

News snaps

Girls hostel in bad shape

From Our Correspondent
RANGPUR, Apr 18: Shaheed Jahanara Imam Girls hostel of Rangpur Carmichael College is facing manifold problems. It has become almost unfit for habitation.
Water and electricity supply is completely inadequate. The iron bar fence of the hostel is not well protected. The boarders are residing in the hostel amidst great sufferings.

Dacoits arrested

From Our Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, Apr 18: Trishal police arrested two dacoits from the hostel of a madrasah recently.
Acting on secret information police raided the hostel of Jantali Senior Madrasah and arrested the dacoits. They were identified as Tota Miah and Ansar Ali.

1 killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, 18: One person was killed when a bus hit a tempo on Kushtia-Jhenidah road near Madandanga on April 16 afternoon. The victim was identified as Sekendar Ali of village Sreerampur in Saikupa thana. He was a passenger of the tempo. According to eyewitnesses when the bus hit the tempo Sekendar Ali fell from the tempo and was crushed under the wheels of the bus. He died on the spot. Police later recovered the body and sent it to Jhenidah Hospital for autopsy.

Man electrocuted

From Our Correspondent
MOULVIBAZAR, April 18: One Suhan Miah, 30, son of late Haris Ullah of village Jagatshahi in the sadar thana of Moulvibazar was electrocuted recently.
According to witnesses, the incident took place when he was passing through the village road, he came in contact with a live electric wire. He died instantaneously. Following his tragic death, the villagers agitated against the Pally Biddut authority.

Work not progressing

CHANDPUR, Apr 18: Work for construction of Hajiganj Bridge over the Dakatia River is progressing at snail's pace for lack of funds, reports APB.
The 375-feet bridge will link Hajiganj with Ramganj, Raipur and Luxmipur Sadar. Construction work of the bridge was inaugurated on March 23, 1994 and it was scheduled to be completed within 30 months.
But till now, only 30 per cent of the work has been completed. Nobody can say when the work will be completed. Originally, the cost of the bridge was estimated at Tk 4.1 crore, which was to be funded by the government. Only Tk 50,000 had been allocated for the project during the current fiscal year, a source in the local office of the Roads and Highways Department said.

Posts of doctors vacant

RAJSHAHI, Apr 18: As many as 578 posts of doctors out of 1,581 are vacant in hospitals and rural health complexes in 16 northern districts for long, reports APB.
There are 586 hospitals and health complexes in the districts. Besides, 39 posts of doctors are vacant at Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra and Rangpur medical college hospitals, sources at the Divisional Health Directorate said. These vacant posts include those of 13 senior consultants, five junior consultants, 417 assistant surgeons and medical officers and 89 dental surgeons.

Disbursement of allowance

RANGPUR, Apr 18: The disbursement of old persons allowances is on full-swing in the district, reports BSS.
The Social Welfare Department has enlisted 7,380 old persons in the district and started disbursement of allowances among them at the rate of Taka 100 each per month, according to official sources. The scheme was initiated in the district about a year ago and every month a sum of Taka 7.38,000 is being disbursed as old persons allowance.

Meeting of law & order body

NARSINGDHI, Apr 18: A meeting of the district law and order committee was held on Thursday at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room, reports BSS.
Presided over by Deputy Commissioner Rafiqul Islam, the meeting was attended, among others, by Police Super Mohlesur Rahman, Civil Surgeon Zahirul Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Rev) Bijon Kanti Sarker, Pourashava Chairman Abdul Motin Sarker and the six thanas Nirbahi Officers. The meeting discussed prevailing law and order situation in six thanas of the district and called upon the law enforcing agencies to take effective measures against the criminals and anti-social elements.

