Dinajpur and Pabna districts from Ghorashal Urea Fertiliser Factory and sold out to a trader of Gazipur district. Police seized the cargo and the arrested were produced before the court on Tuesday.

Workshop on office management

MYMENSINGH, Mar 12: A three-week workshop on 'Office Management and Communication' concluded at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) here on Sunday, reports UNB.

Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Hossain was the chief guest at the concluding session held at the Graduate Training Institute (GTI). Member Director of Planning and Evaluation Department of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council A B M Nural Alam was the special guest. The function was presided over by GTI Director Prof M Hajrat Ali. A total of 22 trainees took part in the 328th workshop of GTI.

Woman killed in earth collapse

MANIKGANJ, Mar 12: A woman labourer was killed and five others were injured in an earth collapse at Beraripara village in Ghor thana here on March 8, reports APB.

Witnesses said Shantana Begum, 50, died on the spot in the incident that took place when 12 women were digging earth from a canal. Three of the injured have been admitted to Ghor Thana Health Complex while the rest were given first aid.

Punishment to Aref's killers sought

MANIKGANJ, Mar 12: Manikganj Bar Association at a protest meeting has demanded exemplary punishment to the killers of JSD leader Kazi Aref Ahmed, a valiant freedom fighter, reports APB.

The meeting was addressed by, among others, District Awami League president Advocate Moslemuddin Khan, ex-MP Mr Abul Khair Mantu, Advocate Abdul Wahab Khan, Juba Dal Central Leader, Golam Shariar Khan Shipar and Advocate Jamilur Khan. Advocate Abdul Latif presided over the meeting, held at the Bar Library auditorium on Saturday.

Fundation of Ainjibi Bhaban laid

BAJITPUR (Kishoreganj) Mar 12: Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, on March 9, said the judiciary is the greatest gift of modern civilisation and is a means of ensuring social justice in the country, reports BSS.

The law minister was addressing as the chief guest at a gathering organised in connection with the foundation laying of the 'Bajitpur Ainjibi Samity' Bhaban here. The minister said since law and courts are the last resorts of the people, the government is duty-bound to provide any logistics the people needs to ensure speedy, easy and inexpensive justice in society.

Abducted man rescued

HABIGANJ, Mar 12: Police rescued a centenarian man after two weeks of his abduction from the house of a UP chairman in Baniachang thana here, reports UNB.

Police said some local hoodlums abducted the man, identified as Haji Naziruddin, 103, on February 20 from his house. The old man was confined to the house of the local UP Chairman and the abductors demanded Tk two lakh as ransom from his relatives. Zahura Khatun, daughter of the centenarian, filed a general diary with the police who, acting on a tip-off, rescued the man on the night of March 5, according to the report available on Sunday. No arrest was made so far in this connection.

Women's Day observed

KHULNA, Mar 12: The International Women's Day was observed here in Khulna on March 8 as elsewhere in the country in a befitting manner.

The theme of this years international day is "stop women repression and build a happy society", reports BSS.

Various socio-cultural and women organisations in the city observed the day through holding different programmes including rally, discussions, meetings and musical soiree. Jatiyo Mohila Sangstha of Khulna branch held a discussion meeting at its office on this occasion. Presided over by the chairperson of the Khulna branch Prof Hosneara Runu. The meeting was also addressed, among others, by Nurjiz Begum, Lutfunnessa Lufta, Mukti Roy, Aleya Saeed, Rehana Akhter, Sahana Balee, Fatema Khatoun, Halima Akhter Ruhina, Johra Khatoun, Suraiya Banoo and Momota Rani.

Cotton procurement drive begins

RANGPUR, Mar 12: Cotton procurement drive has begun in Rangpur Zone through 19 purchasing centres of Cotton Development Board, reports UNB.

The board is purchasing the seed and non-seed cotton at Tk 27 and Tk 26 per kilogram respectively from the growers. Official sources said cotton was cultivated on 900 hectares of land in 19 units of the zone comprising of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat with a production target of 800 metric tons. The harvesting of the crop is going on in full swing in the current season.

892 crimes committed last year

JAMALPUR, Mar 12: Some 892 crimes were recorded in the district last year marking the deterioration of law and order situation, reports UNB.

