

News snaps

10 gamblers arrested

From Our Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, June 6 : Phulpur police arrested 10 gamblers from different areas of the thana recently.

While conducting a drive to curb gambling, police arrested five persons from Danta Bazaar, four from village Sakalla and one from the thana sadar. Gambling activities is on sharp rise in many places of the district which is affecting the normal life style of people.

Youth commits suicide

From A Correspondent
MAGURA, June 6 : A young man committed suicide on May 28 by drinking poison in Kullia village of the thana. The victim was identified as Rafiqul Islam, 25, son of Asad Biswas. The cause of suicide was family troubles.

UP chairman arrested

NETRAKONA, June 6 : The chairman of Birshiri Union Parishad (UP) under Durgapur thana was arrested by Netrakona police from a guest house here on Monday.

Rafiqul Islam, the UP chairman was arrested in connection with a case. Police said, Islam physically assaulted one woman named Swareshyati Rani of Birshiri. A case was filed by Swarishyati with Durgapur Police Station. Police after receiving a secret information rushed to the guest house where he was hiding and arrested him.

Seminar on child trafficking

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, June 6 : A seminar on organising social movement against Child and Woman Trafficking and repression on them was arranged at Keshupur Thana Parishad auditorium under the auspices of Rights, Jessor. Taslim Ahmed, it was attended by woman MP Aleya Afroz as the chief guest. Ex-MNA Subodh Mitra was the main speaker. Binoy Krishna Mollick, acting General Secretary, Rights, Jessor read out the key-note paper.

Paddy loaded truck snatched

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, June 6 : A paddy loaded truck was snatched away from near kola bazaar in Kalganj thana on May 31 night.

Police said a gang of armedmen took control of the truck at about 8pm which was loaded with 120 bags of paddy worth Taka 70 thousand. Later on the truck was recovered from Kushita town without goods.

Open sale of phensidyl

From Our Correspondent
JAMALPUR, June 6 : Indian phensidyl syrup, a contraband drug is being held openly in the thana, Islampur thana and Sarisabaria thana. A gang of smugglers with the connivance of some political leaders and some unscrupulous Narcotics officials are engaged in smuggling the spurious drug for a long time.

Uplift works progressing

TANGAIL, June 6 : Tangail Zila Parishad is implementing 26 projects in the current fiscal year at a cost of Taka 57.26000, reports BSS.

Official sources said, under the projects, 10 union parishad buildings, boundary walls, three schools and three dakhngalas, four culverts and six roads are being constructed. The work is going on in full swing. It is expected to be completed by June.

Another youth commits suicide

MUNSHIGANJ, June 6 : A young man identified as Md Ashabuddin, son of Abdur Rahman of South Islampur in the thana committed suicide by taking insecticide recently, reports BSS.

According to his family sources, the young man was suffering from chronic disease and killed himself following unbearable pain.



RAJSHAHI: A new school of Santal language has been opened here for aborigines recently. Photo shows some Santal students are seen standing with books in hand near the school.

— Star photo

Because of filing a false case

GAZIPUR, June 6 : Five police personnel and another man were sent to jail on Sunday for filing a false arms case against a man of Chhoto Koir village, reports BSS.

Official sources said there had been an enmity between Mohammad Jakaria and Hedayet Mollah of the village since long. As a sequel to this enmity, police conducted a raid in 1982 and filed an arms case against Jakaria. But Jakaria was acquitted of the charge by the then martial law court. The court ordered to start departmental proceedings against the policemen for filing the false case. After being acquitted, Jakaria filed a case with the court against them and the court recently issued warrant of arrest against the accused persons. They were identified as Hemayet Mollah, Subedar Abdul Khalid, Habidul Moazzam Hug (retd), Former CI Tofazzal Hossain, former OC of Kalganj thana Yakub Ali and constables Jagadish Chandra, Surj Miah and Dulal Miah.

Cattle lifting on rise

LAJMONIRTH, June 6 : Cattle lifting is on alarming rise in Aditmohi thana creating panic among the farmers, reports UNB.

Villagers said an organised gang of cattle lifters very often swoop on the villages at night and steal cattle from their cowshed. According to them 17 cattle were stolen from Sarai Khan village within the span of three days recently. The gang had lifted 25 more cattle earlier from the same village. Most of the affected families are facing acute financial hardship as they used to maintain their livelihood by selling cow milk.

10 bridges under construction

PIROJPUR, June 6 : The Local Government Engineering Department has taken up construction of 10 bridges in two thanas at a total cost of Tk 48.60,025, reports BSS.