Tubewell water being tested

SATKHIRA, Apr 18: The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has taken up a programme to test tubewell water to detect arsenic in seven thanas of the district in the current year, reports BSS.
According to official sources under the arsenic testing programme water of 3634 tubewells in seven thanas has already been tested in the regional research centre in Satkhira and detected the presence of arsenic in water of 2909 tubewells.
One British geological survey team had tested the tubewells water of Satkhira district in August '98 and detected the presence of arsenic in 71 per cent tubewells of the districts. The most badly affected areas are Kalaroa thana, sadar thana, Tala thana and Debhata thana.

Cub-holiday held

MANIKGANJ, Apr 18: The cub-holiday of Bangladesh Scouts, Manikganj thana unit, was held at Manikganj Government High School play ground on April 10, reports BSS.
Md Manfuzur Rahman, Additional Deputy Magistrate, was present in the inaugural function as the chief guest. F A Abdul Jabbar, District Education Officer, was the chief guest in the concluding ceremony. Both the functions were chaired by Gulnar Najmun Nahar, president, Bangladesh Scouts, Manikganj thana unit and Thana Nirbahi Officer, Manikganj. Among others, Sultan Uddin Ahmed, District Commissioner, Bangladesh Scouts and Headmaster, Manikganj Government High School, Kazi Keramat Hossain, Vice President, Bangladesh Scouts Manikganj thana unit, spoke on the occasion. A total of 32 units of scouts participated in the camp.

Pahela Baishak celebrated

NARSINGDHI, Apr 18: Pahela Baishak, the first of day Bengali new year, was celebrated here with traditional festivity and fervour on Thursday, reports BSS.
Many socio-cultural organisations arranged separated programmes including Baishakhi Mela, colourful procession, milad mahfils, opening of halkhata, distribution of sweets, folk festival, recitation, discussion meeting and painting competition for the children. District Awami League arranged milad mahfil and discussion meeting at its office. BNP also arranged discussion meeting to celebrate Pahela Baishak.

Uplift projects undertaken

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 18: Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) has taken up four development projects in the district in 1998-999 fiscal year, reports BSS.
According to official sources, the government has sanctioned Taka 2,43,00,000 for the implementation of the projects. He projects included construction of big bridges and culverts. About 60 per cent of the work of two schemes has been completed. The work order of the rest two schemes is on process. The work will start soon.

No initiative for protecting people from cyclone, storm

BARISAL, Apr 18: The people of the country's coastal belt have complained that there was no significant initiative for protecting the people from the cyclone and storm during the last 28 years of independence, reports UNB.
Few embankments and a number of cyclone shelters were constructed in the belt for protecting about 70 lakh people, which are too inadequate.
Besides, there are some publicity campaigns in the national and other levels like meetings, seminars, and radio-TV broadcast during the storm. But these activities have failed to create total awareness among the people for saving their lives

