

Centenary celebration programme ends

Vow to restore past glory of Pabna Edward College

From Ranesh Maitra

PBNA, Mar 21: The five-day centenary celebration of Pabna Edward College concluded on March 10.

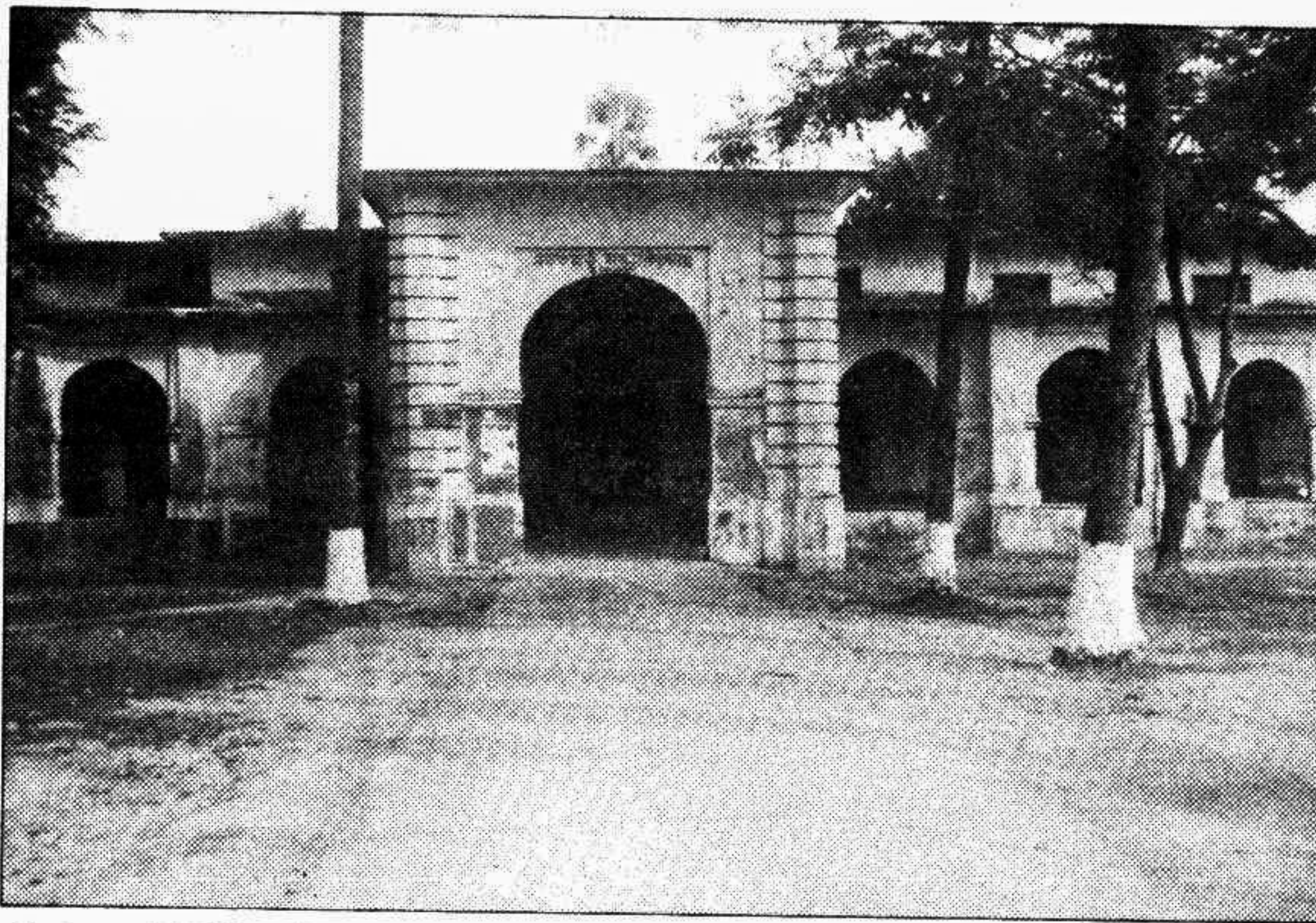
Speakers at a discussion meeting on the concluding day vowed to make the college campus free from terrorism and create a congenial atmosphere for education. They also vowed to make determined efforts to restore the past glory of the college.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh inaugurated the centenary festival on March 6. Two members of the cabinet, Mohammad Nasim and Prof M Abu Sayeed, both ex-students of the college took part in the function.

