

News snaps

Housewife strangled to death

From A Correspondent

BOGRA, May 21: A housewife was strangled to death at Karnapur Uttarpara of Sadar thana on Monday night. Police sources said that Sukur Ali strangled his 16-year-old wife Fatema on way to his father-in-law's house. After the incident he went to his father-in-law's house and informed that Fatema had been abducted by some miscreants. His clothes were also taken away, he said to them. On suspicion, the in-laws went to the spot and found the dead body lying there. His clothes were recovered from there which was kept under the ground. Fatema married to Sukur Ali seven months ago. A murder case has been filed with Sadar thana. Sukur Ali has been arrested in this connection.

Life-term for 3 killers

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 21: Three persons were convicted and sentenced to life-term imprisonment and fined Taka 2,000 each, in default to suffer six months more rigorous imprisonment (RI) on charge of a murder. Laila Salma Banu, Assistant District and Sessions Judge awarded the punishment to Abdus Sattar, Abdul Majid and Alim Uddin of village Birampur in Trishal thana recently. The three convicts killed Abdul Motaleb of the same village over a land dispute on August 22, 1998.

Woman trafficker gets jail term

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 21: One woman trafficker has been convicted and sentenced to suffer 14-year imprisonment on charge of trafficking a girl to India on May 5. The court also fined Taka 25,000 in default to suffer RI for three years more. The convict is Rehena Khatun Rani, 21, daughter of Kawsar Ali of village Uchhepara in Kaliganj thana. The prosecution story in brief is that Muslima Khatun, 18, wife of Abdul Mazid of village Kakshiali in Kaliganj thana while returning to her husband's house from her father's house, a trafficker named Rehena, allured her of providing a job at Satkhira. She took her at Nariakelta crossing in Satkhira town and sold her to a gang of traffickers. Later on, police rescued her from the clutch of traffickers.

Two outlaws arrested

From A Correspondent

MAGURA, May 21: Two alleged members of outlawed 'Sromajibi Mukti Andolon' was arrested along with a shutter gun and these rounds of bullets on May 12 morning from Kalinagar bazar area in Sreepur thana. Police said, they were arrested with the help of local people. Zakir, 28, son of Ashraf Ali of Durgapur in Sreepur thana and Alam, 26, son of Isahaq Mollah of the same village were trying to flee after snatching 10 thousand and 7 hundred taka from Tahmina Begum, an NGO worker from Kudla village of the same thana.

Crackdown on criminals

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, May 21: Vigorous anti-crime drive has been started in all the four thanas of the district. The thanas are Chuadanga sadar, Alamdanga, Damurhuda and Jibannagar. Police and BDR jointly conducted the drive. So far about 250 people have been arrested from different places of four thanas on various charges. The government opened 15 new police camps in the district to control and resist crime.

Clash over collecting honey

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, May 21: At least 20 persons were injured, 12 of them seriously in a clash over collecting honey from a hive on May 15. According to local and hospital sources, an uncle and his nephew of village Lashkarkandi in Kotwali thana locked in a clash with lethal weapons for collecting honey from a big hive on a tree belonging to them. The clash lasted for about two hours injuring 20 persons. Of the critically injured, 11 were admitted to Faridpur General Hospital and one to Faridpur Medical College hospital.

Red Crescent Day observed

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 21: World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day was observed here in a befitting manner on May 8. Elaborate programme was chalked out in observance of the day. The programme included hoisting of National flag and Red Crescent flag in the premises of Red Crescent Society, Kushtia Unit. A discussion meeting was organised with Chowdhury Murshed Alam Madhu, chairman in charge of the unit in chair. Mohammad Hossain Mohan, Member of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society managing board spoke on the occasion as the chief guest. The discussion meeting was also addressed, among others, by Md Asgar Ali, Kh Zulfikar Ali Azooz, A S M Aktaruzzaman Masum, Shamsur Rahman Babu, Zillur Rahim, Alam Ara Jui, Sajeda Hossain, Dr Shahana Aktar, Selim Ahmed, Ariful Huq, Abdul Karim, Ashrafur Islam and Enamul Huq.

