

National

News snaps

Rally of landless

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 16: A big rally of landless was held under the auspices of Satkhira District Bhumiheen Samity at Shahid Abdul Razzaq Park on May 10.

President of the association Kawsar Ali presided over the rally while it was addressed, among others, by Advocate Abdur Rahim, Prof Abu Ahmed, Abul Kalam Azad, Saifullah Laskar, Abul Hossain, Abul Kashem, Khodeja Khatun, Ahmad Palash. They urged the government to fulfill the eight-point demand of the landless people within the shortest possible time.

Red Crescent Day observed

From A Correspondent

NETRAKONA, May 16: World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day was observed in Netrakona on May 8 in a befitting manner.

A colourful procession and a discussion was held on the occasion. Osman Gani Talukdar, chairman of Netrakona district unit of BRCS and local MP Fazlur Rahman Khan led the procession.

Road mishaps in 4 months

From A Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 16: Some 105 people were killed in 372 road accidents on Jamalpur-Dhaka and Jamalpur-Mymensingh highways in the last four months.

At least 1,015 people were injured in the accidents and 215 vehicles were damaged during the same period. Police said, of the dead 68 people were killed in 172 truck accidents and the rest were killed in coaster, bus and motor car accidents.

2 prisoners die at MMCH

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 16: A convict and an undertrial prisoner died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) on May 5.

According to jail sources, Jalal Uddin, 40, a convict who was serving a 10-year jail term in Mymensingh Central Jail was sent to MMCH after being fell sick on May 4. Sadek Mia, 45, of village Raoti in Tarial thana of Kishoreganj district, an undertrial prisoner was admitted to MMCH from Kishoreganj jail on May 4 in a critical condition where he died on May 5.

Jute seeds crisis in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 16: The target of jute cultivation in seven police stations of the district will not be achieved during the current season for want of seeds.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation preserves seeds in its godowns to supply among the growers. About 25 thousand hectares of land in the district have been brought under jute cultivation during the current season. The change in the distribution system of seeds by BADC this year has caused the crisis.

Separate incidents claim 4 lives

FENI, May 16: Four persons were killed in separate incidents in the district recently, police said, reports APB.

Saiful Islam, 14, and Rafiq, 35, were killed by lightning when they were walking on a street at Fotehpur village under Porshuram thana. Another boy, Mohiuddin, 13, also suffered serious burn injury in the incident. In another incident, Sahara Aktar, 20, mother of a seven-month-old baby, was allegedly beaten to death by her husband for dowry at Panchgachia village under the Sadar thana. Abdus Sukur, 32, was run over by a bus on the Feni-by-pass road at Jatra Shiddhi, police said.

Zinger loaded trucks seized

COX'S BAZAR, May 16: BDR personnel seized two trucks loaded with 14 tonnes of zinger near Damdama check post on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Highway recently for evasion of about 60,000 taka import duty, reports APB.

BDR sources alleged that the tax was evaded in connivance with a section of Customs officials. The government is being deprived of huge amounts of revenue due to evasion of import duty by a section of traders engaged in cross-border trade with Myanmar, they said.

TLM programme ends

NETRAKONA, May 16: The six-month Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme under the auspices of Ujjibita Netrakona concluded recently in three thanas here.

The three thanas included sadar, Barhatta and kendua. Under the programme, 2,13,750 illiterate people were targeted for imparting education through 7,125 centres with equal number of teachers under 450 supervisors. The government sanctioned Taka 6.28 crore to make the programme a success.

Pry dropouts up

SATKHIRA, May 16: A large number of children are being deprived of primary education in the frontier thana of Nalitabari here due to abject poverty and ignorance of their guardians, reports UNB.

The situation aggravated at the suspension of programmes for making the primary education attractive to the children. The programmes were introduced in different schools of the thanas in the second and third years of the introduction of compulsory primary education to increase the enrollment. Under the programme the poor students were provided with dresses and educational appliances other than textbooks, which created interest among the children to go to the school. According to the thana Primary Education Office, some 32,026 children out of 41,883 have been enrolled in different primary schools of the thanas this year.