Prof Mohammad Abdur Rouf, president of Edward College Centenary Celebration Committee presided over the discussion. Prof. Fakhrul Islam, a retired principal and an ex-student of the college was the chief guest.

Prof Sheikh Kutubuddin, acting principal Prof Solaiman Ali, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Zannatul Ferdous MP, Prof Rafiqul Islam Bakul MP, Advocate Ramesh Maitra, general secretary, Pabna Edward College Ex-Students' Association and Maniruzzaman David general secretary, Edward College Students' Association addressed the function.

The speakers also paid rich tributes to the founder of the college, late Gopal Chandra Lahiri, former principal of the college, Roy Radhika Nath Bose, all donors of the college and all other principals, teachers and



Century-old Pabna Edward College.

— Star photo

ex-students of the college who were termed as a "galaxy of brilliant stars." The officials and employees were also lauded for their devoted work.

During the five-day festival, hundreds of ex-students, and present teachers and students participated in friendly cricket matches and memorial meet-

ings. A fair was also arranged on the occasion. A book named "Shatabdir Chhayapathey 100 years history of the college was published by Prof Manwar Hussain Jahedi. Besides, a souvenir and gifts were distributed to ex-students.

Among the eminent personalities who took part in the function were Dr. Mohammad Abdul Khaled, Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University, Prof Mujibar Rahman Bhuiyan, Chairman, Jessore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education and Dr Anwar Hossain, Director-General of IIT.

Traffic jam a regular feature in Satkhira

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, Mar 21: Satkhira town is over crowded with hundreds of vehicles like trucks, buses, coaster and coaches. Indiscriminate parking of trucks on the roads and hospital crossing, Puraton Satkhira, Hagachha bus stand of the town and due to illegal occupation of foot paths has caused traffic jams obstructing movement of pedestrians.

The town has also been congested with the movement of rickshaws and vans. About 2,500 rickshaws and vans ply on the roads and remain parked on the pavement hindering easy

movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

A large number of rickshaws and vans from villages come in the town.

The Roads and Highways Department's roads have been occupied by a section of unscrupulous traders, timber merchants and saw mills owners causing traffic jam.

Unauthorised road occupants were evicted in the last year. But after a few months they again established their tinsed and wooden shops on the roadside ignoring the ban imposed earlier.

4,000 certificate cases filed against Pabna farmers

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Mar 21: Nearly 4,000 certificate cases have been filed against the peasants in all the nine thanas here for non-payment of their outstanding agricultural loans.

According to an official source, the exact number of such cases was 3,926. In many cases, warrants of arrest have also been issued against many such cases was 3,926. In many cases, warrants of arrest have also been issued against many such defaulting loanees. They were compelled to adopt various methods to avoid arrest while many others were rotting in jail or are being harassed after obtaining bail from the court.

The loans were distributed among the peasants for purchasing seeds and other agricultural inputs. The banks which distributed such loans were Janata Bank, Rajshahi Krishi Unayanay Bank and Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB).

The outstanding loan stands at Taka five crores eighty-one lakh fifty-two thousand.

The defaulting loanees, however, stated that due to unpredictable flood, drought and other natural calamities, their production suffered immensely. For these reasons the loan money was actually lost in the field. Everything was washed away during the last year's floods. So the peasants have appealed for exemption of the loan and withdrawal of all pending cases against them.

Meanwhile, the banks have realised a total amount of Taka 21,03,39,000 from the defaulting loanees.

It may be mentioned here that during the same period of the last financial year, a total amount of Taka 9,03,39,000 was realised.

