

News snaps

Diarrhoea claims 15 more

BARISAL, Apr 24: Fifteen more people died of diarrhoea in the district in the last four days, reports UNB. With this, the death toll stood at 80 since February 15. Health control room sources said over 13,000 have so far been affected. The water-borne disease broke out in the Barisal division in an alarming proportion. Dr. Abeer Rahman, Director of Health, said 395 medical teams have been working round-the-clock to contain the spread of disease in the division.

Body of a teacher recovered

RANGAMATI, Apr 24: The body of a high school teacher was recovered from a deep jungle of Baghaichhari thana, 100 km off the town on Thursday evening, reports UNB. Sources said a gang of miscreants allegedly led by Bikash Chakma abducted Biru Lal Chakma, 40, a teacher of Karengatali High School while he was returning home at Barbindo Ghat in the morning. He has been missing since then. Acting on information, police recovered his body and sent it to hospital for autopsy. A case has been filed with the police.

25 arrested in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Apr 24: Metropolitan police on Thursday night in a raid nabbed 25 people from different parts of the city on charges of various crimes, reports UNB. Police sources said they arrested 18 people from Boalia and Rajpara, five from Motihar and two from Shah Makhdum thanas. The arrested were wanted in connection with various criminal cases including terrorism, extortion and vandalism. The drive against the criminals will continue in order to maintain law and order situation in the city, the sources added.

Bus service disrupted

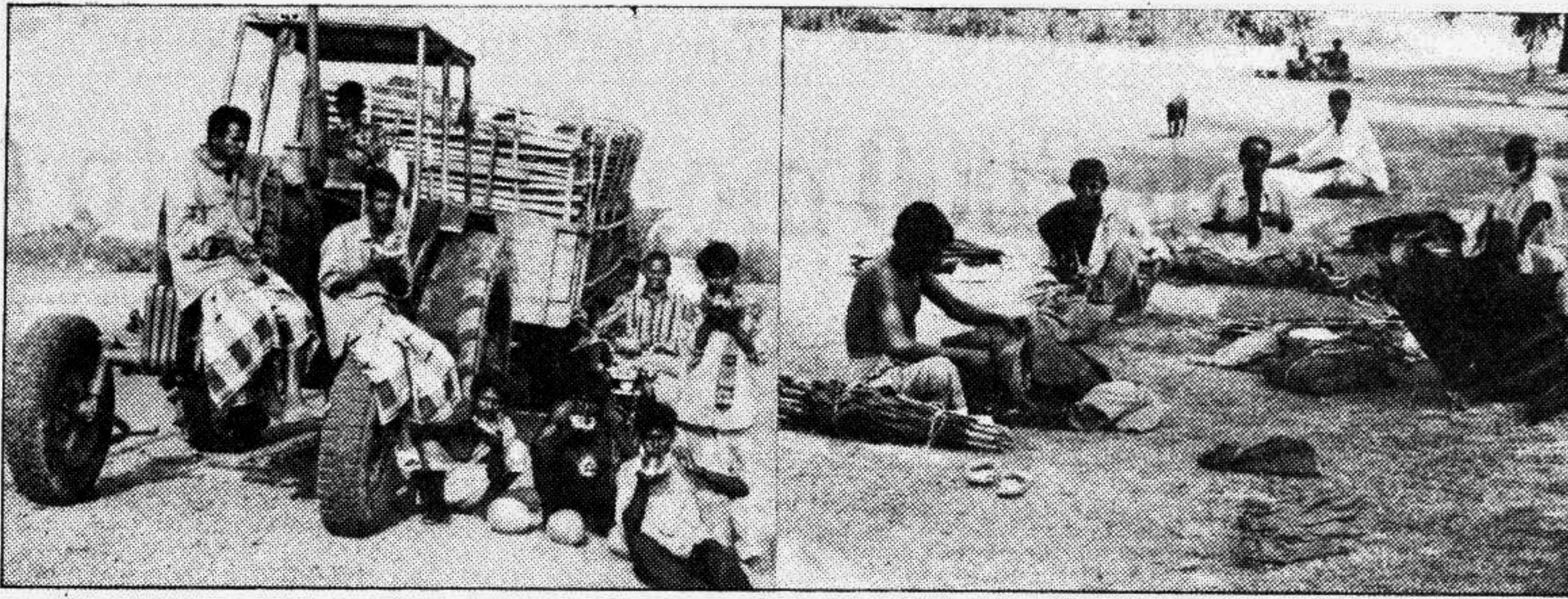
MADARIPUR, Apr 24: Bus service in Razoir-Kotalipara route in the district remained suspended for several hours yesterday following a conflict between two groups of bus owners, reports APB. Hundreds of travellers remained stranded at different places as buses and minibuses stopped playing till about 3:30 pm due to the conflict between bus owners at Tekerhat and bus-minibus owners at Madaripur. However, the bus services resumed following intervention by the district administration, official sources said.

