

National

News snaps

Afforestation programme

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, May 29: An extensive afforestation programme has been undertaken in 38 thanas of the northern region during this fiscal year.

A total of 533 kilometre roadside places will be brought under this programme. Of the total areas, 102 kilometre roads in Gaibandha, 152 kilometre in Rangpur, 116 kilometre in Kurigram, 192 kilometre in Nilphamari and 70 kilometre in Lalmonirhat district will be brought under this programme. The programme will be conducted by Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The programme will continue for the next five years. The aim of the programme is to increase forest areas in the northern region.

Young man commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, May 29: A young man committed suicide by taking poison in Kachua thana of the district following a fire fed recently.

The victim was identified as Md Khorshed Alam, 23, son of late Shajuddin Pathan of village Einpur in Kachua thana. He was rushed to Kachua Hospital where the attending doctor declared him dead.

Two killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, May 29: Two persons were killed on the spot in a road accident at Bakhunda under Nagarkanda thana recently. A Nagarkanda bound private pick-up van loaded with rice collided head-on with a tempo. As a result, the van fell into a roadside ditch killing the driver of the van Mukter Hossain Mridha, 26, and one unidentified person aged 25. A case was lodged with Nagarkanda thana in this connection.

Couple roasted alive

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, May 29: Both husband and wife were roasted alive and their two children received burn injuries in a devastating fire at village Nishindotpur of Mozhishpur union in Brahmanbaria thana recently.

According to eyewitnesses the fire originated from a lamp which engulfed the house. As a result, Abul Hashim, his wife Kursida Akter and their son Md Lukman, 16, daughter Julekha Begum, 8, sustained burn injuries. In a critical condition all of them were admitted to Brahmanbaria Modern Hospital where the couple succumbed to their injuries while their ill-fated son and daughter were undergoing treatment.

Divorce rate up

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 29: The number of divorcees in seven thanas of the district is increasing day by day.

More than 2,000 marriages were terminated during the last six months in the district. According to sources, primary causes of divorce have been attributed to dowry, polygamy and immoral activities. Poor women are the worst victims. Due to non-registration of marriages they do not get the legal protection. Marriage registrars in the remote areas demand higher fees which the poor parents and guardians can not afford. Besides, despite legal restrictions, many men marry several times in villages without obtaining the written permission from the first wife.

7,000 affected by iodine deficiency

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, May 29: About 7,000 people in 10 thanas of the district have been affected by iodine deficiency.

Particularly the children and women have been affected by Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) causing physical and mental problem including reducing of IQ, doctors said. Iodine deficiency causes goitre, physical and mental retardation to the children, deafness and dumbness and retardation of normal development of brain and nervous system. The deficiency of iodine may also cause abortion to pregnant mothers.

Showcause notice on hat leasee

PANCHAGARH, May 29: The Mareya hat of Boda thana has been given on lease following regular and normal procedure but the cheque of Tk 2 lakh has been dishonoured by the local branch of Sonali Bank, reports UNB.

TNO of Boda thana and chairman of the thana hat development committee issued a showcause notice on the leasee Nur Islam but has not yet cancelled the lease. The matter raised suspicion in the public mind in the thana. Some members of local elite have sent a petition to the Divisional Commissioner calling for investigating the suspected corruption.

Mother, children vaccinated

PIROJPUR, May 29: A total of 1,36,879 mother and children of the district have been vaccinated and inoculated under the Extended Programme of Immunisation last year, health officials said here, reports UNB.

Of them, 21,137 were immunised in sader, 27,059 in Mohbaria, 29,699 in Nessaarabad, 21,750 in Nazirpur, 19,555 in Bhandari and 10,928 in Kaukhali thanas besides, 6,251 mothers and children in the Pirojpur municipality. The immunisation comprised of BCG, DPT, measles, polio, and tetanus for pregnant mother.

VGP allocated rice seized

BAGERHAT, May 29: Police seized some 1 metric ton of rice and wheat allocated for distribution under VGP programme from the houses of a UP chairman and his neighbour at Demra village in sader thana Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the houses of Atahar Ali, chairman of Demra union, and Yunus, and recovered the foodgrains. None was arrested. The police action came when local people lodged complaint against the chairman as he was making unusual delay in distributing the grains.