In Pabna district, the total outstanding loan stands at Taka 87,97,78,000 so far.

News snaps

457 projects being implemented

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 21: A total of 457 projects are being implemented in nine thanas of the district in the current financial year under Rural Infrastructure Development Programmes (RIDP), reports BSS.

According to district administration sources, 2241 tonnes of wheat have been sanctioned for the implementation of the projects. Of the total 65 projects are being implemented in Sirajganj sadar thana, 61 in Belkuchi thana, 59 in Shahjadpur, 53 in Kaziপুর, 40 in Ullapara, 39 in Tarash, 49 in Raigonj, 39 in Chowdhali and 52 in Kamarkhand thana. The implementation work is going on satisfactorily and will be completed by April next. The projects include construction and re-construction of roads, re-exavation of canals and earth work in the premise of different educational and religious institutions.

Bridge construction work progressing

CHUADANGA, Mar 21: Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Chuadanga has taken up a programme to implement four schemes in Damurhuda thana in the current financial year at a total cost of Taka 19,54,094, reports BSS.

The schemes are being implemented with the financial assistance of US aid PL-480. According to an official source the undertaken schemes include construction of three T beam bridges and one culvert. So far, 10 per cent work of the total schemes have been completed and the rest work is going on satisfactorily. The schemes are expected to be completed by June next.

Gender orientation workshop

MYMENSINGH, Mar 21: The gender orientation workshop of the second batch was held at the extension centre of Bangladesh Agriculture University on March 13, according to a press release of the university, reports BSS.

Women for women, a research and study group sponsored the workshop. Dean of the Veterinary Faculty and Convenor of the Deans Council Prof Quamrul Hasan was the chief guest at the inaugural function which was presided over by the Registrar of the Agriculture University M Najibur Rahman. The seminar was addressed, among others, by Executive Member of Women for Women Prof Mahmuda Islam, and Deputy Registrar (education) Mohammad Shahid Dad Khan.

Smuggling of narcotics on rise

NATORE, Mar 21: Narcotics and drugs including phensidyl, cannabis and heroin are being smuggled into the country through the borders of Lalpur and Bagha Chughat thanas in the district, local people alleged, reports APB.

These are openly sold in the six thanas of the district and also dispatched to other parts of the country, but law enforcers allegedly remain inactive. Knowledgeable sources say, narcotics are being smuggled by traders on both sides of the border like other business. Although rats are carried out some times, those are for public eyewash. The godfathers are never touched and if any body is arrested on charge of smuggling narcotics, he gets released in no time, local people alleged.



HABIGANJ, Mar 21: M A Kabir, an eminent social worker and a former member of Habiganj Press Club presenting a colour television and a Fax machine to Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, President of the club at a function held here recently. — Star photo

Reunion concludes

MADARIPUR, Mar 21: A two-day programme of reunion of the Ex-Students of Government Nazimuddin University College concluded on March 13 at the college premises, reports BSS.

Former Principal Prof Md Sharif Hossain attended the reunion as the chief guest, while former IGP Md Azizul Haque, Chairman of Bangladesh Portion Corporation Khandaker Rashedul Haque, Additional Secretary Abdul Mannan Hawlader were the special guests. Prof Md Motiur Rahman presided over the reunion function. A total of 1,000 ex-students participated in the re-union function. A discussion was held on this occasion which was addressed, among others, by member-secretary Prof Shahedul Haq Khokon, Advocate Obaidur Rahman Khan, Lutfor Rahman, MA Wazed Mia, AKM Mujibur Rahman, Alifuzuddin Ahmed, Shamsur Azad and Abdul Haque.

HYV wheat farming on 15,000 hectares

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Mar 21: High yielding variety (HYV) of wheat has been cultivated on 15,000 hectares in five thanas of the district in the current season, according to an official source, reports BSS.

The thana-wise breakup is: 4,000 hectares in Chapainawabganj, 3,000 hectares in Shibganj, 3,000 hectares in Bholahat and 5,000 hectares in Nachol and Gomastapur. The Agriculture Extension Department has set up some demonstration plots in these thanas to train the farmers on scientific method of wheat cultivation.