Welding worker electrocuted

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 21: A electric worker of a welding shop in the town was electrocuted here on May 14. The victim was identified as Aslam Hossain, 25, son of Abul Hossain of village Kacharpara in the town. Witnesses said he received an electric shock while working and died on way to hospital.

Dacoity at Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, May 21: A dacoity was committed at the local branch office of BRAC RDP office at Sakua in sadar thana on May 12 night. Dacoits entered into the office of BRAC by breaking open the grill and the door. They looted valuables including gold ornaments worth Taka 67,000 after fastening the officials on gun point. ASP (sadar) Muklasur Rahman and OC Habibul Haque of the local thana visited the spot.

Good harvest of IRRI-Boro

NETRAKONA, May 21: Despite prolonged drought like situation, the farmers of 10 thanas of the district are expecting a good harvest of IRRI-Boro crops in the current season, reports UNB. Officials said of these thanas, bumper production is expected in Mohanganj, Khalazuri, Madan, Arpara, Kalkamanda and Barhatta thanas. Harvesting of the paddy has already been started and going on in full swing in the district where the farmers claimed to have harvested 100 maunds of IR-29 variety of paddy from one acre of land. A total of 165,000 hectares of land were brought under cultivation of IRRI-Boro crops in 10 thanas of the district this season.

Uplift work progressing

COMILLA, May 21: Works on 65 development schemes in the district at a cost of Tk 2.35 crore are going on in full swing, reports UNB. District Council is implementing the works under its Annual Development Programme, officials said. The schemes included construction, reconstruction and renovation of bridges, culverts, roads and dukbanglow. Of the total schemes, works on 13 have already been executed and the rest will be completed by this year.

Fever, chicken pox in Naogaon

NAOGAON, May 21: Fever and chicken pox, which broke in an epidemic form, affected over 1,000 people during the last fortnight in the district, reports UNB. Women and children were the main victims, said the hospital sources. Physicians said prevailing sultry weather and other natural disasters were responsible for the outbreak of the diseases.

Coastal people in panic

PIROJPUR, May 21: People in the coastal area have been passing their days in panic on the advent of 'kalboishakhi' season as the area lacks adequate shelter homes, reports UNB. The seasonal calamity claim huge lives and property every year from 17,000 square km coastal belt. Over 25 big and moderate cyclones and tidal surges that hit the area during the last 40 years claimed about 10 lakh lives, officials sources said. A survey, conducted by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), last year, identified a total of 12,049 square km of land in 49 thanas of the coastal districts as 'high-risk zone'.

National

Citizens cry for civic amenities

Politics keeps N'ganj Poursabha polls pending for 11 years

From Ehsanul Haque



Front view of Narayanganj Poursabha

— Star photo

NARAYANGANJ, May 21: Absence of elected public representatives to 123-year-old Narayanganj Poursabha is depriving nearly 10 lakh people here of civic amenities.

Being run by the civil servants for the last 11 years, the municipality is also causing harassment to those who turn up the Poursabha office to lodge their complaints and obtain certificates of different kinds.

Angered by the poor service, the town dwellers are defaulting in the payment of municipal taxes, but the authorities are finding it difficult to realise those.

The Poursabha has no public representatives since 1988, following a court injunction on holding its election. There were cases against a new delimitation of the municipality.

A section of the local politicians have created the legal problems for holding the elections for their vested interests. "Political will of the ruling party and support of the Opposition can only remove the legal barrier," commented a local leader of an opposition party.

The government nominated administrator is looking after the affairs of the town dwellers of the 200-year-old port town. He is substituting 25 elected representatives -- 24 commissioners headed by chairman.

The last election of the Poursabha was held on February 11, 1984. The elections which were due in 1988, 1992 and 1999 could not be held because of legal complications.