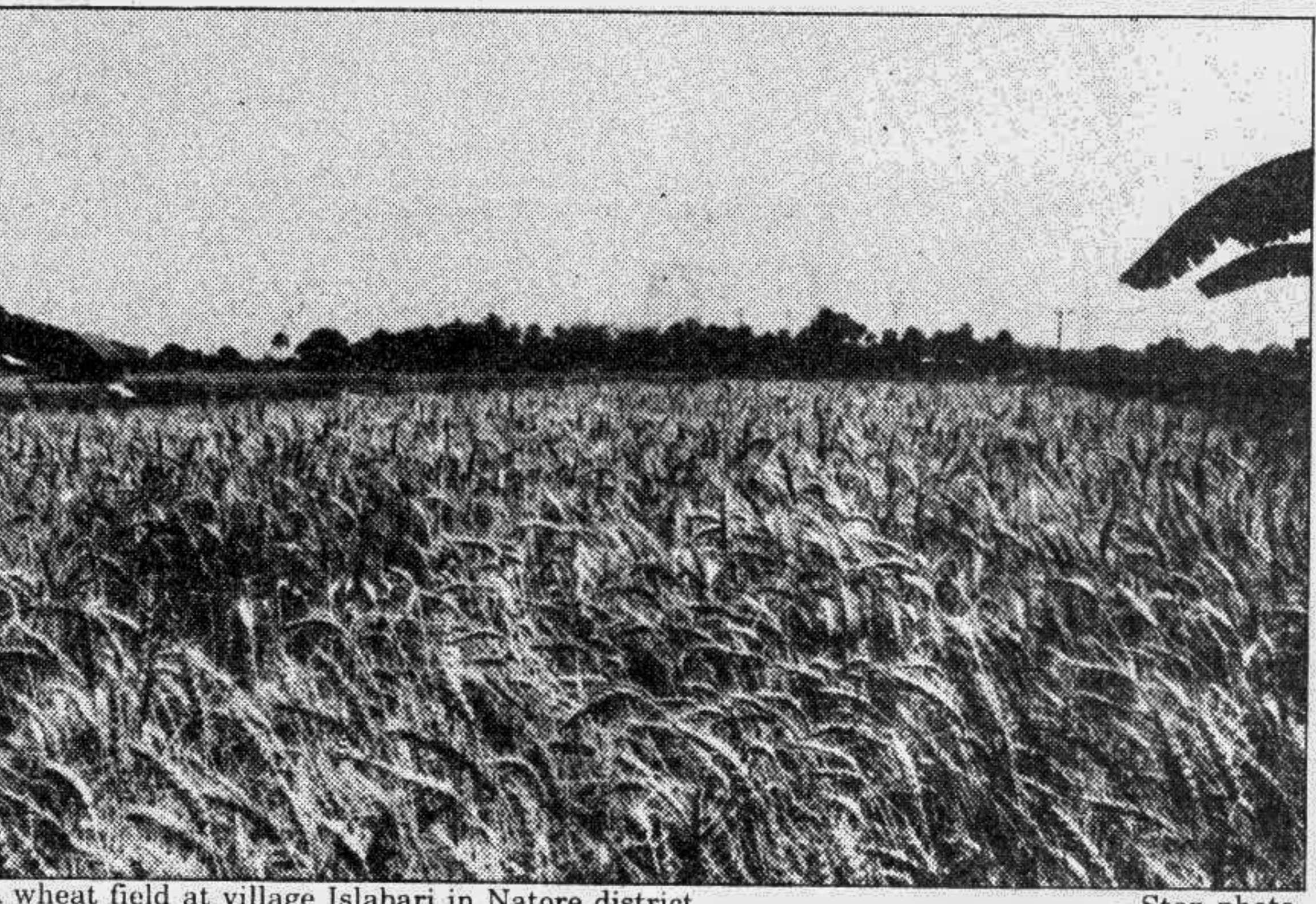
during the catastrophe.
Cyclone lashed the country's coasts 51 times during the last two centuries leaving trails of devastation, unofficial sources said.
A total of 7,68,292 people lost their lives during these cyclones, said the source. Of the total deaths, 1,51,574 were reported during the post-independence period.
The cyclone preparedness system in the country is century-old and not adequate to cope with the severity of the situation.
The British colonial rulers introduced four types of signals for the river ports and 11 types

of signal systems for the seaports in order to protect these establishments. This system was not changed since then causing much confusion among the people.
There was no adequate campaign in the coastal areas for creating awareness about the duties of the people during the storm for saving their lives and property.
But there was no uniform system of signal and the people guess the severity of the storm with the increase of the number of different signals.
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society proposed to introduce four types of signals a few years back, but the proposal was not

approved as yet.
There are 33,000 volunteers in 33 thanas of the country's coastal belt, but the activities of the volunteers are not visible except during the stormy weather.
There was no initiative in the grass-root level to create awareness.
The publicity campaign by the Radio and Television does not reach the people living in the most vulnerable points of the coasts.
Besides, the condition of the cyclone shelter centres constructed across the coastlines is deplorable due to lack of proper maintenance and care.