Bridge construction begins soon

ISWARDI, May 29: Construction of the long awaited Bhairab Bridge and Pakshay Bridge will begin in August and October respectively, reports APB.

The proposed 1,800 meter Pakshay Bridge over the Padma will be constructed some 300 meters off the Hardinge Bridges, official source said. The Bhairab bridge will be constructed on the Bhairab river near Khulna city. The total cost of these projects have been estimated at Tk 3,268 crore. The projects will bring about a revolutionary change in the country's communication system, establishing direct road link between northern and south western district and between Dhaka and Mongla port.

Scheme to develop primary schools

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, May 29: The Primary Education Development project under LGED has taken up a scheme for the development of two primary schools in Chapainawabganj district in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

The scheme includes one new building of Nasirabad Primary School and a new building of Sanpur Primary School. The estimated cost for the scheme is Taka 12 lakh 82 thousand. The implementation of the scheme is progressing satisfactorily and 95 per cent of the work has already been completed. The rest work is expected to be completed by July next.

Housewife beaten to death by husband

RANGPUR, May 29: A young housewife was beaten to death by her husband for dowry at Dhaperhat in Kotwali thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Family sources said the husband, Abdul Jalil used to torture his wife Goleza Begum, 20, for dowry money. On the fateful day, he beat his wife mercilessly and at one stage pushed poison into her mouth to cover up the crime. Later on she succumbed to her injuries at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH). Police sent the body for autopsy. Goleza's father Osman Gani told newsmen that police refrained from taking any action against Abdul Jalil.

Seven-year RI for smuggler

KURIGRAM, May 29: A Special Tribunal Court here convicted a man and sentenced him to seven years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for smuggling non-iodised salt, reports UNB.

The convict, Mohammad Bakul, of Bazra Union in Ulipur thana, was also fined Taka 5,000, in default, to suffer one year more RI. According to the prosecution, a team of Anti-Smuggling Task Force, on information, raided the godown of Bakul on January 29, 1998 and arrested him with, 3,040 kg non-iodised salt smuggled in from India. Later on a case was lodged with the police in this regard. After examining the records and witnesses, Judge of the court-4, Kazi A M Joynal Abedin awarded the punishment.

PM's assurance yet to be fulfilled

More cyclone shelters needed in offshore islands of Bhola dist

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, May 29: More multi-purpose cyclone shelters need to be constructed immediately to protect several lakhs of helpless people of different shoals and offshore islands of Bhola district.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured to construct more multi-purpose cyclone shelters in the shoals and offshore islands during her visit here on May 30 in 1997.

Most of the cyclone shelters were constructed after the country's biggest natural disaster in 1970 when several thousands of people were killed.

As a result, due to lack of proper repair and maintenance work the cyclone shelters have turned into dilapidated concrete structures.

Most of the centres' doors, windowpanes and other structures have already been either

broken down or stolen away, but those were not replaced as yet.

It is assessed that not more than 1.50 lakh people can take shelter in 143 cyclone shelters in time of cyclonic storm and other natural disaster.

Most of the cyclone shelters are located near the villages. These are being used as schools for the rural boys and girls of primary stage.

Monpura being the far off offshore island thana of the district is the worst sufferer in every respect. Even in time of cyclonic storm or tidal surge, records reveal, Monpura becomes most unsafe than anywhere in the district. Over five lakh helpless, poor residents of this offshore island thus become easy prey of natural calamities.

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More cyclone shelters and 'killas' are also needed in other shoal lands and offshore islands of the district like Dhalchar, Char Nijam, Charpatila, Char Ukrimuddin, Char Satyen, Char Jamshed, Ptarchar, Char Zahiruddin, Char Chamiruddin, Char Hossein, Bhalumiar Char, Bherduria, Kandarpur, Rajapur, Natun Char, Kakrarchar and others.

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Date expired medicines flood Bogra markets

From A Correspondent

BOGRA May 29: About one thousand one hundred twenty-four medicine shops here have no drug license.