Schoolboy killed in Sylhet

SYLHET, Apr 24: An eleven-year-old school student was allegedly murdered at Dattagram village under Shawla thana on Thursday, police said today, reports APB. Akmol Hossain, son of Faizur Rahman, was called out of his house allegedly by a neighbour on Thursday afternoon and he had been missing since then. Local people found his body at nearby chepti haor Friday morning and informed the family and police. Police recovered the body and sent it to Osmani Hospital for autopsy. Police suspected that it was a pre-planned murder. But no case has been filed till yesterday evening, police said.

Housewife killed for dowry

MADARIPUR, Apr 24: A young housewife was killed in the town last night allegedly by her husband and in-laws for dowry, police said today, reports APB. The husband, Saiful Islam Moon, has been arrested. The victim, Shilpi Akter, 18, was daughter of one Abdul Hai Chowdhury of Luxmiganj in the sadar thana. Shilpi's younger sister Mina, who was at Saiful's house last night, told police that she was killed by her husband and in-laws. The in-laws, however, claimed that Shilpi committed suicide. The body was taken to hospital for autopsy and a case has been filed.



NATORE: The prevailing hot spell coupled with acute waster crisis has aggravated suffering of the people in both urban and rural areas in the district. To get some relief on a scorching day, some day labourers (left) having watermelon at Kandivtua on Natore bypass road. (Right) As the demand for umbrella is now high, workers are busy making umbrellas at Duttapara School premises in Sadar thana. — Star photo

C'nawabganj may face fertiliser crisis

CHAPAINWABGANJ, Apr 24: The district may face fertiliser crisis as the dealers threatened to give up their dealership, reports UNB. Ten dealers, out of 27 in the district, have already renounced their dealership as they are not getting adequate allocation of fertilisers. District unit leaders of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association, in a press conference held recently here, demanded immediate solution to the problems created following contradictory decisions of BCIC and district Fertiliser Monitoring Association (FMA). They claimed as per the agreement, signed between the dealers and BCIC, the dealers can sell fertiliser across the district, but FMC gave directives to them not to sell the fertilisers to the farmers in their respective thanas or other thanas without its prior permission. Moreover, AED told them not to sell more than three sacks of fertiliser to a farmer, creating complications in this regard. They also alleged that they received 6,879 mts of fertiliser during January-March period against the demand of 14,014 mts and 4,856 mts were allotted for the month of April against the demand of 3,720 mts. A huge quantity of fertiliser may remain unsold due to disproportionate sanction, apprehended the dealers. In this situation, dealers are yet to lift fertiliser sanctioned for the month of April, which may cause a scarcity of fertiliser in the district.

Villages no longer echo with dheki sound

By Morshed Ali Khan with Aminul Islam in Mymensingh

The villages in Mymensingh district no longer echo with the pounding and squeaking sound of dheki -- the wooden object once used by women folk in rural Bangladesh for centuries to husk paddy. Women now hardly gather at the affluent farmers' courtyard during the harvest season and pound the dheki till late in the night. The traditional Mymensingh dheki rice has become a victim of technology with the arrival of electricity and rice mills. Despite its tremendous demand among connoisseurs of quality wholemeal red rice, rice markets of the district no longer display the dheki rice. Farmers have opted for new high yielding variety of paddy replacing the local fine varieties of berai and pajam. With the dheki disappearing fast from village homes, our tradition is also on the verge of demise. There has never been any government or non-government initiative to revive the dheki. In Europe and America, demand for such environment-friendly products is fast rising, but none of our agriculturists or marketing experts have ever given it a thought that the dheki, if truly promoted, could capture an international market. Experts say the Mymensingh red dheki rice is not only delicious but also extremely nutritious. Once cooked, the rice with its red, pink and white texture and a sweet flavour, is a gastronomic delight. While most women have abandoned dheki in the village, others said they were willing to take up the dhekis again if people in Dhaka want to buy the produce. There are lots of people in the capital with village connections who pay the women in advance and get their annual supply of red dheki rice. Taking advantage of the scarcity and its demand, a section of rice traders are now producing artificial red dheki rice. Traders in Tarakanda bazar said that in Dhaka markets, rice traders were selling this artificial rice. The process they use is quite different. Explained one trader: "After repeated boiling the rice is dried for a long time. Then it is husked in the mill with a light pressure for retaining some skin on top of the grains. Then they add some artificial colour for the texture." But the colour washes away in the pre-cooking stage and the rice tastes awful. Before husking in the dheki, the paddy is boiled and then dried. Some women at Rupashi village under Phulpur thana, however, said they were still