On expiry of the elected municipal body's term in 1988, the authorities announced the schedule of the election for municipalities throughout the country early that year. However, the election of Narayanganj Poursabha had to be postponed in 1989 following a writ with the High Court challenging a fresh demarcation (restructuring 12 unions into eight wards).

The suspension of the election continued due to injunction by the court until the court dismissed the writ following prayers by all the four petition-

ers including two former ward commissioners named Jahangir Alam and Rafiqul Islam in early 1993.

Unfortunately, the long overdue election of Narayanganj Poursabha had been withheld for another three years since the removal of legal barriers.

However, on August 5, 1996, the Election Commission had announced schedule of Narayanganj Poursabha election on September 29. Accordingly 11 candidates filed nomination papers for the post of chairman and 121 for 24 posts of ward commissioner in eight wards (three for each ward).

But the election which was scheduled for September 29 was stayed once again by the High Court on a fresh writ petition by a group of five persons.

The sudden postponement of polls came at a time when all preparations for elections were in progress. Then a full-swing electioneering was going on after long nine years.

A Division Bench of the High Court issued the rule on September 1, 1996. The rule was issued upon a writ petition filed by Raisul Haque and four others challenging the legality of Narayanganj Poursabha election scheduled for September 29.

According to the certificate issued by advocate Sudhangsu Shekhar Haldar, the counsel for the petitioners, the court issued orders upon the authorities to show cause as to why the notification for the election should not be declared to have been passed and issued without any lawful authority and with no legal effect.

The court also ordered for stay of operation of the notification of election for eight weeks, but still now the decision of the court is pending with the court for decision.

Informed sources said, the petitioners, who challenged the legality of September 29, 1996 election, were residents of the east bank of the Shitalakkhya in Bandar thana. The four unions of the Bandar thana were separated from Narayanganj Poursabha, following establishment of the new Kadam Rasul Poursabha.

The petitioners, Raisul Haque, district unit chief of Jatiya Party and others in his party Ahsanullah, Mobarak Hossain, Habibullah and Shahabuddin, all from Bandar thana, wanted merger of their four unions of Narayanganj Poursabha.

RU Journalists Assoc

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, May 21: Rajshahi University (RU) Journalists' Association (RUJA) has been formed here recently.

The new committee was formed at a meeting held at Tapan Chatterjee hall which was attended by a large number of journalists, with the Sangbad and APB Correspondent NM Jahangir Alam Akash in the chair.

A new committee of RUJA was approved there. NM Jahangir Alam Akash and Faruk Hossain Chowdhury of The Daily Prothom Alo have been elected as the President and the General Secretary.

The other office-bearers are: Md Kamran Reza Chowdhury (The Daily Star) Vice President, Raihan Rabbi (The Daily Nirvor and the Weekly Dunia) — Joint Secretary, Md Abdur Rahman Rizvi (The Daily Muktakantha and the Daily Sonali Sangbad) — Treasurer, Md Abdul Matin (The Dailyin Barta) — Member Khaleque Hasan Panna (The Dailyin Al-Amin and The Weekly Dharani) — member.

Child roasted alive in Mymensingh

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 21: A child was roasted alive in a fire incident at village Gayaba Milki in Rambhadrapur union under Phulphul thana here recently.

The victim was identified as Rashadul Islam, 3, son of Nurul Islam.

According to police and family sources, the fire originated from a kitchen. Soon it engulfed the adjacent houses. At least 28 houses of 16 families were gutted in the devastating fire. Property worth Taka Five lakh were burnt to ashes.

Now the victim families are passing their days under open sky. Abdul Hye, TNO of Phulphul thana visited the spot and assured them of necessary help.

Woman raped in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 21: A divorcee young woman was raped by her former husband. The incident occurred at Kulkhandi Sonarpura in Matihar thana on Friday last.

According to police, Rowshan Ara, 22, married to Shahidul Islam, 26, of the same village about one year before. They got separated over a family quarrel about two months ago. On Friday midnight she went out of home at the call of nature. All on a sudden, Shahidul Islam caught her. He took her dragging to a nearby field forcibly. There he raped her former wife.