One killed, 20 hurt in launch dacoity

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Apr 18: One killed and more than 20 people were injured, six of them critically in a passenger launch dacoity on Lohalia river of Patuakhali district recently.
Police and witnesses said, a gang of armed dacoits, 15 to 20 in number attacked the passenger launch on Lohalia river at about 3:15 am in the night. It was on way to Rangabali. It sailed from Patuakhali launch terminal at 2 am. It was carrying more than 100 passengers on board.
The dacoits armed with lethal weapons first attacked the driver and took over control of the launch. Then they swooped on the passengers after sailing from Bhuria in the sadar thana.
The dacoits boarded the launch in guise of passengers. Later on they put on masks during the attack, beat the passengers indiscriminately and looted away wealth and money worth more than 50 thousand taka, passengers said.
After an hour-long dacoity they decamped at a shoal in Lohalia river near East Jainkati with the booties.
The launch returned to Patuakhali after the incident. One Majibbar Rahman, 40, succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital at Patuakhali. Another passenger, 20, has been sent to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital with critical condition. Six others were treated at Patuakhali General Hospital.



A wheat field at village Islabari in Natore district. —Star photo

Good output of wheat in Natore

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Apr 18: Farmers of Natore have made a good production of the Chhattal crop of wheat this season.
At least 55,000 metric tons of wheat are likely to produce in six thanas here this year on 23,795 hectares of land.
AED, however, fixed the production target at 54,550 metric tons of wheat.
The wheat cultivation was delayed by the last year's deluge. Then the drought made the growers worried about the prospect of their crop. Although the sterility (cheeta) of wheat was reported from some crop fields, but the number in negligible, said farmers and agricultural officials.
Many farmers of Islabari, Boro Vita, Diar Vita and Mollikhati in the Sadar thana told this correspondent that although the winter was short lived during wheat cultivation, the cold weather at night which has become a new phenomenon in this region,

Dacoity in Satkhira bound bus

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, Apr 18: A bus dacoity was committed in a Jessore-Satkhira bound minibus at 7 pm on Monday.
The dacoits snatching 12 passengers looted over one lakh taka in cash and kinds. According to Satkhira Bus Syndicate, the minibus started at 5 pm from Jessore towards Satkhira. When it reached at Tuzupur bus stoppage the dacoits, seven in number took control of the bus from the driver with a revolver. Other dacoits began to stab the passengers and looted money and booties. The dacoits were in disguise of passengers.
The wounded persons were admitted to different private clinics and hospital. No case has been filed till filing of this report.