Sitalakhya river drying up fast

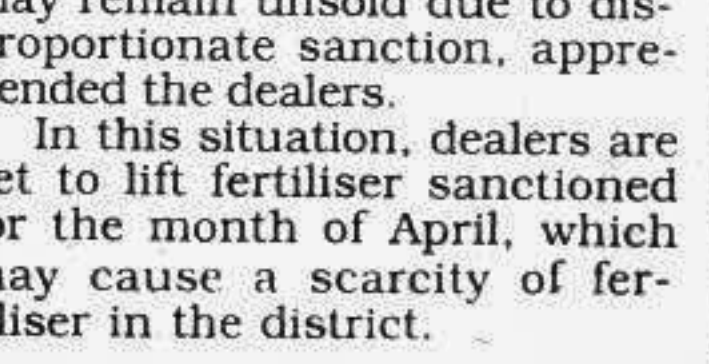
NARSINGDI, Apr 24: The Sitalakhya river is drying up fast with emergence of innumerable shoals between Munshiganj and Ghorashal along its route, reports APB. The river has lost much of its navigability, hampering movement of river transports along its 57 km section between Ghorashal and Meghna-Dhaleswari point during the dry season. The depth of water is only about five feet between Ghorashal and Kanchpur bridge and 13 feet between Kanchpur and Narayanganj now, according to sources in the BIWTA. A cargo vessel of five MT capacity requires an average water depth of at least 17 feet. Cargo vessels carrying industrial raw materials and other goods have to move following the tide and ebb positions, they said. Many vessels often run aground at Demra ghat, Tarabo, Rupashi, and Charpara. Vessels now take 45 minutes to travel between Narayanganj and Munshiganj against 20 minutes in rainy season, they said. This is affecting more than 300 mills and factories on both sides of the river as traders have to spend long hours in transporting goods. There is only waist-deep water in the route between Ghorashal and Tak Barmi, which, too, is dotted with innumerable shoals.