Shahidul Islam has fled away from the village. A case was filed in Matihar thana.

The victim was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for examination.

Jute farming likely to be hampered in 2 dists

By Staff Correspondent

Jute cultivation is likely to be hampered badly in the districts of Jhenidah and Gopalganj for want of timely rainfall, lower price of jute and want of jute seeds this year.

Our Jhenidah correspondent reports: The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Jhenidah, had taken a target to cultivate jute on 2,785 hectares in sadar thana, 2,845 hectares in Saikupa thana, 2,285 hectares in Harinakundu thana, 2,455 hectares in Kaliganj thana, 1,830 hectares in Kotchandpur thana and 3,125 hectares of land in Mohepur thana.

At least 200 millimetre (mm) rainfall was required between late Chaitra and late Baisakh. But till date about 20 mm rainfall was available. As a result the moisture in the soil decreased and the farmers could not prepare their lands for jute farming.

DAE sources said, 750 grams to 800 grams of jute seeds are required for each bigha of land. At least 86,000 kilograms of jute seed will be required in the district. Only 6,500 kilogram (early variety) of jute seeds were produced on 100 demonstration plots in the district. A total of 5,000 kilogram of jute seeds were collected by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC). Moreover, at best another 5,000 kilograms of jute seeds might be preserved by the farmers. It could not meet the demand of the farmers.

As a result the farmers will be compelled to depend on smuggled Indian seeds at a higher rate. When asked a seed seller of Saikupa 'hat' told that no jute seed was available with any trader as the supply of Indian seeds was stopped a few weeks ago. He said that Indian variety of jute seeds like 524, Krishna Sebayon, Chakra, Krishna Kalyan, Maharastra Seed Corporation (MSC), Annapurna,

Mahamaya, Sufalan and some other varieties were available earlier this season. But the stock ended as no consignment was received by them again.

According to the trader, he sold at least 22,000 kilogram of jute seeds last year, while only 4,000 kilograms of jute seed were sold by him in the current season. Another seed seller said that the land for producing jute seed was under water in the country as well as in neighboring country due to devastating flood last year. It had created acute jute seeds crisis in the sub-continent.

He expressed his opinion that jute cultivation might not exceed 4,000 hectares in the district this season. Regarding this, the BADC trader said that they (BADC) could not give guarantee of quality seeds as they had collected the seeds anyhow.

Ramjan Ali, a farmer at village Harihara in Saikupa thana said that he had lost his interest in cultivating jute on his land and that's why he had been cultivating jute on only one bigha of land instead of four bighas of last year. Stating his last year's experience Ramjan Ali said that jute had disheartened him as the price of jute was not over Taka three hundred per maund.

Talking to farmers of different areas and officials of DAE and BADC it was learnt that maximum 7,000 hectares of land out of the target of 15,325 hectares would be brought under jute farming in Jhenidah district this year.

Our Gopalganj correspondent reports: The target of jute cultivation in Gopalganj district may not be achieved during the current season for want of seeds.

According to reliable sources, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation

(BADC) preserves seeds in its godowns for distribution among the growers.

AHK Abu Esha Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Gopalganj told The Daily Star correspondent that BADC had supplied only 376kg of jute seeds.

It is alleged, genuine growers are not getting seeds from BADC. They are seeking seeds to the growers at higher prices. It is further alleged. Meanwhile, the local markets are flooded with Indian jute seeds.

The target has been fixed to bring 25,000 acres of land under the jute cultivation for the current season in the district. The target of production was fixed at 25,000 tons, but the target would not be achieved.

AED sources said, that jute is cultivated on about 15 lakh acres of land throughout the country.

About Taka 1,300 crore is earned annually from the export of goods and rawjute. The contribution to the public exchequer in the shape of tax, duty and revenue is Tk. 70 crore, while Power Development Board gets Tk 100 crore from the jute sector.