Work progressing

BARISAL, May 16: The construction of an inter-district bus terminal is underway in Rupatalli area of this divisional town at a cost of about Tk 70 lakh in this fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, government has acquired a total of 2.03 acres of land for the construction of this bus terminal, a long felt demand of the people of the region. Preliminary engineering work and soil test have already been completed here and the earth work on this project is progressing fast in this dry season. Besides, land demarcation of the plot of land has also been completed some days ago. When completed, the inter-district bus services of six southern districts of Barisal division will be easier and comfortable.

Foodgrains distributed

PIROJPUR, May 16: Foodgrains worth about Tk 2.19 crore have been distributed here in the last three months under the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme, reports APB.

The district Relief and Rehabilitation office told that a total of 1,882 tonnes of wheat and rice have been distributed among 36,200 flood affected people in six thanas and two municipalities during the period.

Doctor killed

COX'S BAZAR, May 16: After the death of two persons in the hands of a mad man at Napitkhali village in the Sadar thana on Monday, a homeopath doctor was killed by another mad man in another village of the same thana on April 20, reports APB.

The doctor Sudhangshu Bimal Sharma alias Ratan Doctor, 57, of Bomangkhal village, was allegedly hit with a stick by the mad man when he was returning home from a local market, police said quoting local people. He died at a local hospital. A case has been lodged with local police. The mad man, Mostaque Ahmed, aged about 30, fled away. He is the son of one Naderuzzaman of Bomangkhal village.

Fodder crisis

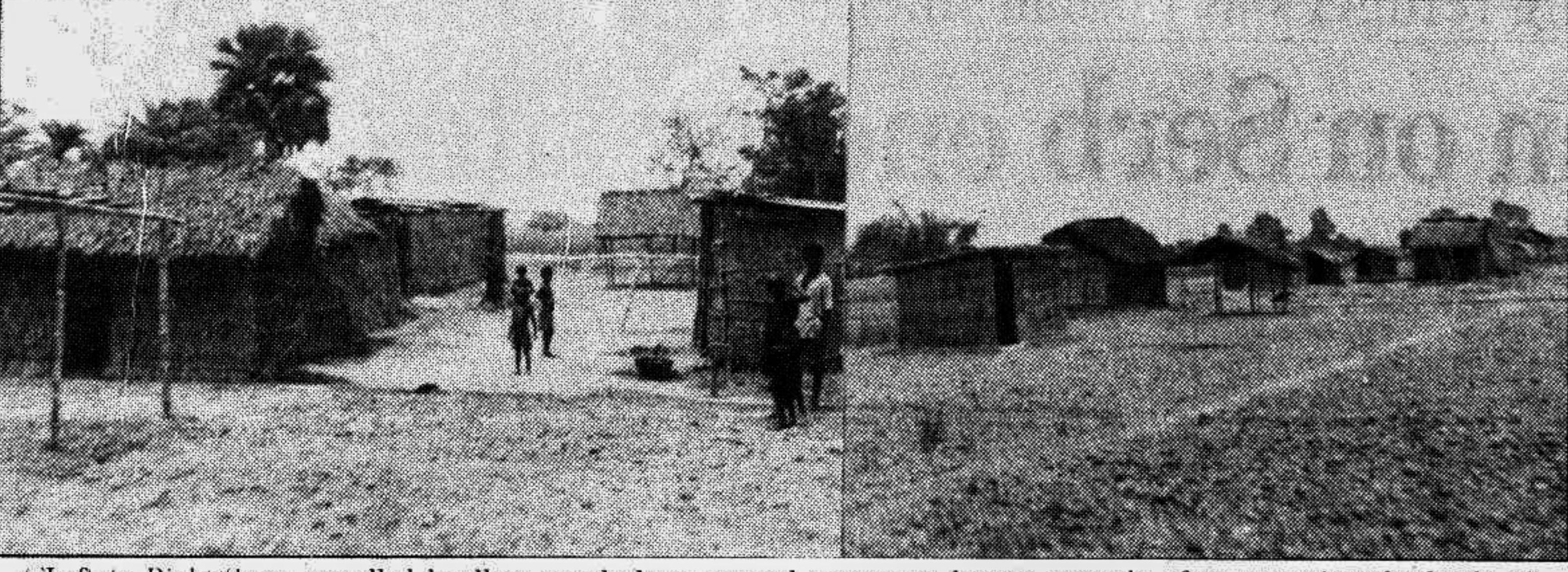
JHENIDAH, May 16: Cultivation of local varieties of paddy has decreased in Jhenidah district over the last few years, reports APB.