Rangpur Newsletter

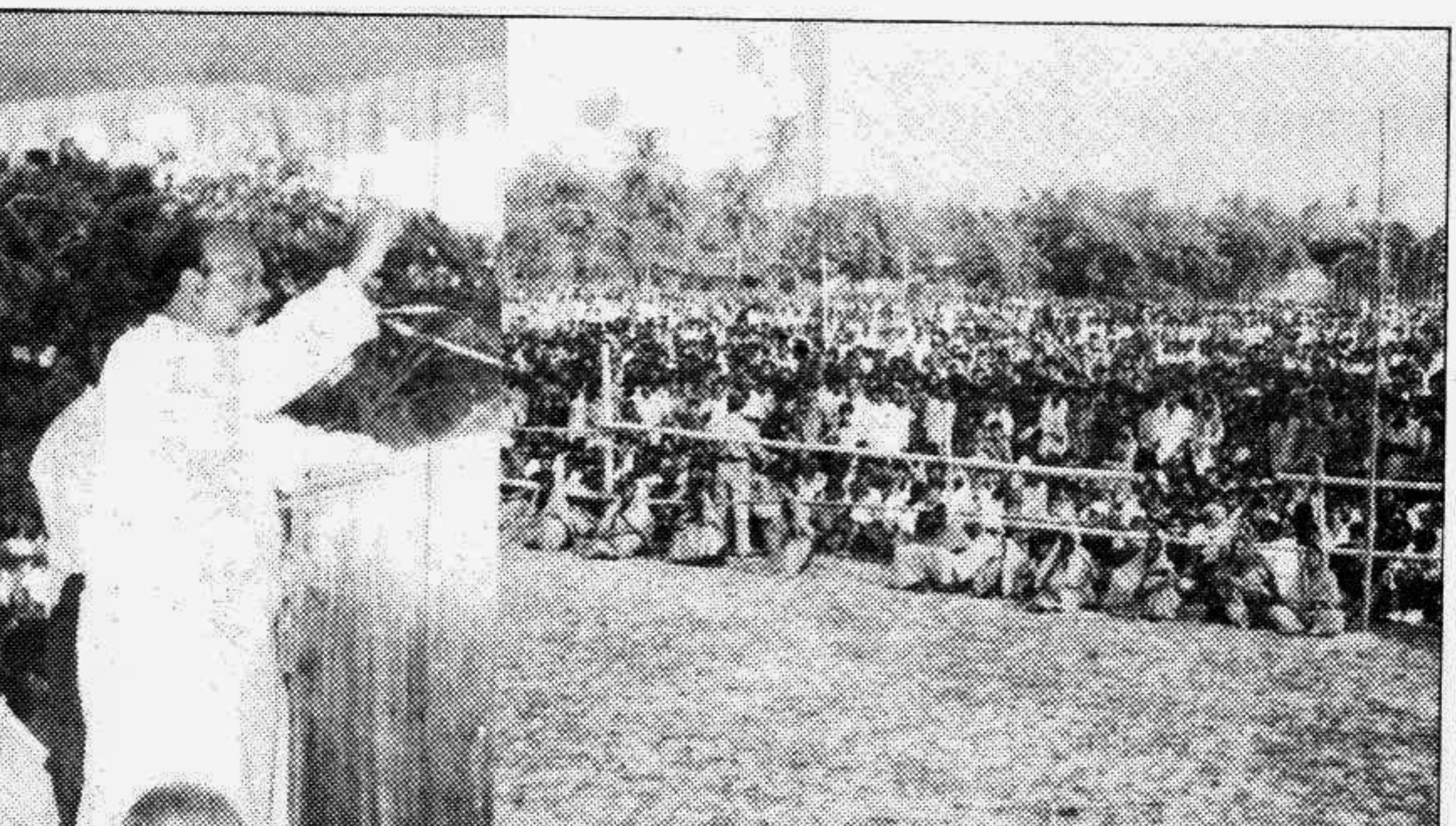
Pahela Baishakh observed
From Our Correspondent
RANGPUR, Apr 24: The Pahela Baishakh, first day of Bengali new year, was observed at town and elsewhere in the district amidst great festivity and various colourful programmes. The programmes included milad mahfil, opening of 'Halkhata', distribution of sweetsmeats, musical soiree, rally, and discussion meetings. The district administration held a rally and arranged a function at Rangpur zilla school ground.

Tubewell installation programme
From Our Correspondent
RANGPUR, Apr 24: The Public Health Engineering department is executing a massive programme to install 1,097 shallow tubewells and 1,578 Tara pumps during the current fiscal year with a view to providing pure drinking water across the rural areas in 10 districts under greater Rangpur, Bogra and Dinajpur regions. About 70 per cent tubewells have so far been installed and the project is expected to be completed by the end of June. About 2,50,000 people in rural areas across the 10 districts will be benefited. The districts are Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Bogra and Joypurhat.

Tk 12 cr for crop loan
From Our Correspondent
RANGPUR, Apr 24: Four commercial banks in the district have geared up the disbursement of crop loan under the farmers across the district. The banks are Janata, Agrani, Sonali and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank. A sum of Tk 11.95 crore has been sanctioned for disbursement. Over 21,000 farmers will be benefited from the scheme.



JHENIDAH: Home Minister Mohammad Nasim addressing a gathering at Hatfajilpur in Sailkupa thana after he laid the foundation stone of a police outpost here recently. — Star photo



JHENIDAH: Proshika Manobik Unnayan Kendra organised a two-day workshop on the cultural activities here recently. (Right) A participant performing at a function on the occasion. — Star photo

Pry education facing setback in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 24: The compulsory primary education programme in 13 thanas of the district has been facing various problems hampering normal academic activities, reports UNB. The primary children have been facing problems to continue their studies due to negligence of the concerned officials as most of the schools do not have funds, and the number of teachers is too inadequate. Moreover, effective steps for making the education programme a success have not yet been taken in the district. The students have been deprived of proper education due to price hike of paper and other educational materials. The schools damaged by last devastating flood and tornado have not yet been repaired due to shortage of fund. Some of the schools are in dilapidated condition. Besides, there is no tubewell in most of the schools while the tubewells installed earlier at a few schools remained inoperative since long. Shortage of teachers in the government primary schools has also intensified the problems of the students.

Statue recovered

MYMENSINGH, Apr 24: Police recovered a statue made of black stone from the house of one Tapan das at Atul Chakrabarti Road of the town on April 15. Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house and recovered the precious statue. In another drive, police raided the house of one Shamsuddin under Trishal thana and seized eight kg of ganja. Police also arrested Shamsuddin in this connection.