Villagers' clash leaves one dead in Sunamganj

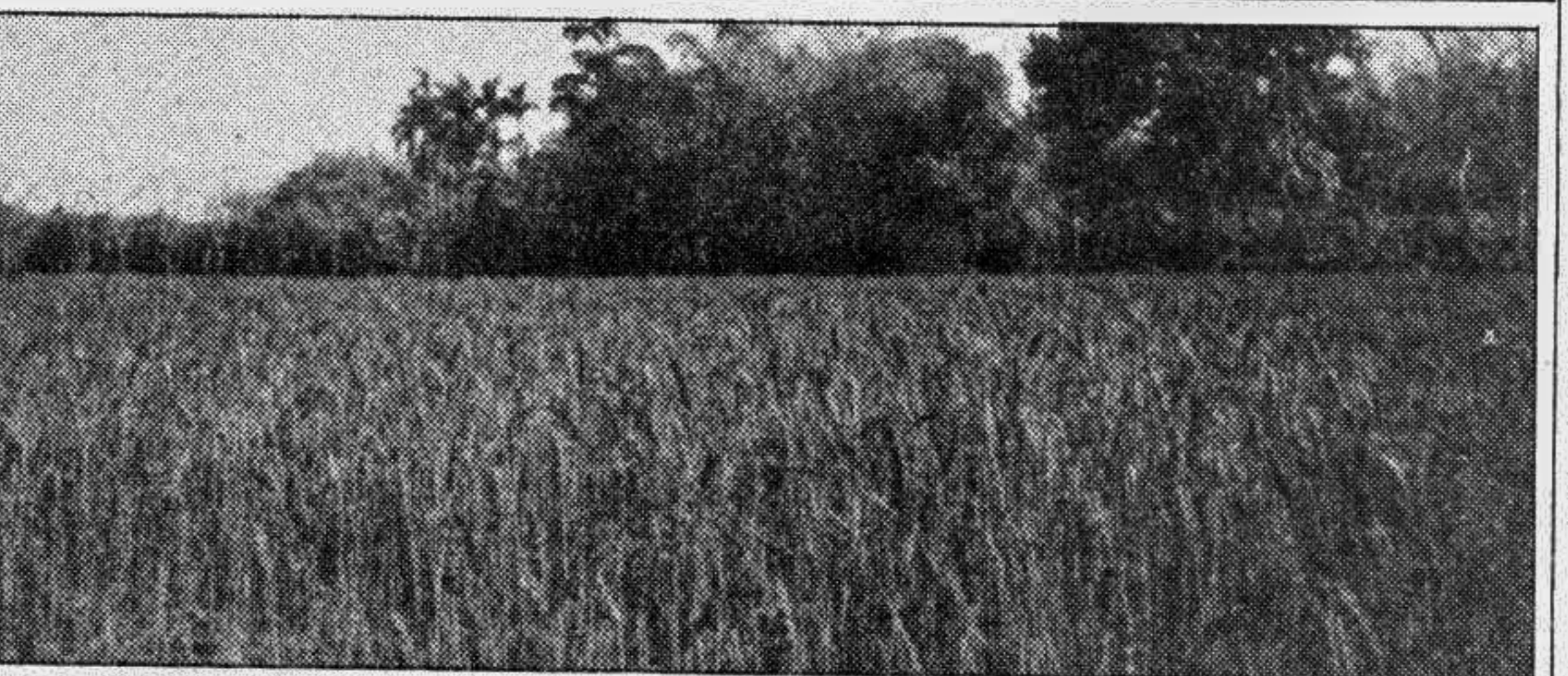
From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Apr 18: One person was killed and 50 others were injured in a clash between the villagers of two villages in Doarabazaar thana of Sunamganj district on the Eid day.
Police had to lob seven rounds of teargas shells to bring the situation under control.
Two groups of young villagers of Shariapur and Masimpur had an exchange of hot words over taking wine on the Eid day morning. It was negotiated within a short time. After sometime, the situation went tense again when the body of one Sultan of village Shariapur was found at a place near the thana headquarters. The news spread sharply.
The villagers from Shariapur, Naingam swooped on the rivals as both the sides were locked in the armed clash. About 50 persons sustained injuries and eight shops were looted during the clash. Police lobbed seven rounds of teargas shells to bring the situation under control. The villagers of Shariapur lodged a case accusing 73 of the rivals. Police have been deployed there.

Biennial confce of Magura dist unit of JCD

From Our Correspondent
MAGURA, Apr 18: The biennial conference of Magura district unit of Jalyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was held at Asaduzzaman auditorium here recently.
Mohammad Alamgir Hossain presided over the conference while Masiur Rahaman, whip of the opposition in the Parliament and central leader of BNP was the chief guest.
Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, president of the central committee of Chhatra Dal inaugurated the conference.
Kazi Salimul Haque Kamal, president of Magura district BNP, Nazimuddin, general secretary of Magura district BNP, Advocate Ahmed Hossain and Iqbal Aktar Khan Kafur, vice president of the district committee of BNP were special guests.
Nasiruddin Pintu, general secretary of the central committee of Chhatra Dal was the chief guest. Among others Manjur-e-Elahi Tarikul Islam Bani, ABM Mosharraf Hossain, Shafiqul Alam Tuhin, MA Majeed, student leaders of the central committee of Chhatra Dal spoke in the conference.
Shabed Hasan Tagor and Aminur Rahman were new elected president and general secretary respectively of the district committee of Chhatra Dal.