According to police, the crimes included rape, dacoity, burglary, clash, kidnapping, incidents of acid throwing and women and child repression and murder. But local people claimed that the actual number is much higher than the crimes recorded with police stations. A police officer, on condition of anonymity, told that they have failed to take stern action against the culprits due to political pressure, interference by the local influential quarters and lack of necessary and modern equipment.

Female UP member raped

JESSORE, Mar 12: A female Union Parishad (UP) member was raped by an armed miscreant at her residence in Sarsa thana last week, reports UNB.

According to a delayed report, the hoodlums entered into the house of the member of Nizampur Union Parishad by breaking the door open at night on March 2 and raped her at gun point. Villagers rushed to the house on hearing the hue and cry of the victim and caught the rapist red-handed. But later on his accomplices snatched him from the hands of the villagers and fled the scene. The villagers alleged that the rapist being the brother of a male Union Parishad member of the same union and the activist of the ruling party had been threatening the victim not to file a case with the police.

Tobacco factories pollute environment

RANGPUR, Mar 12: The tobacco processing factories located in the residential areas of Haragach Pourasava are polluting the environment causing health hazards to the dwellers, reports UNB.

Some dwellers alleged that they are facing health hazards due to environmental pollution and expressed their concern for allowing the tobacco processing factories in the residential areas. Some local physicians said, "tobacco processing in the residential areas is injurious to human health as it is more dangerous than smoking."



COX'S BAZAR: Automobiles moving fast on the sea beach here creating problems to the tourists. Accidents may occur at any moment causing death or injury to them. But there is none to halt such trend. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Lalon festival concludes in Kushtia

From Fokhrun Nessa

KUSHTIA, Mar 12: The two-day 'Lalon Festival, 1999' concluded here on March 3 in a befitting manner at the Lalon Academy premises at village Cheuria, two miles away from Kushtia town.

Lalon research workers, artists and disciples of great poet Fakir Lalon attended the function from various parts of the country and abroad.

It may be mentioned here that twice in a year 'bauls', disciples of Fakir Lalon Shah meet at Lalon Mausoleum, once in the month of March during the full moon (Falguni Purnima)

and again in the month of October during his death anniversary. During the festivals they pay rich tributes to their leader 'Baul' Emperor Fakir Lalon Shah.

They sing throughout days and nights keeping everybody spell-bound. This year on the first day Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia Md Abdus Salam, President of Lalon Academy inaugurated the 'Swaranotsab' by holding a short discussion meeting where General Secretary of Lalon Academy and other members spoke. Deputy Commissioner said that a

scheme for development and expansion of Lalon Academy has been taken up which was passed by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Several admirers of Lalon Shah and local residents expressed their eagerness to donate land for expansion of the academy premises.