The objective of the Industrial Policy remained unfulfilled in spite of disinvestment of jute industry to private sector. Besides, fall in demand of jute in the international markets and unfair terms of trade, increase in wages and other benefits, power failure, heavy debt servicing were some of the factors responsible for loss in jute sector.

Jute sector employs about three crore people right from cultivation.

Meanwhile, the World Bank studied the problems of jute and jute industry and forwarded recommendations. A national task force undertook a similar in-depth study and submitted a report.

Erosion renders hundreds of families homeless in Gaibandha

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, May Several hundred families residing along the western bank of the river Jamuna are passing their days in misery as the river has already devoured a number of villages in Shaghata thana.

With sharp rise in water level in the Jamuna basin, the erosion has taken serious turn at Shaghata and Haldia unions in Shaghata thana. Every day huge areas are being devoured by the river. Pansipara, Hatbari and Munshirhat in Shaghata union, Guabari, Kipurpara, Char-Haldia, Kanaipara, Nalsia in Haldia union are affected seriously by the erosion.

A large number of families on the bank of the river fear that their homesteads along with limited crop lands might disappear any time following

widespread erosion. Many of them have shifted their huts to elsewhere. But there is no enough space for taking shelter on the embankments. The embankments have already been occupied by the erosion victims.

According to Tajul Islam of village Pansipara said that after losing all his belongings in erosion, he tried to take shelter on the Jamuna embankment but he returned disappointed as there is no space for him. Fifty more families of the village are in trouble as erosion is about to hit their homesteads.

While talking to a former chairman Fazlul Hoque told this correspondent that villages Pansipara and Hatbari might go under river any time. The future of the inhabitants of

these areas is almost uncertain as erosion is knocking at the door. Moreover, they have no place to take shelter. Jasjial Mandol of Char Haldia narrated his distress as erosion is about to hit his area. He told that he never wanted relief, but he wanted from the authorities concerned proper steps to check erosion soon.

The existing chairman of Haldia union Shahadat Hossain expressed that every day a large number of erosion victims had been coming with the demand of food and shelter. This year erosion takes a serious turn in this area. He urged the concerned authorities as well as government to take immediate measure to halt the erosion and shelters for the victims.

A success story of controlling diarrhoea in southern dists

By Rafiq Hasan, back from Perojpur

Seasonal decline in water level and concentration of germs in the natural sources of drinking water were the main causes of spreading diarrhoea in the southern region of the country every year, doctors said.

The disease sometimes spread in epidemic form in some areas causing large number of death.

Till last Friday, 207 people died of diarrhoeal attack since January this year in eight southern districts. A total of 36,741 people were attacked by the disease in the districts of Jhalokathi, Barisal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Perojpur, Barguna, Bagerhat and Noakhali.

The Health Directorate officials said, five people died and 700 were attacked by the disease within a day.

Doctors and hospital sources in Perojpur said that diarrhoea starts spreading in the region mainly during the months of November - December and February - April when water level in the coastal area falls and germs concentrate in water. During this time, all the coastal areas including Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts become vulnerable to diarrhoeal diseases, doctors said.

They said people quickly become victims of the disease because they drink contaminated water from natural sources like ponds, canals and rivers which contain germs of diarrhoea intensively during the months of November - December and February - April.

Extensive preventing measures, awareness campaign among the people and timely action taken by the government can save the people from the attack of the disease, they pointed out.

Doctors further said diarrhoea can be prevented to some extent if enough safe drinking water can be supplied and permanent sanitary system established in the area.

Officials at Perojpur Civil Surgeon's office said that diarrhoea could not be spread in the district in epidemic form this year mainly due to timely action by the government.

"We have formed special medical teams for surveillance. They go from door-to-door for patients and set up temporary camps to enable local people for seeking treatment," said Dr Alamgir, Perojpur Civil Surgeon's office.

"We also supplied huge medicine including oral saline, water purification tablets and other necessary preventive measures for keeping the situation under control," he said.