Accommodation problem for girls at Rajendra College

From Our Correspondent
FARIDPUR, Apr 18: Several hundred girl students studying in degree pass, honours and master courses at Rajendra University College have been facing untold suffering owing to absence of girls' hostel on the college campus.
Honours and subsequently Master courses in different subjects were introduced in the college 12 years ago. Some guardians said regretting that not a single girls' hostel has yet been set up by the college authority on the college campus to accommodate the girl students from far-flung areas of greater Faridpur and its adjoining districts.
A good number of girl students of the college had to discontinue their studies for want of hostel accommodation. Many more from distant areas have to reside with their near or distant relations as paying guests for having higher education. Their studies are seriously hampered for want of congenial atmosphere at the relatives houses.
Some girl students of the college used to live in rented houses in the town in mess system. But they had to leave the rented house for want of security. Some guardians alleged that they had already withdrawn their wards from the college as there is no provision of hostel at the college campus to provide accommodation to the girl students.
Mention may be made here that acute accommodation problem is also prevailing in the boys' hostel of the college. Moreover, two or three hostel buildings on the campus have been lying in a very dilapidated condition. They may collapse at any moment causing casualties to the students or other people moving nearby.
So, the concerned authorities should immediately take steps to construct a girls' hostel building at the college campus where the girl students from far-flung areas can reside and prosecute their students with devotion.



A view of a wheat field at village Anandipur in Char Sitra union under the sadar thana. —Star photo

"Biju" celebrated in CHT

From Shuvra Jyoti Chakma
KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 18: 'Biju' the biggest and traditional annual festival of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts was celebrated with befitting programmes for three days. The festival began on April 12 and continued up to April 14 this year.
Various organisation took up different programmes in celebrating the festival. The programmes included various traditional games of the tribal community named as 'Gilahara', 'Nadenghara', 'Dahara', 'Putthihara' and 'Panihara'.
In Rangamati, a week-long indigenous cultural fair started from April 7 of the year. The Tribal Cultural Institute of Rangamati organised the fair with the financial assistance of a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Various traditional goods of the tribal community was displayed at the fair. The fair started from last year at the compound of Rangamati Tribal Cultural Institute. Renowned poet Shamsur Rahman inaugurated the fair last year. A colourful procession was brought out at Rangamati on April 13 welcoming 'Biju'.
Marma community in Bandarban district sadar played 'pani khela'—a traditional game of the Marna community at Rajbari Midan. Every year they celebrate 'Pani khela'.
Although the tribal community call the 'Biju' in various names, but now-a-days 'Biju' is called as 'Boisabi'. The main programme of the first words of Chakma, Marna and Tripura community.
According to the word 'Boisabi', —Boi comes from Tripura's word 'Boisu', 'Sa' comes from Marma's word 'Sangrai' and finally 'Bi' comes from Chakma's 'Biju'.
But the word 'Biju' is known to all in CHT.
Boisabi programme depends on the Bangla Choitra month. The main programme of the Boisabi was celebrated on the last day of Choitra'. The Chakmas call the day as 'Mulbiju'. The word 'Mulbiju' means 'Main Biju'. Marna community call it as Sangrai. Although they celebrate it on every 1st January of the year.
The Chakmas celebrate the Boisabi programme in three phases. The phases are Phul Biju, Mul Biju and Cosh ya