Even the Medicine Administration does not know that on average five drug shops were being opened every month here.

Only five hundred seventy-six medicine shops have been running with drug license, out of a total of one thousand seven hundred medicine shops.

One hundred medicine shop owners did not get license as yet despite their prayer for the same. Only two hundred twenty drug licenses were issued during the last 11 years from 1982 to 1993. The number of issuance of drug license among the traders is very negligible in comparison with the demand.

It has been learnt from the Office of the Drug Superintendent

dent that an incumbent applicant for license needs to complete the Pharmacy course. Then they have to deposit an amount as fee to get the license.

Two types of drug courses are available here. One is for three years' and another is for three months'. One must have to complete either of the two courses and obtain a certificate of passing.

There are even some shops here which have no trade license at all, not to speak of drug license. Yet these shops have been selling various kinds of medicines including the life saving drugs.

Innocent rural people are not only deceived after purchasing the date expired medicines from these shops, but also suffering from various diseases after taking those medicines.

TLM programme progressing

From K M Rezaul Hoque

GAIBANDHA, May 29: This year Gaibandha district will be declared illiteracy-free zone, said the Total Literacy Movement (TLM) committee here.

The programme under the caption 'Bikoshito Gaibandha' started functioning six months ago in seven thanas of the district. Total illiterate persons within the age group between 11 to 45 years have been assessed to be 4,61,468. Out of the total, 4,37,468 illiterate persons have already been brought under the TLM programme here. The remaining 30,000 illiterate persons are being taught in different non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The government allocated a huge amount of money for promoting the rate of national education. As such the TLM programme has been geared up throughout the country.

In Gaibandha district the authority allocated a fund of Taka 13,41,75,601. Meanwhile, the district administration received an amount of Taka 7,70,00,000. The TLM committee already spent Taka 7,48,17,194.

During implementation of the programme the district TLM committee set up 7,439 male centres and 7,077 female centres throughout the district.

The committee recruited a total of 14,516 teachers and 968 supervisors to conduct the whole literacy programme. Each centre was set up with 30 learners in different remote areas.

While talking to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of

Gaibandha Sharafuddin Ahmed he told The Daily Star that despite various problems the programme had been implemented here satisfactorily. Now the committee is getting ready to hold the final test of the learners through an examination expected to be held tomorrow.

(Saturday) in all centres of the district. The programme will be extended further for the next three months on vocational nature with a view to providing them in different income oriented jobs, he added.

