

News snaps

Separate incidents claim 2 lives

MANIKGANJ, June 16: Road accidents, snake-bite and terrorism have taken two lives and injured nine others here, reports UNB.

In one of the two road accidents, a Second World War jeep ran over a Class five student named Saiful, 10, at Andharmanik on Hariampur extension road of Dhaka-Aricha highway killing him on the spot. Police seized the bus, but the driver fled away.

Bumper output of Boro paddy

SHERPUR, June 16: The bumper production of Boro crops here has brought smile on the face of growers, reports UNB.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Boro paddy were cultivated on 61,500 hectares of land against the target of 55,400 hectares and production stood at 2.24 lakh mts of paddy. Growers said the cultivation target surpassed this year as they got adequate bank loan, fertilisers and pesticides at fair prices in due time. Moreover, showers during last April and proper irrigation facilities were mainly responsible for the bumper production, they added. This year, production of BR-26, BR-29, BR-8, BR-28 and BR-27 crossed the target. Farmers harvested 70-80 maunds of BR-29 paddy from each acre of land.

Foodgrains distribution completed

NARSINGDI, June 15: The distribution of foodgrains under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme of the government was completed here recently, an official source said, reports BSS.

A total of 6,067 tons of wheat and 3,523 tons of rice were distributed among 84,400 members of distributed families in the six thanas here during the last eight months under VGF programme. Of the total foodgrains 640 tons of wheat and 482 tons of rice were distributed in the two pourasabhas.

516 FWP projects implemented

SIRAJGANJ, June 16: The district administration implemented 516 projects in nine thanas and three pourasabhas here under Food for Works Programme (FWP) in the current financial year, reports BSS.

A total of 926 tons of wheat was allotted to implement the projects. According to official sources, 61 projects were implemented in Sirajganj sadar thana, 35 projects in Tarash, 43 projects in Royganj, 55 projects in Kaziur, 49 projects in Chohali, 30 projects in Belkuchi, 77 projects in Shajadpur, 39 projects in Kamarkhand, 87 projects in Ullapara and 26 projects in Sirajganj Pourasabha, 10 projects in Shajadpur Pourasabha and four projects in Ullapara Pourasabha.



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: A blood donation programme has been arranged here recently by Rajshahi Medical College unit of Sandhani on the occasion of Teachers' Day. — Star photo

BADC installs pumps for irrigation

KISHOREGANJ, June 16: Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) installed 95 floating pumps in North-South region of the district and seven pumps in Itna and Mithaman thanas to irrigate land in the last Boro season, reports BSS.

According to BADC official sources, a total of 14,420 acres in North-South region and 4,300 acres in Itna and Mithaman thanas were cultivated with the help of these pumps. BADC also installed 478 deep tubewells to irrigate lands for Boro cultivation here.

AED sets up demonstration plots

MADARIPUR, June 16: The Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has set up 50 demonstration plots in four thanas in the current season to acquaint the farmers with the modern methods of farming, official sources said, reports BSS.

The demonstration plots have been set up for various crops including Boro, potato, groundnut and pulse. The sources said, three demonstration fish farms were also set up in Kalkini, Rajor, Shubhar and sadar thanas here to motivate people in pisciculture.

Law and order reviewed

COMILLA, June 16: A meeting on the law and order situation of greater Comilla and Noakhali was held in the Deputy Commissioner's conference room here on Monday, reports BSS. The meeting was presided over by freedom fighter and adviser to the Prime Minister Khondakar Asaduzzaman M P Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mobaidul Islam, BDR Sector Commander Colonel Shawkat, all deputy commissioners, police super and public prosecutors of six districts of greater Comilla and greater Noakhali attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed the overall law and order situation and suggested measures to curb crime and anti-social activities.

Work progressing

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, June 16: Three water treatment plants are going to be set up at a cost of Taka 16 crore 42 lakh in Kushtia.