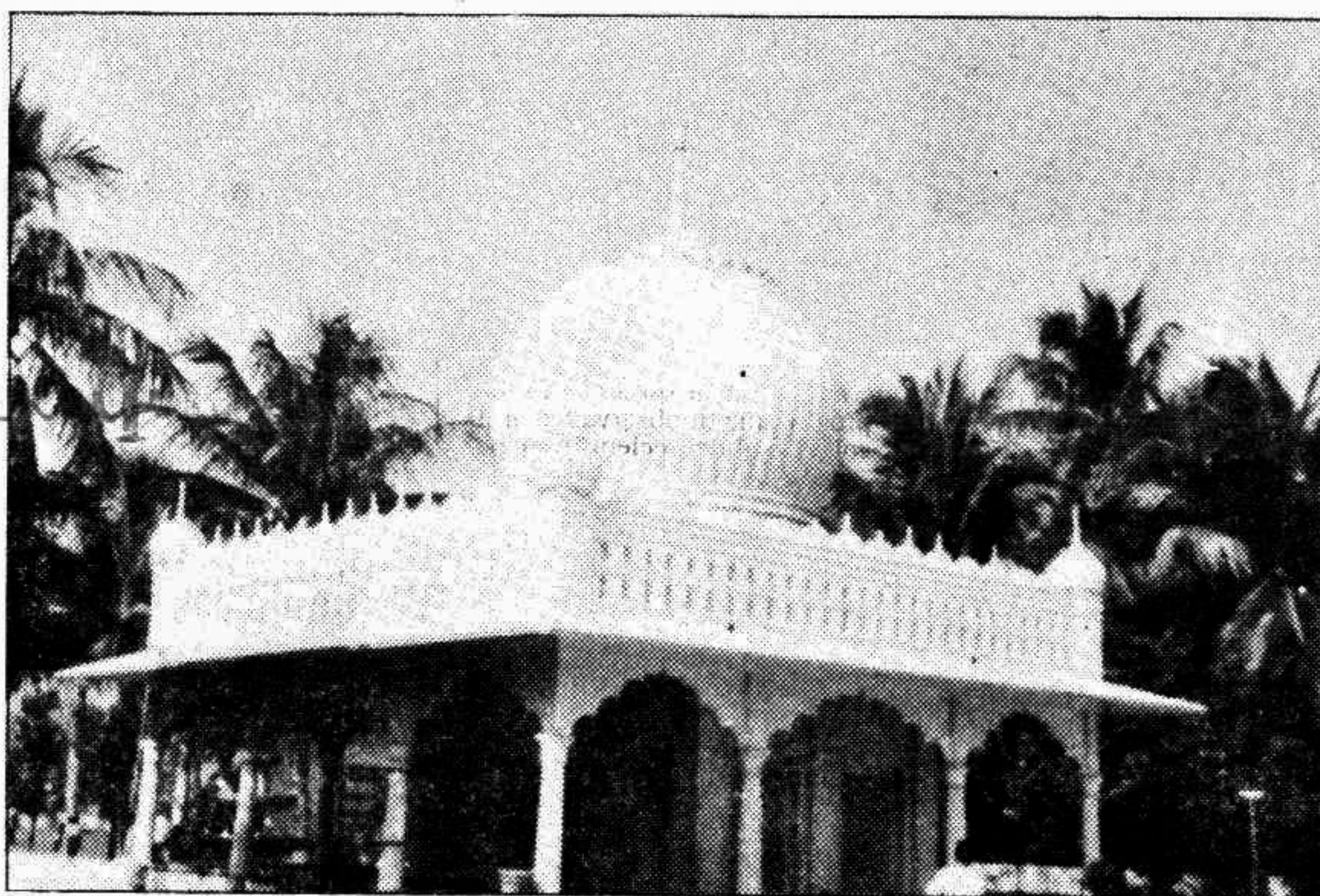
Lalon Shah died some 108 years back. Mystery is there over his birth and details of his life is not also not known as nothing is written about his biography. But Lalon Shah who lived within the 'Zamindari' of Rabintra Nath Tagore kept a tremendous impact on him.

Tagore himself admitted it in his lectures delivered at Oxford, England in 1930.

Lalon is the spiritual leader of 'bauls' who represent an obscure religious cult. Their iconoclasm, disregard of caste and attempt to make a merger of different religious traditions gave them a separate entity, a freedom to confront life outside the prevailing social and religious custom. They do not preach religion or religious doctrine but woe others with their songs which speak of humanism. During festivals twice in a year men and women go on singing and dancing throughout days and nights. They take hemp and it is quite customary with them. Bauls come from far and near. They pay rich tributes to their leader, Lalon Shah through songs.

Prominent 'bauls' who regularly participated here for a long time were Fakir Chand, Khoda Baksh, Khejmat Ali, Jharu Shah, Ranjita, Nemai Shah, Shukur Shah, Khorshed Shah and Lalji.

During these days, Kushtia town wears a festive look. 'Bauls' both men and women pay homage to their spiritual leader, Lalon Shah who was a metaphysical thinker. These 'bauls' who are mystics in a typical way are free from all desire, quite indifferent to the worldly gains and consider themselves dead. In fact they are dead with regard to every pain and sorrow. They are also considered as religious mendicants, a sect representing an obscure religious culture. They believe that all human beings belong to one single caste. As God is one and as He belongs to all see all men alike. The structure of the 'Baul' culture is based on humanism and in this regard Sufism of Islam has kept a great impact on them.



Lalon mausoleum has been built on the grave of Lalon Shah at Cheuria, two miles off Kushtia town. Lalon followers from various parts of the country and abroad visit here throughout the year. — Star photo

Life-term for 4 killers

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Mar 12: Four persons have been awarded life-term rigorous imprisonment (RI) with a fine of Taka 10,000, in default, to suffer six months more imprisonment for killing a man.

The convicted persons are Prallah, Nikhil, Susanto and Prasanto of Thaipara village in Shalikhah thana here.