Baral now a dead canal

PABNA, Apr 18: The once-mighty stream called 'Baral', which originated from the Chalan Beel, has now almost become morbid beyond recognition, reports APB.
People tend to call it a 'dead canal'.
Meanwhile, the underground water levels have been receding fast, endangering irrigation.
As a result, vast areas in Gurudaspur, Bagatipara, Lalpur, Baraigram, Singra, Tarash, Chatmohar, Bhanguara, Banwarinagar Faridpur thana have almost dried up.
With the closure of the flow of the Padma and unplanned construction of a sluice gate at Charghat, some 125 kilometre section of the river, up to the Jamuna, has silted up and lost its navigability.
Positions of other small rivers in the area have also met similar fate. The rivers that used to have a width of 1,000 feet have now turned into narrow streams with a width of 100 to 150 feet. Depth of these rivers has been reduced from an average 100 feet to 30/40 feet.
These rivers hardly remain navigable except in the monsoon. On average, these rivers remain non-navigable for six to seven months during the year. Bullock carts move along the dried up river beds.
Business and traders of the region are consequently incurring staggering losses. They complain that they have to spend two to three times more on account of transportation costs.
Meanwhile, underground water levels have also been dropping fast, making it very difficult to undertake cultivation of IRR and Boro crops.
Local farmers said unless something can be done to augment supply of irrigation waters, production of IRR, Boro, wheat, potatoes and watermelons of this area would be hit hard.
They have urged the concerned authorities to remove the sluice gate at Charghat to save 20 lakh people of Chalan Beel area.

Potato growers deprived of fair price

From Our Correspondent
CHANDPUR, Apr 18: Potato growers of the district have been deprived of fair price of their produce during the current season due to lack of storage facilities.
This year there was a bumper production of potato throughout the district.
According to Agriculture Extension Office, about 40,000 hectares of land were brought under potato cultivation this year.
The target of production exceeded more than 60 thousand metric tons. The farmers have already collected potato from the field. Due to abundant supply of potato in different markets the price of potato have come down.
Potato is now being sold at Tk five to six per kg. The price is much less than the production cost, it is alleged by potato growers.
In absence of adequate space of cold storages most of the growers are not in a position to store potato.
They need money immediately to repay their loans and other expenses.
Poor potato growers are compelled to take loans against advanced sale of their products. There are only five cold storages in the district for preservation of potato. Middlemen and some unscrupulous businessmen booked these cold storages in advance. Poor and marginal potato growers find it difficult to preserve potato. Middlemen are now buying potato in bulk and storing these in different cold storages. They sell potato in the lean period and get profit while poor growers who toil hard to produce this crop suffer much and get a nominal price of their produce.
It is alleged that more than ten thousand metric tons of potato are likely to be perished due to shortage of cold storage here.

Suspension of RU Library Sc teacher demanded

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Apr 18: The students, political activists and journalists on the campus demanded suspension of Mohd Abdus Salam, a teacher of Library and Information Science (LISC) Department. He was sacked from the chairmanship of the department on charge of corruption and malpractices.
They brought out a silent procession with banners which paraded the main thoroughfares of the campus. The procession ended at the central library premises.
A rally was arranged there. It was addressed, among others, by Taslim Sakhawkat Hossain, Ahidul Islam, journalist Abdur Rahman Risvi and others. They demanded removal of corrupt teacher like Mohd Abdus Salam immediately.
They criticized the university authorities for not publishing the probe committee's report.
Later on they placed memorandum to the Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Abdul Khaleque.
The VC assured them of proper action against him if found guilty in the probe report.
Meanwhile, Prof Sohrab Ali, convener of the probe committee said that the probe report would be submitted to the university authorities within this month.
Mentionable here that former chairman of the department Mohd Abdus Salam was suspended from chairmanship of the department following some allegations of admitting some unqualified candidates in the department, collection of money from the students of the department, forgery of signature and others.



RAJSHAHI: An orientation course on "Healthy School Programme" was held recently at a local hotel in the city under Rajshahi Healthy City programme. Rajshahi city Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu inaugurated the programme organised jointly by World Health Organisation (WHO) and Rajshahi City Corporation. —Star photo

MAGURA: A narrow bridge on the river Hanu at village Nohata in Sripur thana. Accident may occur at any time herea. The bridge connects Sripur-Nokel road. —Star photo