Man killed in road accident

MYMENSINGH, Mar 21: One person was killed and 15 were injured as a truck hit a railway engine at a level-crossing here on Sunday, reports APB.

Billal Hossain, 22, of Netrokona died on the spot as the fish-loaded Dhaka-bound truck hit the moving railway engine at the Paat Gudam level-crossing in the early hours, railway police said. Four of the injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital and the rest were given first aid there. The gate man was allegedly not on duty at that time, Railway police said.

Seven video cameras recovered

SATKHIRA, Mar 21: Kalaroa thana police recovered seven video cameras from a private car near Dhalbari on Satkhira-Bhokra road in sadar thana while it was being smuggled out to India on Sunday night, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off, Kalaroa thana police led by OC Hashem Khan chased a Bhokra-bound private car when the private car reached Bhokra-Dhalbari area it hit an electric pillar and fell down in a road-side ditch. Three passengers of the car managed to escape. Police recovered seven video camera from the car and seized the car.

Water scarcity in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Mar 21: Although Jamalpur Pourasabha was declared a Class One municipality five years ago, the town dwellers are yet deprived of adequate supply of drinking water, not to speak of other civic amenities, reports APB.

The 130-year-old pourasabha has a population of about 1.5 lakh now in its 12 wards. But water supply connections have so far been given to only 1900 subscribers in wards 1 and 2. Water supply system was started here in 1969 with two over-head tanks. The number has not increased in the last 30 years. People complained that the pump machines often go out of order and as a result water supply remains suspended for days together. They also complained that the supply water is often very dirty and unfit for drinking without boiling.

Cloth loaded truck snatched

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 21: A truck loaded with 47 bales of cloth worth about Tk one crore was snatched at Kadamtoli on Friday night, police said, reports APB.

The truck was going to Belkuchi from Dhaka. When it reached Kadamtoli, some snatchers attacked it, beat the driver and helpers and drove it away. High officials of the district police visited the spot and a case has been filed in connection with the incident.

Loan distributed among landless

BHERAMARA, Mar 21: Interest-free loans of Taka five lakh forty thousand has been distributed among one hundred and sixty-five members of landless families in Bheramara, Daulatpur and Mirpur thanas under the Poverty Alleviation Programme recently by Rural Development Board, reports BSS.

The programme included cow-fattening, tailoring, nursery, poultry and pisciculture programme. Bheramara thana unit of Bangladesh Rural Development Board distributed about Taka one lakh fifty thousand among 20 female members of Bittohin Samity for poultry and dairy programme.

One killed as police open fire on mob in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Mar 21: One person was killed and two were injured when police opened fire to disperse a mob protesting alleged involvement of police in a dacoity here at around 5.10 am Wednesday.

Abdul Momen, 22, a degree examinee died on the spot while Bashiruddin, 34, and Mintu, 14, received bullet injuries.

The incident took place on the Jhenidah-Chuadanga road at village Baradi near Haridhani Bazar. Agitated people held five policemen hostage for helping dacoits during a dacoity in a truck in front of them in the morning. Being informed, about 100 policemen from adjoining areas rushed to the spot and gheraoed the people. At one stage, police fired around 30 rounds of shots and lobbed 14 tear gas shells to free their colleagues leaving one dead and two injured.

The five policemen accused of 'helping' the dacoits were closed at the Jhenidah police lines. None was arrested in this connection till filling of this report.

Terror of Faridpur arrested

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 21: Babu Kashi 38, a top terror of the district was arrested by police from a jungle beside Alipur food godown recently.

Babu Kashi was wanted by police for his involvements in 22 criminal cases including murders, dacoities, rape and other anti-social activities.

On a tip off, a contingent of police headed by Habilder Nurul Islam raided the place in a commando style and arrested him.

It may be mentioned here that Babu Kashi was sentenced to death by hanging by the District Judge Court in the sensational Feroj murder case. He was acquitted from the High Court.