Golam Rabbani, Additional Sessions Judge, Magura delivered the judgement after conducting the trial on February 24.

The prosecution story in brief is, the convicted persons accompanied by others injured Raton, Tapon and Khokon of Thaipara village with sharp weapon when they went to till land with their brother Sarojit for killing them. They were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Raton died at the hospital.

Police submitted chargesheet against the convicted persons after investigation.

The convicted persons were absconders when the judgement was delivered.

Corrupt dealers creating fertiliser crisis

COMILLA, Mar 12: A severe crisis of chemical fertilisers has been prevailing in different areas for about a month, reports APB.

During a visit to some thana headquarters, farmers told this correspondent that the artificial crisis has been created by a section of corrupt fertiliser dealers.

A 50-kg bag of TSP is being sold at between Tk 320 and Tk 350 against its official price of Tk 280.

Farmers complain that corrupt dealers are also selling Indian SSP fertilizer in the name of TSP, which is not up to the standard.

There are 104 fertiliser dealers here. It is alleged that most of the dealers are selling their quota at the mill gates, creating the artificial crisis.

2 health complexes ailing

JAMALPUR, Mar 12: Melancholia Thana Health Complex has been facing manifold problems due to shortage of physicians and lack of necessary amenities causing untold sufferings to the patients, reports UNB.

Official sources said four doctors out of nine and three nurses against six are working in the hospital, but most of them remain absent during the duty hours due to lack of supervision and care depriving the patients of proper treatment. The emergency patients are the worst sufferers.

The X-ray machine set up 10 years ago is still lying inoperative though its operator is drawing salary regularly.

The patients admitted in the hospital are also facing a lot of problems due to lack of proper care and nursing. They are served with substandard foods and are to buy necessary medicine from outside at high prices.

Environment of the health complex is also being polluted day by day due to negligence of the authorities concerned. As a result, not only the patients but also the visitors are becoming sick for unclean and filthy atmosphere.

Local people alleged that the authorities have been cultivating IRRI-Boro and transplanted Aman on about three acres of land in the health complex compound for their personal use using electricity of the government.

They also alleged that medicines allotted for the hospital find their way in the black-market causing sufferings to the poor patients.

Another report says: The 10-bed Begumganj thana health complex is yet to be upgraded into a 50-bed one after 12 years of its announcement by the authorities concerned.

