

National

News snaps

Tension over delimitation

PATUAKHALI, Mar 12: Tension has been prevailing at Charhadi in between Dasminda thana here and Lalmoham 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 Dlara survey. The survey will determine the ownership for certain, said official sources. But district administration sources here said Lalmoham 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 Dasminda 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 quantity of urea fertilisers from a cargo on Shitalakhy 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 Nurul Alam was the special guest. The function was presided over by GTI Director Prof M Hafiz 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 Shanti 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 Mosteppuddin Khan, ex-MP Mir Abul Khati Mantri, Advocate Abdul Wahab Khan, Jubo Dal Central Leader Golam Sharar Khan Shariat 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 Banipachang 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 year's 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 Hossaini Runu. The meeting was also addressed, among others, by Nurtag Begum, Lutfunnesa Lutfi, Mukti Roy, Aleya Saeed, Rehana Akhter, Sahana Bala, Fatema Khatoon, Halima Akhter Ruhina, Johra Khatoon, 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

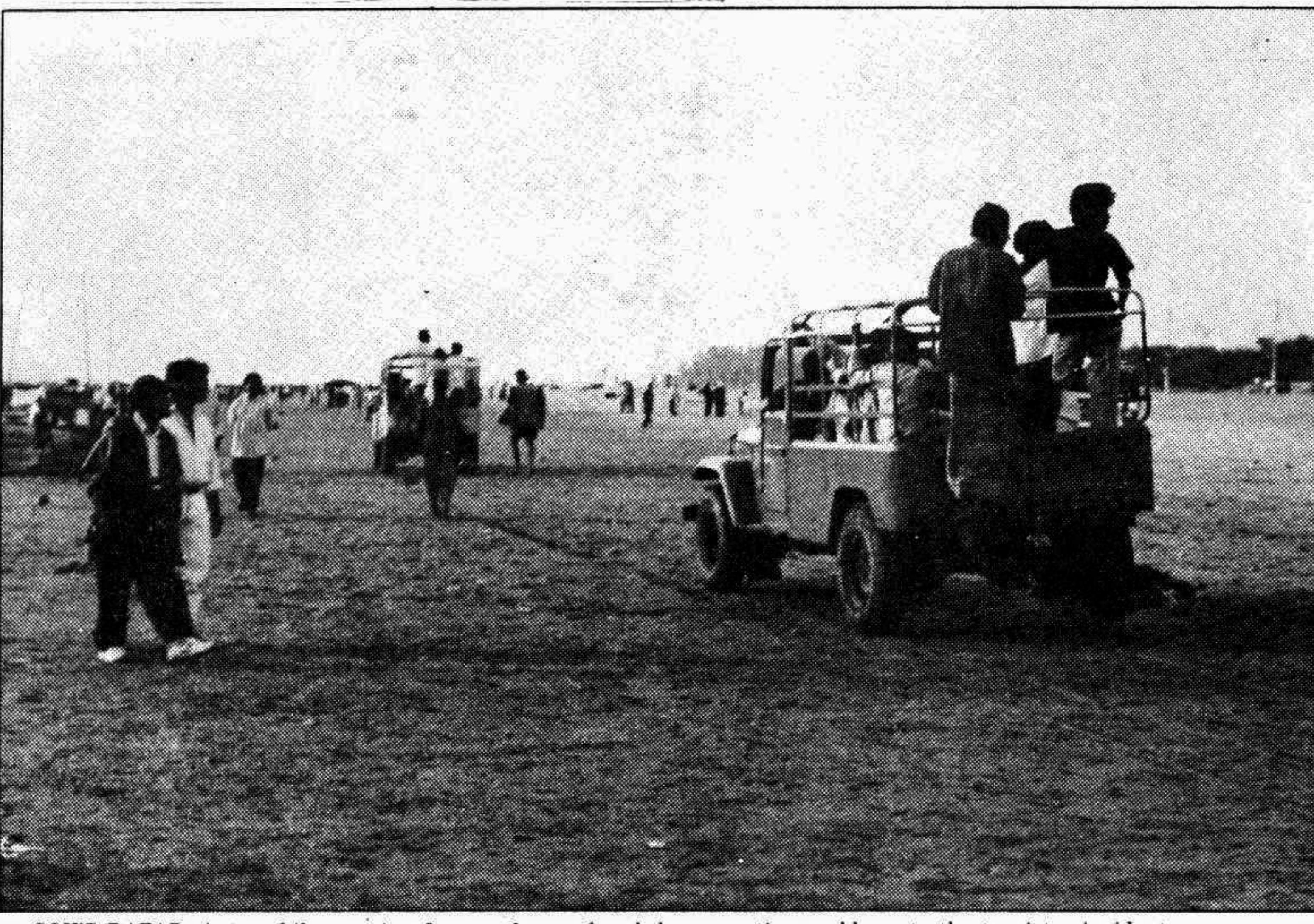
JESSORE, Mar 12: A female Union Parishad (UP) member was raped by an armed miscreant at her residence in Sarsa thana last week, reports UNB.