Farmers said they have been facing fodder crisis. This is due to non-cultivation of local varieties of paddy. On the other hand, production cost of IRRI-Boro paddy has also been increasing day by day with rise in prices of inputs as these are more dependent on fertilisers and irrigation than local varieties. Apart from the fact that IRRI-Boro fields can not be used for cultivation of other crops after harvest of paddy. Previously, the farmers could produce at least three crops a year, they said.

Agri-fair concludes

RAJBARI, May 16: A five-day agricultural fair concluded at the local agricultural office here recently, reports UNB.

A total of 16 stalls of agricultural products were set up in the fair. Besides, two stalls of handmade jute goods and silk products took part. On the occasion, a rally of farmers was held at the premises of the fair with AED deputy director Abdur Rahman Khan in the chair. Another four-day agri-fair also concluded in Pangsha thana on March 2, organised by the local Agriculture Extension Department.



(Left to Right) Some so-called landless people have erected temporary houses recently after occupying the lands of aborigines at Shankarbhag village and Basupara village in Natore sadar thana

— Star photo

Tension in 3 Natore villages over illegal occupation of land

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, May 16: Tension has been prevailing at three villages of Natore sadar thana following illegal occupation of land of some aborigines by some so-called landless people.

Security of life of people has become unsafe at Shankarbhag and Peeripara villages under Boro Harishpur union and Basupara village under Laximpurkhola Union in Natore thana. This is because the illegal occupants and the aborigines are threatening each other everyday showing arms, local villagers said.

Incidents of bloodshed may occur at any moment in the area, but the local administration remains silent although several complaints were filed for and against the occupants.

The situation started with the grabbing of land of former Union Parisad (UP) chairman Abdul Jalil of Harishpur union. About seven acres of his cultivable land at Joynagar and Peeripara villages were grabbed by a group of so-called landless people during early April. A complaint was lodged with the assistant judge's court on April 6 and an injunction was issued, on the same day, preventing the occupants from using the land.

Another case, filed with the same court, on May 5, said that the illegal occupants of Abdul Jalil's land at Jaynagar violated the court's previous injunction and built 29 temporary houses on the land.

While this correspondent visited Shankarbhag village recently, he found that some poor people, claiming themselves to be landless had built about 20 straw-made temporary houses on their occupied land. They had been living there with their family for about three weeks.

Khitish Chandra Teli, a teacher, and Anil Kumar Teli, a farmer claimed the ownership over 86 decimal land.

They told this correspondent that they had been living on the land from the period of their forefathers.

This correspondent met Bellal, one of the occupants and his wife Mamataz on their occupied land at Shankarbhag.

They said that they had built houses on this land three weeks ago when they came to know that the land was 'khas' property.

However, in his complaint to the assistant judge's court, Abdul Jalil said that his father, late Bogai Uddin Sarkar, surrendered the land to the government following a government ordinance in 1972. But the land remained in their possession. This is because the government had never tried to take control of the land. So they did not handed it to the government in exchange of due compensation.

However, the illegal occupants are now safe on Jalil's land.