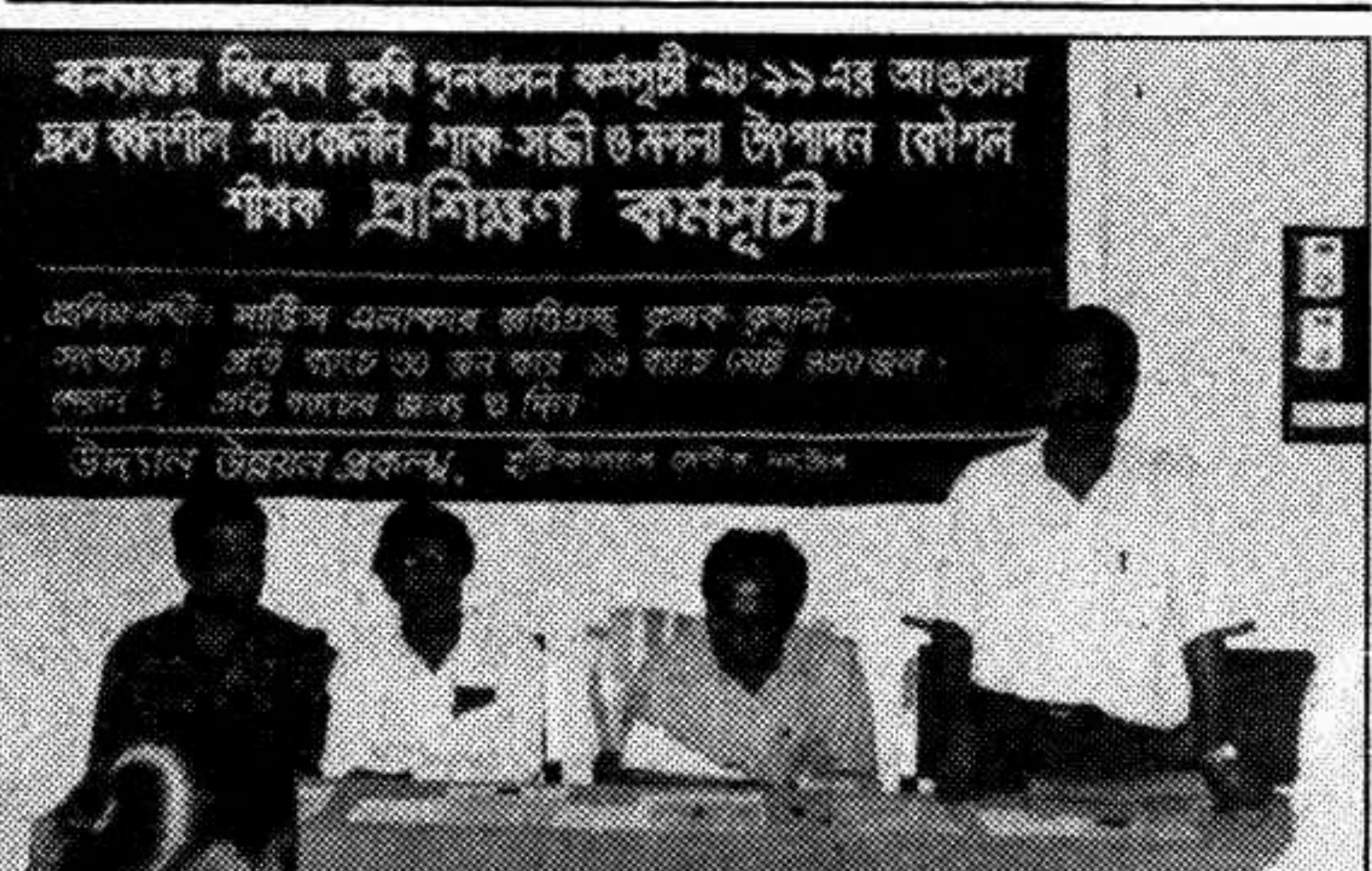
The health complex was established in 1976 at Choumuhani in the thana and the decision to upgrade it was taken in 1986.

Health Ministry also asked the authorities to acquire five acres of land adjacent to the hospital which is yet to be implemented.

As per direction, Noakhali Civil Surgeon office sought five acres of khas land for the hospital from Mouja-283 in Begumganj thana to the district administration.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) of the thana selecting the land for the hospital sent it to the Land Reforms Board in Dhaka in 1997 with a forwarding approval sent it back to the local authority and since then the project is lying shelved.

Meanwhile, a vested quarter has already occupied the proposed land for the hospital.



NATORE: A training programme of horticulturists in progress which was held recently at Natore Horticulture Centre. — Star photo

Fuel price up in dists

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 12: The price of jute sticks has gone up excessively causing much inconvenience to the common consumers.

A medium size bundle of jute sticks is being sold here between Taka 400 and Taka 500, though the price of jute fibre is decreasing day by day.

A jute stick trader of Haji Shariatullah market in the town when asked told this correspondent that the demand of jute sticks has increased greatly for its multipurpose use. Moreover, scores of trucks are carrying heaps of jute sticks to other districts, particularly to Dhaka daily resulting in its excessive price hike.

A jute grower of Char Hajiganj area in Char Bhadrassan thana said that said that jute stick, a by-product is more profitable than the jute fibre — the original product now-a-days.

He added that 1,300-1,400 bundles of jute sticks worth about Taka 4,000 are grown on one were of land. On the other hand 10 to 12 maunds of jute are produced on the same land, he said.

So, with the increasing demand of jute sticks, the growers are cultivating jute with much interest, he further said.

UNB from Nethrakona reports: Scarcity of fuel has been prevailing across the district for the last few months affecting the daily household activities of people.

A maund of firewood is being

sold between Taka 80 and Taka 100. The supply of firewood has decreased to a great extent and the problem has been prevailing in nine thanas.

The people of Sadar, Mohanganj and Durgapur towns are using LP gas cylinders for their domestic cooking. But, the supply of it has also been reduced abnormally creating much trouble for the dwellers.

The town dwellers started using electric heater illegally for their cooking.

Recently, in a drive launched against the illegal users of electric heater and electricity in Sadar, Mohanganj and Durgapur town areas, many people were fined, said an official of local Power Development Board.