People of the town heaved a sigh of relief with the arrest of Babu Kashi. Just after the arrest of Babu Kashi, his accomplices started blasting bombs trembling the area.

Salt producers demonstrate for fair price

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 21: Some 10,000 salt growers of the coastal belt staged a demonstration in front of the TNO's office at Maheshkhali yesterday, demanding fair price of their produces and crackdown on smuggling of the product, reports APB.

They gave an ultimatum to the administration to meet their demands by Saturday next, otherwise they threatened to launch a movement and paralyse life in the district.

The farmers, who have been agitating for a couple of months to realise the demands, brought sacks of salt with them and sprayed those on the streets in protest.

The additional deputy commissioner from Cox's Bazar rushed to the spot in a bid to pacify the salt growers. He assured them to refer their grievances to the higher authorities.

Their seven-point demand include formation of a Salt Board with its HQ in Cox's Bazar, curbing smuggling of salt from Myanmar and India as well as creating buffer stocks of salt procuring from the growers at the minimum price of Tk 100 per maund.

Good output of mango expected in greater Rajshahi this year

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Mar 21: There will be a bumper production of mango this year in the country, experts hope.

About 90 per cent of mango is produced in greater Rajshahi district.

According to the local office of Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department (BAED), weather has remained favourable from the very beginning of the season. Cloudless sky, tolerable heat of the sun and breeze help mango-buds blossom and grow well, they say.

On the other hand, the current year is 'on-season' for mango. There was a poor production of mango in the 'off-season' of last year.

Considering all these factors, BAED sources expect a bumper production of mango.

According to BAED, there are mango gardens on about 40,000 acres of land in greater Rajshahi. Out of the total, there are 22,000 acres in Chapainawabganj, 8,000 acres in Rajshahi, 6,000 acres in Natore and 5,000 acres in Naogaon districts. Mango is a cash crop in these areas. In many areas like Shibganj thana of Chapainawabganj, mango cultivation is the main sector of agriculture. There are extensive and thick gardens of mango trees extending miles after miles instead of farm lands. Lakhs of people including farmers, labourers and traders wait for the season for their main earning of the whole year.

BAED hopes that a total of about 4.10 lakh metric tons of mango will be produced this year in greater Rajshahi. According to the expectation about 2.10 lakh metric tons of mango will be produced in Chapainawabganj district, 90,000 metric tons in Rajshahi district, 60,000 metric tons in Natore and 50,000 metric tons in Naogaon district.

Mango of Rajshahi region has good name for its sweet taste and nutritive quality.

In the current 'on-season' mango sprouts have grown abundantly in almost each and every mango tree. If 60 per cent of these sprouts grow fruit-fully many trees would break down for heavy weight.

Experts of BAED said that they had been expecting a bumper production even at least 25-30 per cent of the buds grow fruit-fully and exist. The sky has been almost clear throughout the whole season and no fog, rain and storm has been experienced in this season, they said. Attack of diseases has not also been reported in this year. BAED personnel have advised the farmers to spray prescribed medicine, if clouds, fog and rains come, for preventing attacks of diseases.

In the meantime, most trees have grown green fruit-stones.

There are about 30 varieties of mango in greater Rajshahi region. Of those, Frazier, Langra, Khersapat, Gopalbhog, Mo-hanbhog, Heemsagar, Dudhsagar, Ashshina, Rani-

pasand and Madhusagar are the most famous and popular varieties.

Mango Research Institute, situated in Chapainawabganj has also developed a few new varieties of mango. Out of those, Anrapali and Mohananda varieties have become popular in the region.