Bajitpur pourasava facing manifold problems

KISHOREGANJ, Apr 24: Bajitpur pourasava in the district is beset with a host of problems causing inconvenience to the town dwellers, reports UNB. The problems included deplorable condition of roads, absence of proper drainage system, inadequate streetlight, shortage of accommodation, lack of sanitation, frequent power failure, mosquito menace and shortage of recreational facilities. The roads are mostly narrow and uneven. Cracks and potholes have developed at many points on these roads and rain-water remains stagnant on the roads even after a slight rainfall. Absence of any proper drainage system is another problem. Due to this problem, roadside ditches remain filled with filth and garbage, which the authorities do not clean. The drains have become the breeding grounds of mosquito. Frequent failure of power supply and fluctuations in voltage are the regular features. The town plunges into darkness on many days after sunset. Many light posts have no bulbs. There is no place for recreation for the people except the cinema hall. The fish and vegetable markets are in deplorable condition causing sufferings to both the buyers and sellers. The conservancy service is not satisfactory. There is no public latrine or urinal in the town. Housing is a great problem for the town dwellers as the new houses is not being built in proportion to the increased number of people of the pourasava. In absence of accommodation, many government employees and employees of other organisations have to keep their families at their village homes and neighbouring district much to their inconvenience.



JHENIDAH, Apr 24: Trains, both local and inter-district, are now convenient carriers of smuggled goods in Jhenidah and adjoining districts, reports APB. Knowledgeable sources told APB that smugglers are carrying smuggled goods in trains allegedly in connivance with a section of railway employees and law enforcers. Smuggled Indian goods like sarees, cosmetics, phensidyl syrup are carried in power vans, buffet cars, and water tanks of trains. The Anti-smuggling Task Force, headed by a magistrate, recovered smuggled goods worth about Tk 5 lakh from Kotchandpur, Barobazar and Mobarakganj railway stations in Jhenidah district alone in the last three months, source said. Allegations have it that trains are stopped at places between the 'home' and 'outer' signals of railway stations, from which points the smuggled goods are unloaded. Darsana, Bheramara, Poradah, Kotchandpur, Ansarbaria and other railway stations have turned out to be safer places for loading and unloading of smuggled goods. Some passengers, talking to this correspondent alleged that most of the trains are delayed because of such unscheduled halts.

One kills wife, two sons in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Apr 24: A man strangled his wife and two minor sons to death at village Munshir Dangi under Kotwali thana on April 14, the first day of the Bengali New Year. The dead were identified as Rahela, 25, Razel, 7, and Rajib, 5. The incident occurred at around 9:30 am as Rahela strongly opposed her husband Billal's proposal to sell out their homestead and adjoining lands to repay some loans. During the quarrel between them, angry Billal, 37, lost his cool and at one stage he pounced upon her wife and strangled her to death. He also killed his two sons and fled the scene after setting the house on fire. However, Billal was arrested from one of his relatives' house at Ojan Mullipur under Kotwali thana in the evening the same day. Police Super Md Abdul Mabud visited the spot immediately after the incident. A case has been lodged with kotwali thana in this connection.

Trains being used as carrier of smuggled goods

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Over 7 thousand tubewells inoperative

RAJSHAHI, Apr 24: Some 7,940 deep and shallow tubewells remained inoperative in 16 northern districts including Rajshahi hampering irrigation to about 1.6 lakh acres of land, reports UNB. The farmers in these districts feared that the production of IRRI-Boro and wheat might suffer a serious setback due to the lack of proper irrigation in time. Official sources said the tubewells went out of order mainly due to the fall in ground water level in the region. Of the total, some 70 deep and 118 shallow tubewells in Rajshahi, 13 and 185 in Chapainawabganj, 57 and 517 in Naogaon, 66 and 2058 in Natore, 55 and 877 in Pabna, 107 and 45 in Sirajganj, 193 and 341 in Dinajpur, 56 and 175 in Lalmonirhat, 104 and 87 in Nilphamari, 33 and 150 in Kurigram, 08 and 655 in Rangpur, 23 and 75 in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon 53 and 72, Bogra 114 and 910 and Joypurhat 77 and 113 are lying out of order. Local farmers said they have been facing tough time as they failed to lift ground water for irrigation in IRRI-Boro and wheat fields during the peak season. But local Agriculture Extension Department sources said they are taking initiative to fix the out-of-order tubewells as soon as possible.



MYMENSINGH: Prof Muhammad Hossain, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University taking salute at a march past of Shishu Kishore Council at BAU Stadium on the occasion of the Independence Day. — Star photo