Of these, nine bridges are being built at Mothbaria and one in thana. Officials said the work was going on in full swing and 60 per cent of the construction work had already been done. On completion by next month, the bridges are expected to considerably improve road communication.

Rivals kill youth

SYLHET, June 6 : A young man was killed by his rivals at Doulatpur village in Bishwanath thana on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Police said Selim Ahmed, 30, died on the spot when his rivals attacked him with sharp weapons over a minor dispute. Another report adds : A middle-aged man, Abdul Haq, of Satar South village in thana was killed in a clash on Sunday.

Aman farming on 37,500 hectares

MADRIPUR, June 6 : A total of 37,500 hectares will be brought under broadcasting Aman cultivation in all the four thanas of the district in the current season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 12,500 hectares will be brought under broadcasting Aman cultivation in Rajbari thana, 8,625 hectares in Kalkini, 8,300 hectares in thana and 8,075 hectares in Shibchar thana. The cultivation of broadcasting Aman paddy has been delayed due to severe drought in the district.

Over 100-year-old Teesta Rly Bridge may collapse any moment

From Our Correspondent

KURIGRAM, June 6 : The Teesta Railway Bridge which was built in 1879 with 100-year longevity period is now in a pitiable condition.

The bridge is the only gateway to about 40 lakh people of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts for rail and road communications.

The structure of the age-old bridge, whose longevity expired 20 years ago has now become vulnerable. People fear that major accidents may occur at any moment causing heavy toll of lives and property. If such an accident occurs, communication of the two districts with other parts of the country may cut off.

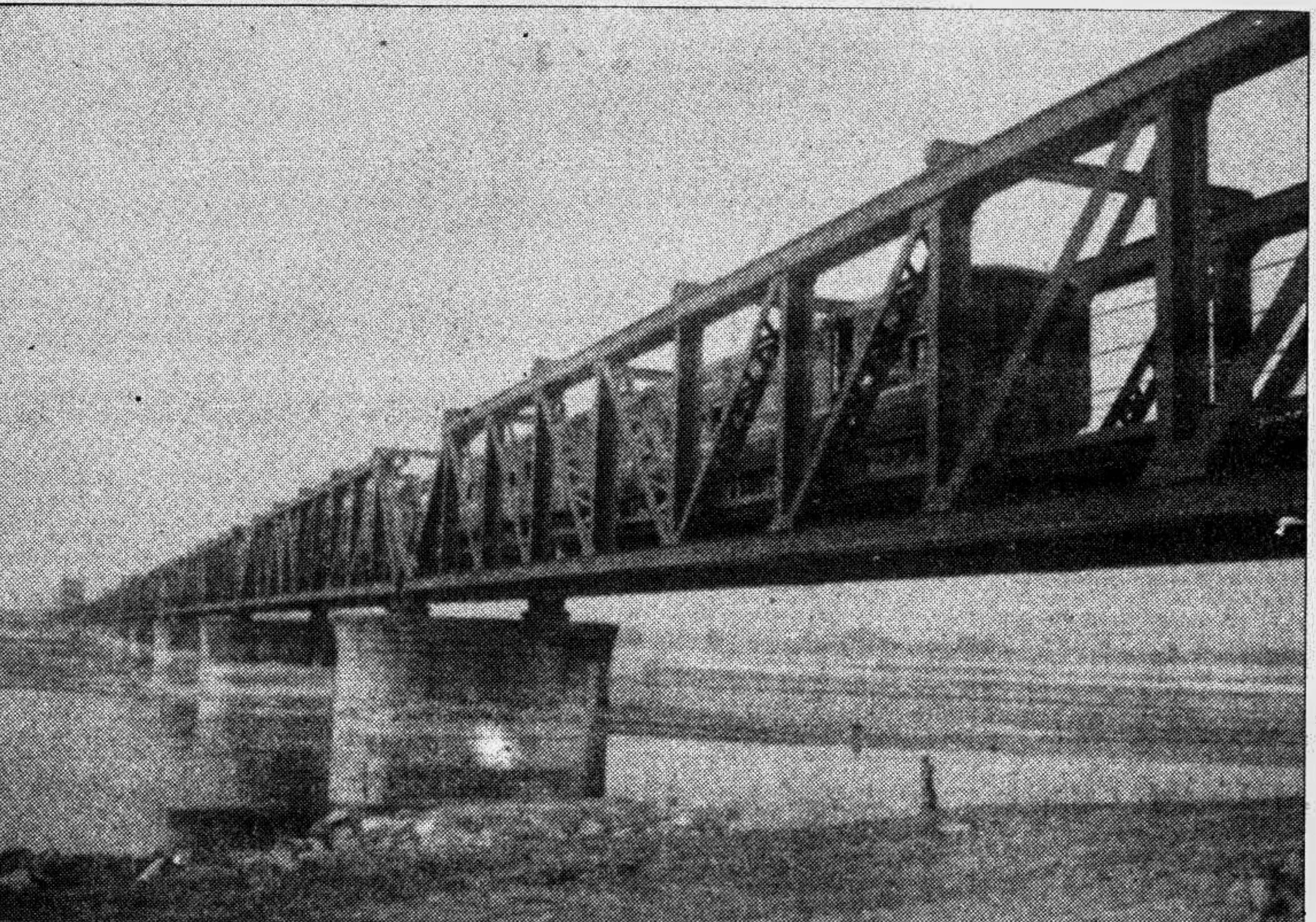
Though the bridge is a property of the Roads and Highways (R&H) Department, its maintenance lies on the Bangladesh Railway. A repair work of the deck of the bridge was completed in the last year. Though the department concerned is repairing the deck every year to keep it playable, yet it may collapse at any time. This is because all its structures shake when any loaded truck or train passes through it.