After this incident, the so-called 'landless' people have grabbed the land of aborigines at Basupara, Shankarbhag and Peeripara.

On April 20 night, about 2.55 acres of land of Madhu Sudhan Teli, an aborigine of Peeripara village was illegally grabbed by some people. Although this land was in possession of Madhu which he inherited from his forefathers, yet the government records termed those to be 'khas' land in 1990. This was a verdict of the assistant judge's court. Then Madhu appealed to the higher court against the verdict of assistant judge's court.

On April 25, 86 decimal land of two aborigines — Khitish Chandra Roy and Anil Kumar Teli, at Shankarbhag village was grabbed overnight by another group of so-called landless people. They allegedly built temporary houses on the land with bamboos from the clusters of Anil and Khitish. This land is now being investigated whether it is 'khas' property or not.

On the following night (April 26), another group of so-called landless people occupied 16 decimal land of Subadi Chandra Teli at Basupara, nine bighas of land of Sujeeb Teli at Shankarbhag village. These lands of the aborigines are also controversial.

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Bellal who is a day labourer and currently working at the house of one Halibat Master in the area, told that though his father had some lands, yet he had nothing. 'Being a landless person, I have too bighas of land... I till my own land and thus run my family... then why shall I go to occupy other's land?'

Sabdu, one of the leading accused persons of the cases filed by aborigines. He refuted the allegations and said: 'The cases against us are designed to harass us.' Sabdu said, 'I have too bighas of land... I till my own land and thus run my family... then why shall I go to occupy other's land?'

Sabdu also alleged that the aborigine leaders here were rearing 'hired terrorists' in the villages. Sabdu added.

Satty, however, denied Sabdu's allegation of rearing hired goons in the village.

Mahtab and Majdar, leaders of occupants were not available on the spot for their comments.

On May, the aborigines here brought out a large protest procession in the town with their traditional weapons such as bows and arrows, spears and sticks. They paraded the streets of the town and laid siege to the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office here. They damaged two government vehicles and submitted a memorandum to the DC. ADC (revenue) Md Abdul Quayum, received the memorandum on behalf of DC. The memorandum demanded immediate eviction of illegal occupants from the aborigines' land and punishment to the responsible persons. Similar memorandum was also given to the DC on April 29 by the aborigine leaders.

Talking to this correspondent, Abdul Bari Mia, Superintendent of Police (SP), Natore refuted the allegations of deteriorating of law and order situation in the villages. He said that the law and order situation of the disputed areas had become normal and police had been on alert there.

When contacted, M Ishaq Bhuiyan, DC, Natore told The Daily Star that none of the aborigines and occupants are legal as they could not show any legal documents regarding their claim.

However, investigations are still going on in this matter. Ishaq said adding that proper steps would be taken after the investigations.

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Diarrhoea claims 39 lives in Noakhali, Laxmipur

LAXMIPUR, May 16: Diarrhoea has claimed lives of 39 people and affected over 4,500 people in Noakhali and Laxmipur districts during the last week, Civil Surgeon office sources said, reports UNB.

According to an unofficial estimate, 51 people died and some 6,967 were affected during the period.

The sources said 14 people died of the water-borne disease and 2,000 were affected on May 4.

Diarrhoea broke out in 50 unions of four thanas of Laxmipur district where 52 medical teams and 12 doctors were working to combat the menace.

The sources also said almost half of the population of Boyar Char of Ramgati thana, western part of sadar including the vast tract of embankment areas of Char Bongshi and Char Ababil of Rajpur thana of Laxmipur district were affected by the disease.

The shoal areas of Hatiya, Sudharam, Companiganj of Noakhali district were also hit by the disease where 84 medical teams were working.

In Noakhali, 22 people died in four days with the death of five people in May 4. The number of affected was estimated at 2,117.

A physician said scarcity of safe drinking water created due to sealing up of the tubewells for

arsenic contamination and intake of adulterated food were the causes behind