Baby burnt alive

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 12: An one and-a-half year old baby was burnt alive when a fire broke out in the house of Siraj Mia of village Alirchar in Kulachar thana recently.

The victim was identified as Imam Hossain. Two other members of the family who sustained burn injuries were admitted to Kailashar Thana Health Complex. Three houses including all household articles were gutted. The cause of the fire could not be ascertained.

Massive venture to set up poultry farms in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Mar 12: The people of 14 villages in Polash thana here have taken up a massive venture to set up poultry farms to achieve self-sufficiency, reports UNB.

They set up about 500 large and medium scale farms of the domestic fowl for egg and meat.

Hundreds of students, employed educated youths as well as professionals engaged themselves in these farming.

Their efforts have already set up instances of successes in the race of self-development and self-employment.

Local sources said there are about 2 lakh hens in these farms. The farm owners grow the hens both for collecting eggs and chicken as well as for meat. The cost involved in the maintenance is too low.

Nagendra Nandi, a farm owner of Barabo village said Tk 100 to Tk 120 is needed for making a hi-breed chicken grown up which can lay 300 to 320 eggs a year. The owner can earn at least Tk 1000 annually, he added.

He said cost of poultry feed against a hen per day is on an average Taka one only. He informed that one of his neighbour first set up a poultry firm in the area and became successful. He earned a lot just in the first year. After that poultry farming spread in nearby 14 other villages including Ghorasal, Paiksha, Khanepur, Raban, Kuraitoli and Algi.

It has now become a major source of income of the local people, he added.

The small entrepreneurs said they sell their products at Ghorasal Bazar where the traders buy eggs daily. Besides, the wholesale businessmen collect eggs from remote villages.

Some owners of the farm said they did not get any credit facility from the banks so far.

They even did not receive any government assistance or patronisation in this regard. Last year's deluge inflicted huge damages to their farms, but the government did not take any rehabilitation programme for them.

Local people said if they get government assistance, they could flourish their small endeavors more.

Problems grip Bandarban Sadar Hospital

BANDARBAN, Mar 12: Sadar Hospital here is beset with manifold problems seriously hampering the treatment of patients, reports UNB.

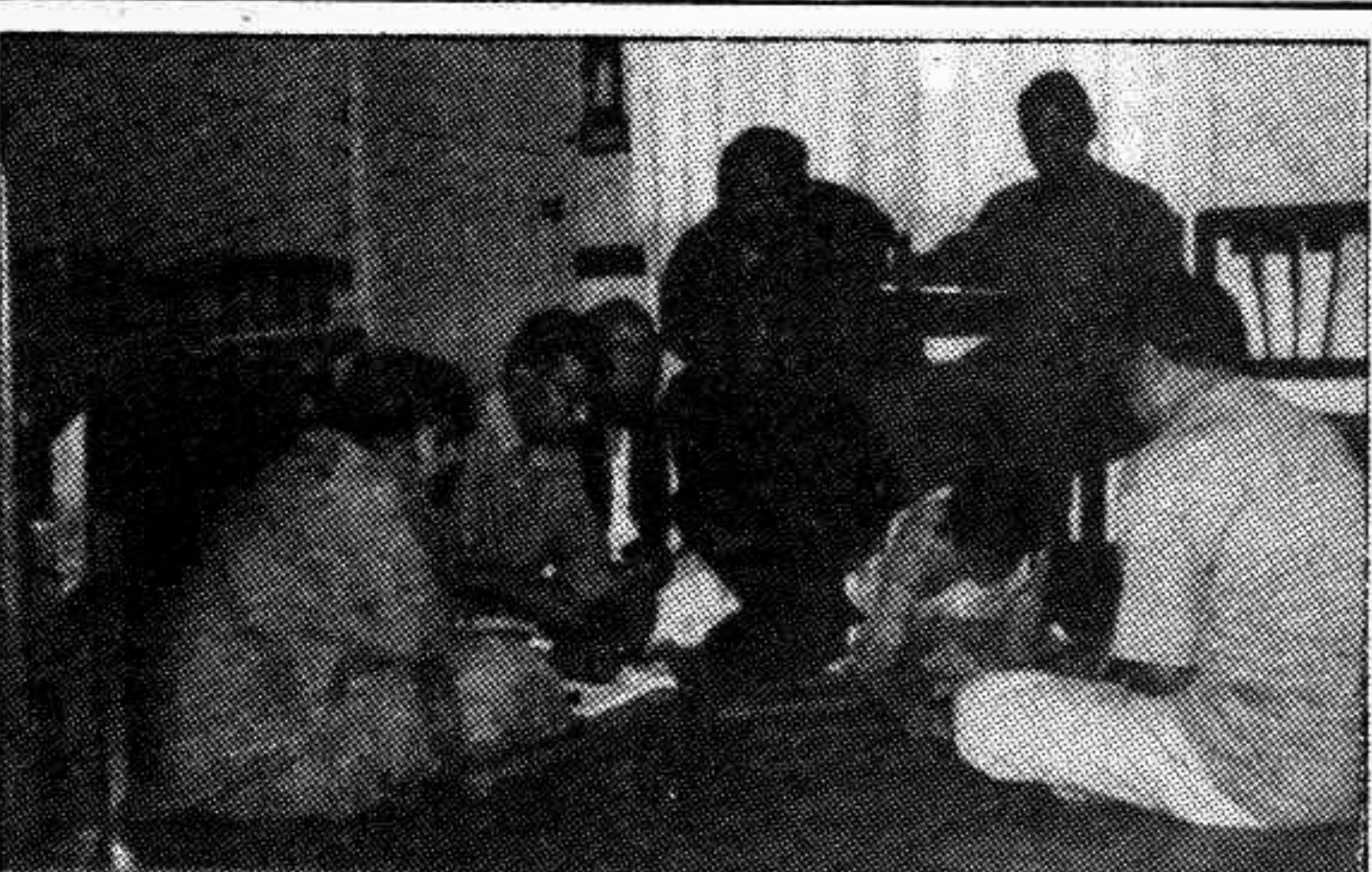
Hospital sources said shortage of manpower, lack of blood bank, specialist physicians and ambulance are the main problems of the modern hospital, constructed at a cost of Tk 40 million.