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 Harragach 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."



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, artistes 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 (Falgun 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.

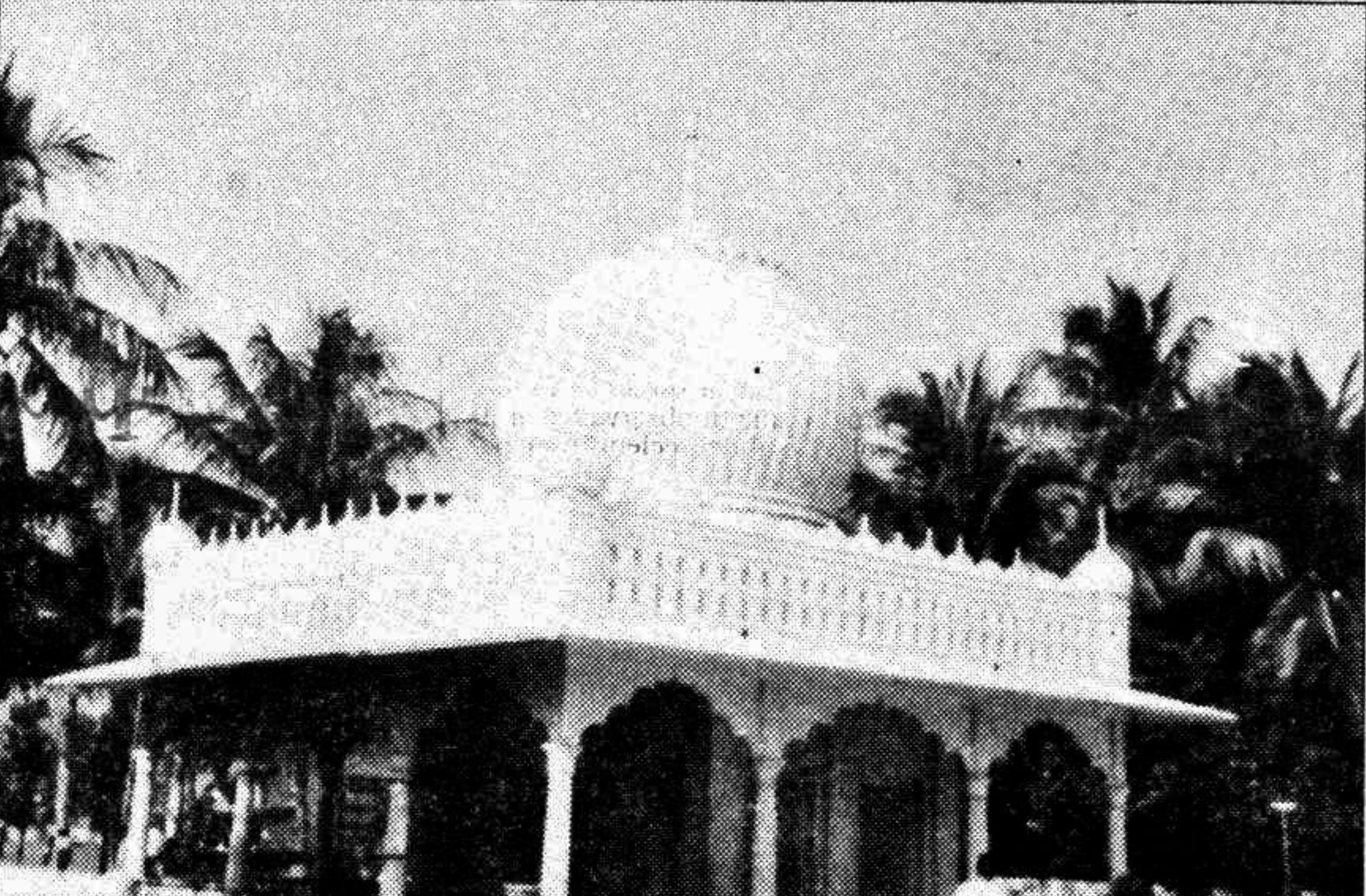
Lalon Shah died some 108 years back. Mystery is there over his birth and details of his life is not also not known as nothing is written about his biography. But Lalon Shah who lived within the 'Zamindary' of Rabindra Nath Tagore kept a tremendous impact on him.

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 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, Jhuru Shah, Ranjita, Nemai Shah, Shukur Shah, Khorshed Shah and Laily.

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.



— 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 Prafulla, Nikhil, Susanto and Prasanto of Thaipara village in Shalikha thana here.

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

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

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 unclear and filthy atmosphere.