The wooden slippers on the deck are being stolen every year. As a result, the railway tracks on the bridge have become vulnerable. Big holes and cracks are formed every year with the disappearance of the wooden slippers, nuts and bolts. The rails tremble when any train runs over it.

The bridge is the third longest one (2,110 feet long and 10 feet wide) in the country. At least 2,000 vehicles including trains, passenger buses, minibuses, Dhaka bound day and night coaches, trucks loaded upto 35 tonnes, lorries carrying fuel, cars and all other vehicles ply daily over the bridge round the clock. At least 100 minor accidents occurred on the bridge during the last two years.

After commissioning of the bridge in 1879, for only railway traffic, it played an important role in the field of communication of British India. It was the most important strategic point during the Second World War.

In 1971, the Pak occupation



A passenger train running over the bridge by shaking its total structure.

forces severely damaged the bridge in the early December. Only trains plying over it before the damage done by the Pak occupation forces. However, its repairing works were completed in 1978 and train communications were restored again.

Later on March 4, 1978, the then President Ziaur Rahman opened the bridge for vehicular traffic after slight modification of the deck by placing wooden slippers. Thus the two districts were connected by road with the rest of the country. At that time,

only some recommended size of vehicles with limited load were allowed to ply over the bridge. An agreement on the issue was also signed between Bangladesh Railway and Roads and Highways department then. Since then, the Roads and Highways department bears the responsibility for all sorts of repairing or maintenance works of the Bangladesh Railway owned bridge on the river Teesta situated 27 kilometers west of Kurigram town on Rangpur-Kurigram highway. With the fund of the R&H de-

partment, Bangladesh Railway conducted the repairing work of the deck of the bridge in 1985, 1993, 1998 and 1999. But the condition of the bridge is deteriorating day by day. The main structure including piers and metallic frames remained untouched which have become vulnerable. The repairing work of the wooden slippers on the deck do not provide safety of the bridge.

They also opined for construction of a new bridge nearby to avoid any severe accident. "Replacement of wooden slippers on the deck is not the solution," they cautioned.

— Star photo

Fisheries Directorate officials embezzle FFW projects' money

and Bhangura thanas.

The wheat used for these projects until May 22 was shown as 48.2 tonnes worth Tk 43 lakh, according to allegations.

Investigations, however, revealed that the entire amount had been misappropriated by the project chairmen and some officials.

Knowledgeable quarters also alleged that a section of officials and employees of the directorate had embezzled substantial amount of money from the project chairmen and some officials.

Locals complained that the allocated wheat had never reached the project sites in time. Most of this wheat had been sold away from the thana food godowns.

The sources said it was owing to manipulations by the office of the concerned engineer of the directorate that the wheat

had been misappropriated. During the pre-measurement, the depth of the canals and the ponds were shown to be greater than actual ones. As a result, informed sources said, a negligible quantity of wheat was used up under these projects.

When contacted, the district fisheries officer, Aminul Huq, denied any charge of corruption or irregularities, saying the projects had been implemented as per regulations.

He, however, said since a large number of written complaints had been received, proper inquiry would be undertaken in due course.