They said lack of necessary doctors is a problem prevailing across the district and only 20 doctors are now working in the seven thanas against 68 sanctioned posts.

There is no doctor in medicine and surgery departments of the Sadar Hospital hampering the treatment of regular patients.

The hospital also lacks a blood bank and the serious patients who need blood suffer seriously at the time of their need. The sources said it is running without any specialist doctor in ENT and Eye departments.

Civil Surgeon told that there is no ambulance in seven thanas and the serious patients cannot be moved from remote places to the hospital and to other parts of the country.



JHENIDAH: Executives of 13 non-governmental organisations including Unnayan Dhara of Jhenidah attended a two-day workshop on 'Our Thoughts and Strategy on Development' held recently at CARITAS Development Institute (CDI) in Dhaka. The workshop was arranged by Training Task Group (TTG), Bangladesh. — Star photo.

Work on Jinarpur dam yet to be started

SUNAMGANJ, Mar 12: The work of Jinarpur cross dam to save the adjacent villages and cultivable lands from the onslaught of hilly water is yet to be started for fund constraint, reports UNB.

District Water Development Board sources said an allotment of Tk 41 lakh was given for the dam, but it has later been re-allocated for another project.

Sources said at the preliminary stage Taka 60 lakh and 100 metric tons of wheat were sought for the dam in fiscal 1998-99, but no approval so far came from the concerned authorities.

Meanwhile, Jinarpur Distressed People Welfare and Flood Protection Committee submitted a scheme to the authorities concerned for proper construction of the dam. They mentioned that if any one of the four enclosures are not constructed at the bank of the river Cahiti, 30 villages and 25,000 acres of land, schools, madrasahs and Tekerhat power line will be inundated by the hilly water from Indian state of Meghalaya.

Freedom fighters Mohammad Nazrul Islam and Mohammad Ekhlaur Rahman said in the previous years, people of this area have lost their dwelling houses and land due to the onrush of hilly water.

The lands have already been covered with sand due to lack of the cross dam, they added.

People of Jinarpur and Kharchar haor recently staged demonstration in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office to press home their demand for construction of the dam and threatened to go for action programme if their demand is not met immediately.

Hemp recovered

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Mar 12: Police recovered one kilogram of hemp from a nearby place of a booking counter of Akhaur rail station recently.

According to police sources, acting on a secret information, a team of police headed by ASI Ali Karim raided Akhaur rail station and recovered a big bundle of hemp from the area.