Local people alleged that the authorities have been cultivating IRRU-Boro and transplanted Aman on about three acres of land in the health complex

2 health complexes ailing

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.

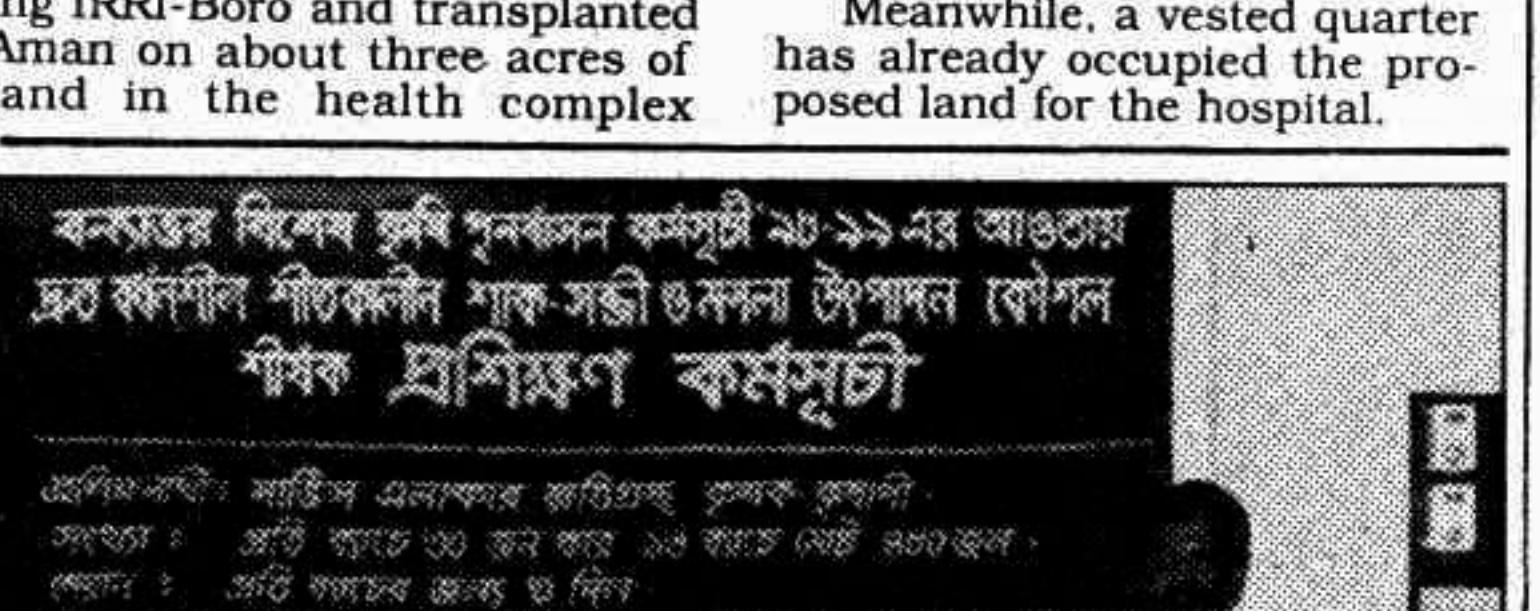
Health Ministry also asked the authorities to acquire five acres of land adjacent to the hospital which is yet to be implemented.

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

The board after necessary 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.



— Star photo

Housewife commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Mar 12: A newly-married housewife committed suicide in her father's house at village Shimulbag in Bajitpur thana on February 26. Police sources said Snigdha Begum, 18, daughter of Shahbaz Mia swallowed poison for unknown reason.

She was married only five months ago, police said. An unnatural death (UD) case was registered with Bajitpur thana in this connection.

Regional meet of Nat'l Child Award Competition

RANGAMATI, Mar 12: In a bid to select competitors in the National Child Award Competition-99, organised by Bangladesh Shishu Academy, the regional competition already commenced here from March 2, reports UNB.

This year Rangamati was selected as the venue for the regional level final competition for the first time.

Competitors from six districts — Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Feni, Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati — have been taking part in the competition, which will continue till April 17.

Local organiser of the academy Shudhamoy Chakma told the winners of this competition would be able to take part in national level competitions.

Two types of this Award Competitions have been classified into 62 subjects — 42 on education and culture and 20 on sports.

Besides, the competitors also divided into two categories — 'Ka', from class one to seven and 'Kha' up to class ten.

He said the four-phase competition has already begun in thana level and will continue till March 15 while in district level it will be held from March 19 to 22 and regional level from April 2 to 4 and finally national level from April 14 to 17.

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 Sharifullah 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.

A jute grower of Char Haji gan area in Char Bhadrashan 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 acre of land. On the other hand 10 to 12 maunds of jute are produced on the same land, he aid.

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.

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