Arsenic detected in tubewells' water of 2 more dists

could not yet be tested for lack of manpower and necessary equipment in their laboratory.

"It's not possible for the people who are poor to volunteer for the test of their tubewell waters as it costs Tk 500 in the division's only one laboratory," said an official preferring anonymity.

Local people urged the authorities concerned to set up more laboratories to test tube-

wells and called on the NGOs to come forward to supplement the government efforts in this regard.

Another report from Jhenidah says: Arsenic contamination has been detected in 141 hand driven tubewells in five thanas here causing grave concern among the local people.

However, no arsenic contamination was found in sadar thana.

Of the affected tubewells, 48 were sealed. The worst hit areas are Moheshpur and Kaliganj.

According to officials, 114 were affected in Moheshpur, 13 in Kaliganj, five each in Shailakupa and Harinakunda and four in Kotchandpur thanas.

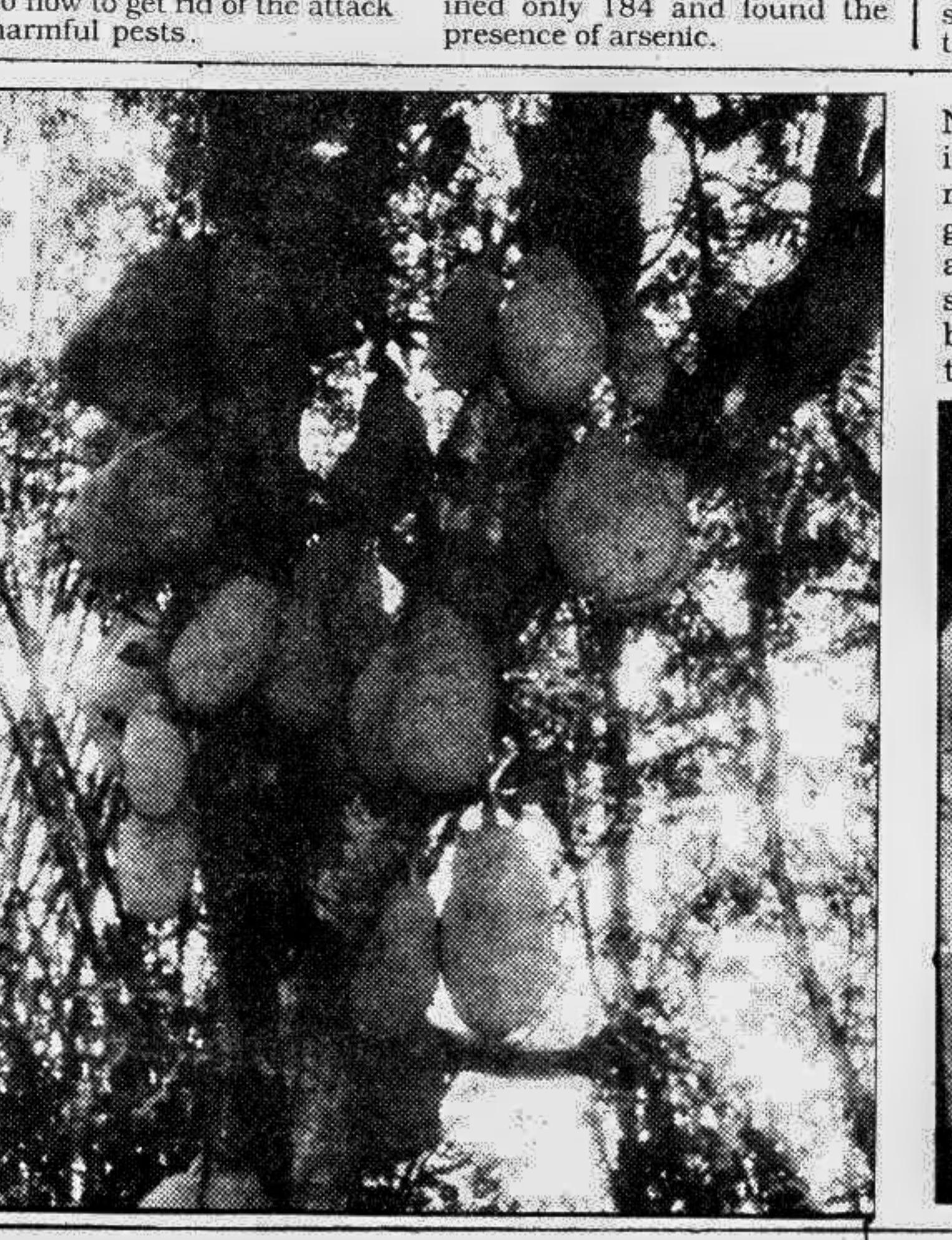
The contamination is so serious that it went beyond the accepted limit.