Doctors at Perojpur Government Hospital also said that the number of diarrhoea patients this year was much lower than that of previous years. "We had kept a separate ward for diarrhoea patients," said Abdul Matin Sardar, Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of the hospital.

During a visit to the Diarrhoea Ward this correspondent saw only six patients there. Most of the patients were children. The patients said that the hospital had provided necessary drugs to them for treatment.

The RMO also said that there was no scarcity of drugs for treating diarrhoea patients.

Alamgir claimed that the number of diarrhoea patients was lower this year because of some preventive measures taken by the government in the diarrhoea prone zones since the beginning of the season.

"Huge number of oral saline and tablets were sent to the respective Union Parishad (UP) chairmen, members, school and madrasa teachers and imams of mosques for meeting the emergency needs," Alamgir said.

"Adequate number of Ponds Sands Filter (PSF) were also set up in the diarrhoea prone areas to supply pure drinking water to the villagers," he added.

5 more police camps for Khulna city

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 21: Five out of 10 proposed police camps would be set up in the metropolitan city in a bid to gear up police operations. An amount of Taka five lakh has already been sanctioned for Mistrypara police camp. The other police camps would be set up at Labonchora, Royermahal, Arhonga, hata and Pather bazar in the city.

The Additional IGP, Mohammad Abdur Rahim Khan is on tour in different districts of Khulna division.

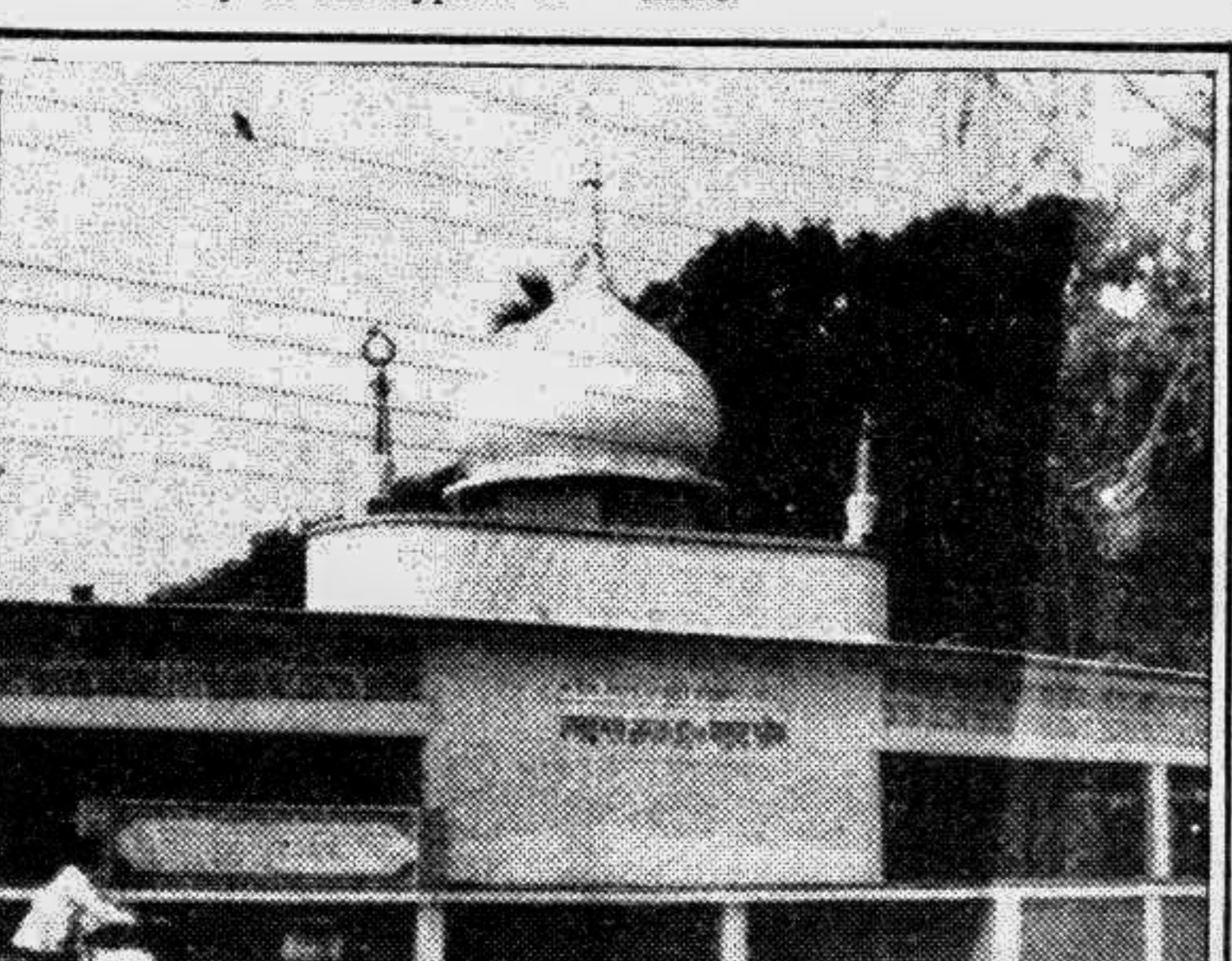
Tuesday he visited the newly set up police camps at Bashundia of Jessore, Rupsha of Khulna district and Fakirhat of Bagerhat district.