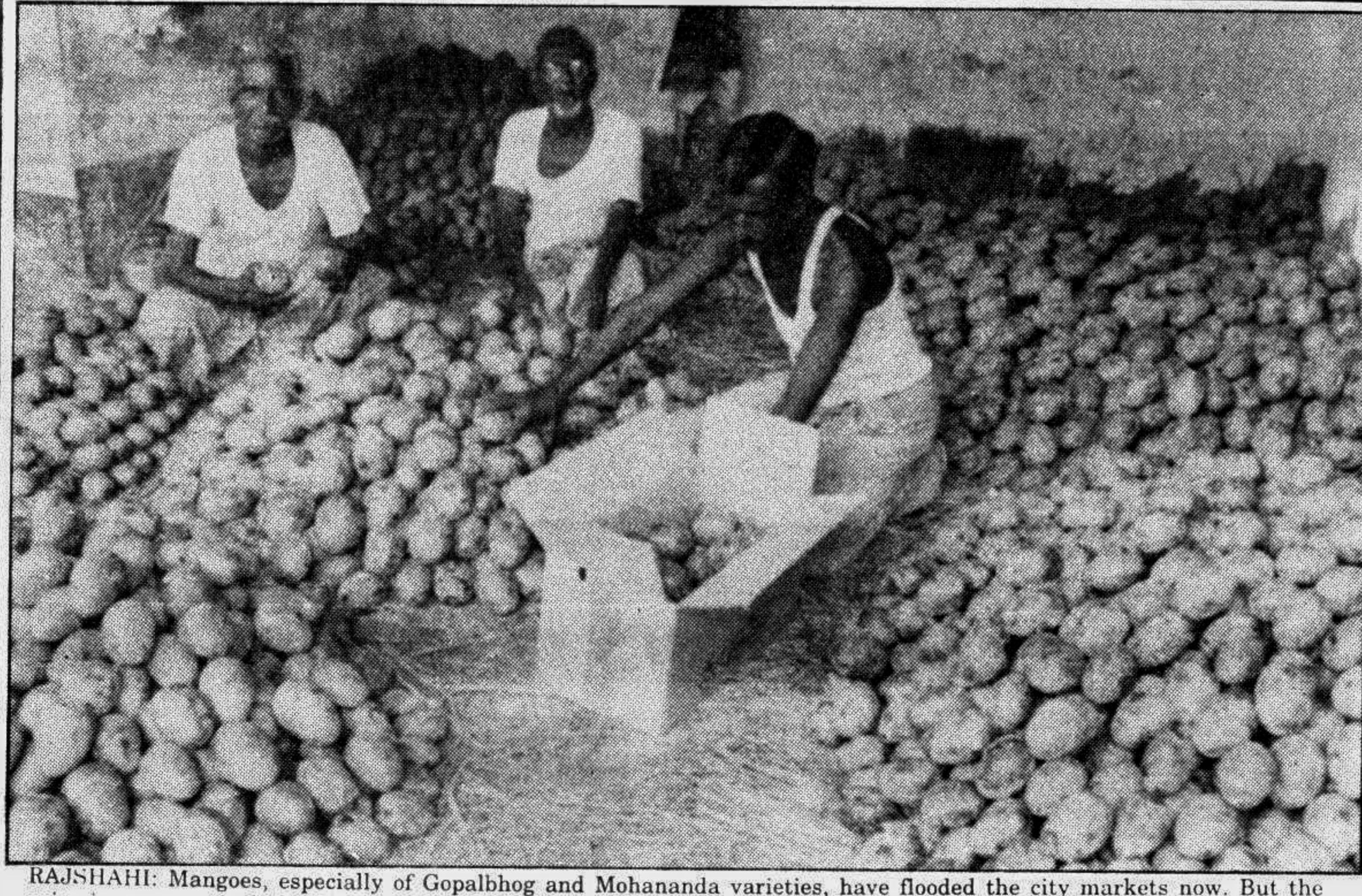
Rally of landless in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, May 29: A big rally of landless was held on May 16 under the auspices of Kalaroa thana Bhumihin Samity at Bujhata Madrasa in Kalaroa thana with Abdur Razzak in the chair.

Prof Abu Ahmed was present as the chief guest, while Saifullah Laskar, Kawser Ali and Abdus Sattar were present as special guests. It was also addressed, among others, by Kalaroa thana Awami League president B M Nazrul Islam, Chairman Kawser Ali, Abdul Jabbar Master and Alimuddin.

In the meeting a 71-member committee of Kalaroa thana Bhumihin Samity was formed which was headed by Alamgir Kabir as President and Alimuddin as General Secretary respectively.



RAJSHAHI: Mangoes, especially of Gopalbhog and Mohananda varieties, have flooded the city markets now. But the price is comparatively high and the taste of mango is not desirably good this year. Continued drought is the reason behind lessening of its deliciousness.

— Star photo

30,038 hectares brought under Aus cultivation in Rajshahi

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, May 29: The experts hope a bumper harvest of Aus paddy in Rajshahi district in the ongoing season despite rainlessness in the early monsoon.

The District Agriculture Extension Department of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation has fixed a target to cultivate Aus paddy on 30,038 hectares of lands including 12,315 hectares of High Yielding Variety (HYV) during the current season.

The Extension Department expects that a total of 40,200 metric tons of paddy would be produced in this season.

In the meantime, the ground at the burning point had gone down by about five feet.

It has been apprehended that the fire might have originated from the reaction of mineral resources like gas and oil. Local people feared that the fire might create havoc any time. They have urged the concerned authorities to investigate into the matter.

The Extension Department expects that a total of 40,200 metric tons of paddy would be produced in this season.

In the last season, Aus paddy was cultivated on 29,885 hectares of land against the target of 28,500 hectare. But only 930 metric tons of paddy were