Of the 16,013 registered tubewells in the district, the concerned department examined only 184 and found the presence of arsenic.

The district-wise breakup of arsenic detected tubewells is: 113 in Khulna district, 77 in Bagerhat, 135 in Satkhira, 147 in Jessor, 34 in Narail, 18 in Jhenidha, 31 in Magura, 54 in Kushtia, 56 in Chuadanga and 63 in Meherpur.

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DPHE sources said over 15,000 tubewells in the division



Tk 3.07 cr renovation works of education instts in Rajbari

RAJBARI, June 6 : Renovation works of 23 educational institutions are progressing fast at a cost of Tk 3.07 crore.

Of the total, 11 are being renovated under the supervision of Facilities Department in Sadar thana, four in Ballakandi, one in Goalando and seven in Pangsha thanas.

District's Relief and Rehabilitation Officer said construction of roads, embankment and culverts and earth filling works of educational and religious institutions is progressing fast.

Official sources said with the completion of the work expected within the current fiscal year, about 4,000 more students of schools and madrasahs will be able to get education facilities.

On the other hand, development works of 37 educational institutions damaged in the last

Tk 200 cr Chalan Beel project stalled for 25 years

RAJSHAHI, June 6 : Flood Control and Drainage Project in the Chalan Beel area stretching from Natore to Rajshahi could not be implemented even after last 25 years due to lack of necessary fund and bureaucratic bottlenecks, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, the donor agencies lost their interests regarding the proposed Tk 200 crore project launched by Water Development Board (WDB) with financial assistance from World Food Programme and International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources said.

Water Development Board launched the project in the fiscal 1973-74 to protect crops on 3.21 lakh acres land of eight thanas in the area from the onrush of floodwaters, sources added.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) also did not show any interest after examining the survey report of the project.

Water Development Board sources said the government had undertaken a plan to construct 298km dam, 24 regulators, 57 flashing inlet, 171 km road, four bridges and 47 culverts. But that also could not set the light of the day.

Meanwhile, another project proposal was accepted in 1991 with the aim of constructing 57km water sewerage canal, 16 regulators, 57 flashing inlet, 55 culverts. But that also could not set the light of the day.

— Star photo by Aminul Islam

bridges, 132 culverts and big 187 canals with an estimated cost of about Tk 43.66 crore.

For implementing the project properly, the total area of the project had been divided into four polders, which included Bhangura and Chatogram, Pabna district, Boria, Gurudaspur and Singra of Natore district, Atrai and Manda of Naogaon district and Tanor, Baghara, Mohanpur of Rajshahi district.

After completion of the first phase work spending Tk 43 crore, the authorities concerned stopped further allocation of fund on the plea of constructing two sluice-gates by WDB in an unplanned way at Charchhat in Rajshahi and Nandakunda in Naogaon in 1984. As a result, the work of the project came to a halt in 1989.

Meanwhile, another project proposal was accepted in 1991 with the aim of constructing 57km water sewerage canal, 16 regulators, 57 flashing inlet, 171 km road, four bridges and 47 culverts. But that also could not set the light of the day.

— Star photo by Aminul Islam

Blacksmiths need govt patronisation

KISHOREGANJ, June 6 : The blacksmith community of the district is facing enormous problems due to lack of patronisation as well as price hike of necessary ingredients, reports UNB.

About 5,000 blacksmiths are passing their days in great hardship for quite a long time. They are not getting fair price of their products due to lack of marketing facilities.

Meanwhile, a large number of them have already left their age-old occupation and turned day labourers for their survival, said the local people.

Blacksmith community mostly populates the district with major concentration in Hossainpur, Katli, sadar, Pak, Astagram, Nikli, Tarail, Kullarchar, Bajitpur and many other areas. These people are struggling hard in maintaining their family.

Some blacksmiths told that prices of their products went down in the past few years while the prices of inputs increased manifold.

They make dao, axe, knife, kitchen knife and other essential agri-inputs, which are being sold in the local market. But the situation has changed now for the price spiral of necessary ingredients.

Rabindra Joyanti in Mymensingh

From Our Correspondent MYMENSINGH, June 6 : Various socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions celebrated the 138th birth anniversary of Rabindra Joyanti recently.

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