In a rally at Mistrypara of

Khulna city held on May 9. The additional IGP reiterated firm commitment of the government to establish a society free from terrorism.

At noon he reviewed the special police operation in the metropolitan city. While addressing officials of KMP and probationer ASPs at the KMP conference room on May 9 noon, the Additional IGP stressed the need for sincerity for making the special operation a grand success.

Police commissioner Md Anwarul Iqbal, PFM, Additional Police Commissioner AHM Noorudin and DIG, Khulna range were present there.



Mazar of Hazrat Shah Jamal (R)

— Star photo

Jamalpur named after great saint Hazrat Shah Jamal (R)

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 21: Many saints and 'Aulias' have come to this country from different parts of the world to preach Islam.

Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) was one of those 'Aulias' who came to Jamalpur from Yemen in the Middle East.

About 900 years ago, this area situated on bank of the Old Brahmaputra was called 'Sannasiganj'. The whole area was a forest bereft of human habitation. Long after people started inhabiting in this area. Later on the area was called 'Jamalpur' after the famous saint Hazrat Shah Jamal (R).

Members of the Hindu community built a Shiva temple. That was the time between 1100-1203 AD when Sen of ancient Gaur of Bengal had suzerainty over the whole area. The locality in an around Jamalpur town where the temple was situated was popularly known as Shiv Para. Subsequently the temple turned into a monastery. Monks from remote corners of the country used to visit this temple. Hence the temple and the area came to be known as 'Sannasiganj'.

During the rule of the great Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605), Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) came to this area for preaching Islam. Enchanted by the scenic beauty of the area Hazrat Shah Jamal (R) set up his camp on the bank of the Old Brahmaputra.

It is said that Hazrat Shah Jamal was a close kin of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) of Sylhet. A group of saints numbering 360 arrived the northern Bengal. Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) was the

leader of that group. There are differences of opinion on the exact location of the mazar of Hazrat Shah Jamal (R). Alhaj Golan Mohammed in his book 'Gono Itibriti' expressed doubt about the existence of Shah Jamal's (R) mazar in the district.

According to another version, the Dargah of Shaha Jamal (R) is situated at the west end of the district town. People from far and near visit the 'mazar' to perform Urs.

Despite controversy raging round the mazar of Hazrat Shaha Jamal (R), it is established beyond any shadow of doubt that once he came and stayed in Jamalpur. It is also a fact that he had hailed from Yemen and came to this part of the world via Multan to preach Islam.

Before Shaha Jamal (R) another great Saint Hazrat Shaha Kamal (R) came to Jamalpur for preaching Islam. He also came from Multan in 1503 and set up his camp at Durmut on the