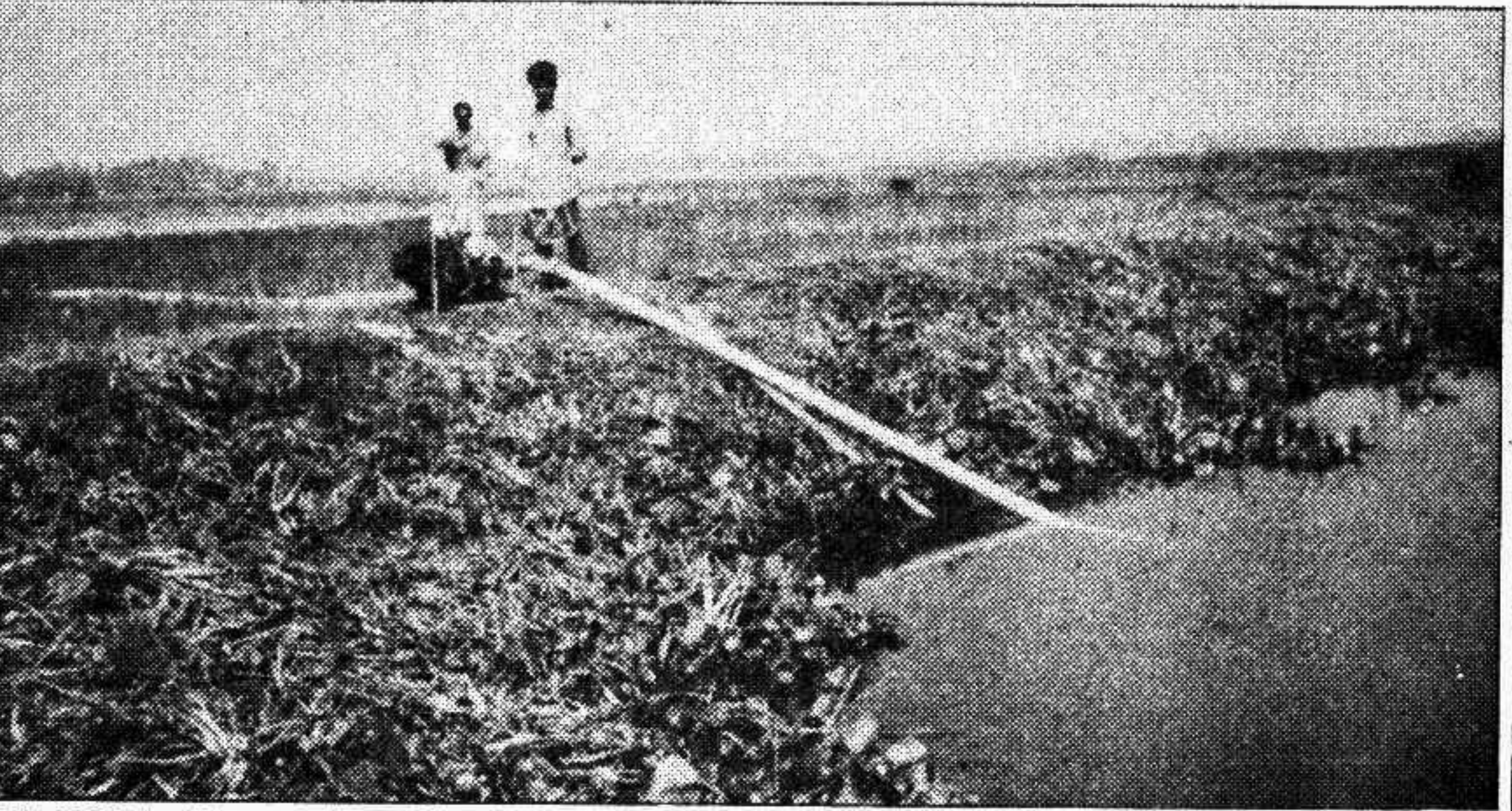
Meanwhile, traders and businessmen from all over the country, have already started to visit the mango producing areas. Many gardens have already sold and bought two to three times.

According to farmers, a mango garden is sold usually three to five times in the on-season. Poor farmers sell their gardens before budding at a very low price. Some others sell their gardens after buds come or fruit-stones grow.

Merchants and money-lenders invest crores of Taka in this sector during the season every year.

Ultimately, the original farmers are deprived of fair price of their crop.

In addition to the farmers, lakhs of other people also earn in this season from mango cultivation. This starts when the garden-owners call labourers for irrigation and spraying medicines to the mango-trees before and after buds come. Lakhs of people, traders, labourers, transport-owners, storehouse owners, basket producers and so on get engaged in cultivation, harvest and marketing of mango.



MAGURA: Water of ponds, ditches and other water bodies are being used widely for irrigation purpose throughout the district. As a result the ground water level is going down very fast every day. Photo shows a typical scene of irrigation on 'Rabi' crops from a ditch at Masalia in Gayeshpur union. — Star photo

Sharp fall in water level

Aricha-Kazirhat ferry service may close down at any moment

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Mar 21: Ferry service between Aricha and Kazirhat is threatened due to sharp fall in water level of the river Jamuna in these days.

The ferry service may close down at any moment resulting in untold sufferings to thousands of passengers, problems in ferrying necessary commodities before the ensuing Eid-ul-Azha festival.

The fear was expressed by Baby Islam, leader of the Motor Owners' Group and Advocate Shimul Biswas, a leader of Truck Drivers' Association while talking to this correspondent.

A high official of the Hydrology Department told The

Daily Star that if the water level fell by four to five inches more, the Jamuna would lose navigability and the plying of ferries would have to be suspended. They disclosed that for keeping the river navigable and Kazirhat-Aricha ferry ghat operative, heavy dredging had been continued, but the intensity at which the water level in the Jamuna had been falling was much greater.

The official further disclosed that already an amount of Taka five crore have been spent this year for dredging of the river for keeping Nagorbari-Kazirhat-Aricha ferry ghat navigable. Ten lakh square feet of sand have already been re-

moved through dredging. As many as 10 dredgers have been working for dredging purposes.

A BIWTC official, when asked over telephone, told this correspondent that nearly 2,500 big and small transports with heavy load, either of passengers or of commercial goods and cows are passing through this route every day. Any disruption, caused by any reason whatsoever, would put the people into untold sufferings. He said, in spite of opening of Bangabandhu Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge, movement of transports, specially of trucks has not reduced through this route.

Water crisis hampers irrigation on IIRI-Boro crop lands in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 21: Irrigation on thousands of acres of IIRI-Boro crop lands in seven unions including Gourandhi Pourasabha is being hampered due to acute crisis of water.

Nearly 8,000 acres of crop-lands in the areas cannot be irrigated.

Many farmers are in great concern due to irrigation water crisis. Some farmers said, they could procure some water using 15 power pumps in a canal, but the flow of water is very meagre against the necessity. So they could not irrigate their lands properly.

It is feared that a vast tract of lands may remain fallow in Gorakhdaha, Tarakupi, Dunuria, Katakakhal, Bahmadi including Kamalapur villages in these unions in this season.

After the prolonged flood of last year farmers tried to pro-

duce more crop, particularly, IIRI and Boro to cope with the situation and took up more than double blocks. But now due to acute water crisis their hard toil and endeavour will not bring any fruitful result.

This year many farmers took loan for IIRI and Boro farming. Naturally they will have to face another setback with the loans.

2 outlaws killed in gunfight with police

MAGURA, Mar 21: Two people were killed and six others injured in a gunfight between police and outlaws at Shatpara in Shalikha thana early today, reports UNB.

The clash ensued at about 3 am when a police squad, on a tip-off, rinded the house of Abul Basar of the village where the gunmen, said to be members of Biplobi Communist Party, went to collect toll from the land-lord.

Sensing police presence, the "terrorists" opened fire on police. Police also returned fire.

One short machinegun, one shutter-gun and 12 bullets were recovered from the spot, police said.

The dead were identified as Nasiruddin Ahmed, 40, of Shatakhal village and Asalu-tuddin, 38, of Kachkhali village in Shalikha thana. Both died on the spot.

In the two-hour-long gunfight, two members of the gang — Abdul Aziz and Baidut — suffered serious bullet injuries and were arrested. They were taken on three-day remand for interrogation.

The injured four policemen were admitted to police Sadar hospital.