The project is being implemented by Public Health Engineering Department (PHED). But the progress was hampered for sometime due to toll collection by a section of terrorists. Now with the improvement of law and order situation its works started again. Now 15 per cent of its work have been done. The Executive Engineer of PHED, Kushtia A F M Reza said that following its implementation the quantum of water will increase to 57,000 gallons about 88 thousand 440 persons will get pure and arsenic-free water. The work is expected to be completed within June 2000.

Aus farming on 23,106 hectares

From A Correspondent

MAGURA, June 16: The Agriculture Extension Department here has taken up a scheme to cultivate Aus paddy on 23,106 hectares of land in four with a production target of 35,453 metric tons, official sources said.

Thana-wise break-up of land is as follows: 5,030 hectares of land will be brought under Aus paddy cultivation in Magura sadar, 4,050 hectares in Sreepur, 3,015 hectares in Shalikhra and 4,125 hectares in Mohammadpur thana.

Eve-teasers active in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, June 16: Eve-teasers are active in Netrakona town. Some demoralised youths are teasing school girls in many ways. The youths are usually found loitering in the streets of the town near the girls schools and making obscene remarks.

Guardians of the girls can not take any action against the youths for fear of reprisals. They have urged the district administration to take necessary measures against the eve-teasers.

Afforestation programme

MEHERPUR, June 16: An extensive afforestation programme has been taken up in two thanas here in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, a total of 98 kilometres roadside area will be brought under this programme. Of the total area, 48 kilometres road in Meherpur and 50 kilometres in Gangni thana will be covered by the programme. The programme will be conducted by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The tree plantation programme will continue over the next five years.

Unabated looting of fish wealth from Bergobindapur baor

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, June 16: Bergobindapur Baor Fisheries project in Chowgacha union of Chowgacha thana has become the den of armed terrorists now.

The 'baor' is being looted openly by the miscreants. The trend has caused an extensive damage to it for the last one month.

The 'baor' manager along with the staffers have fled away from its office following the combing operation in the area.

According to local people, the 'baor' manager was irregular in office attendance and irresponsible to office duties right from his joining here three years ago.

He left the affairs of management, supervision and development of the 'baor' to his subordinates. He himself stays out of station frequently, the source added.

He, however, comes to the office occasionally only to receive sales proceeds of the marketing of fish and for salary disbursement.

He has created a circle of watchdogs with less desirable elements to cover his corruption and wrong doings.

In a bid to get over all problems facing locally or officially and run the project undisturbed, he won the support, help and co-operation of the local thana chief of the ruling party.

It is alleged that dictated and guided by this thana chief, the 'baor' Manager financed a group of terrorists and utilised their services to protect his personal gains. Gradually the 'baor' office has turned into a den of terrorists.

It may be mentioned here that both the 'baor' manager and hatchery manager live with their family in Jessore town, 23 miles off the project with unofficial approval of the higher authority.

But suddenly the situation here turned worse when a 'baor' guard named Shahidul, a BNP worker, was killed while on duty at night recently. The terrorists, who remained with the 'baor' manager in his office, were named in the FIR which was lodged with the local thana.

The total situation changed after the police crackdown.

The 'baor' manager's chief reportedly backed out all his help and support and refused to protect him under the changed circumstances.

As such the 'baor' manager and his staffers along with the hatchery manager fled away. The 'baor' office remained unmanned and unprotected. It is also reported that out of 41 'baor' guards, sometimes six are found in the office and others have left the station.

It is learnt that taking full advantage of the continued absence of 'baor' manager and his staffers the miscreants are now engaged in destroying the wealth of the 'baor' in a free style.

When contacted, the District Fisheries Officer (DFO) of Jessore, who is currently in charge of the Project Director (PD), Beel Baor Fisheries Development Management Programme, confirmed the flight of the baor manager, hatchery manager and other staffers including the baor guards about a month ago without considering the interest of the project.

He, however, intimated that though there was still short of nine tons of fish to achieve the target yet he was confident to get it done within the deadline of 30th June; this year. The target for the current fiscal is 121 tons. It was 111 tons last year.

It is a question how or whether the shortfall will be met within 20 days.

A group of local professional fishermen, who have become disgusted with the prevailing situation in the baor told that it was a conspiracy to evade the government revenues.

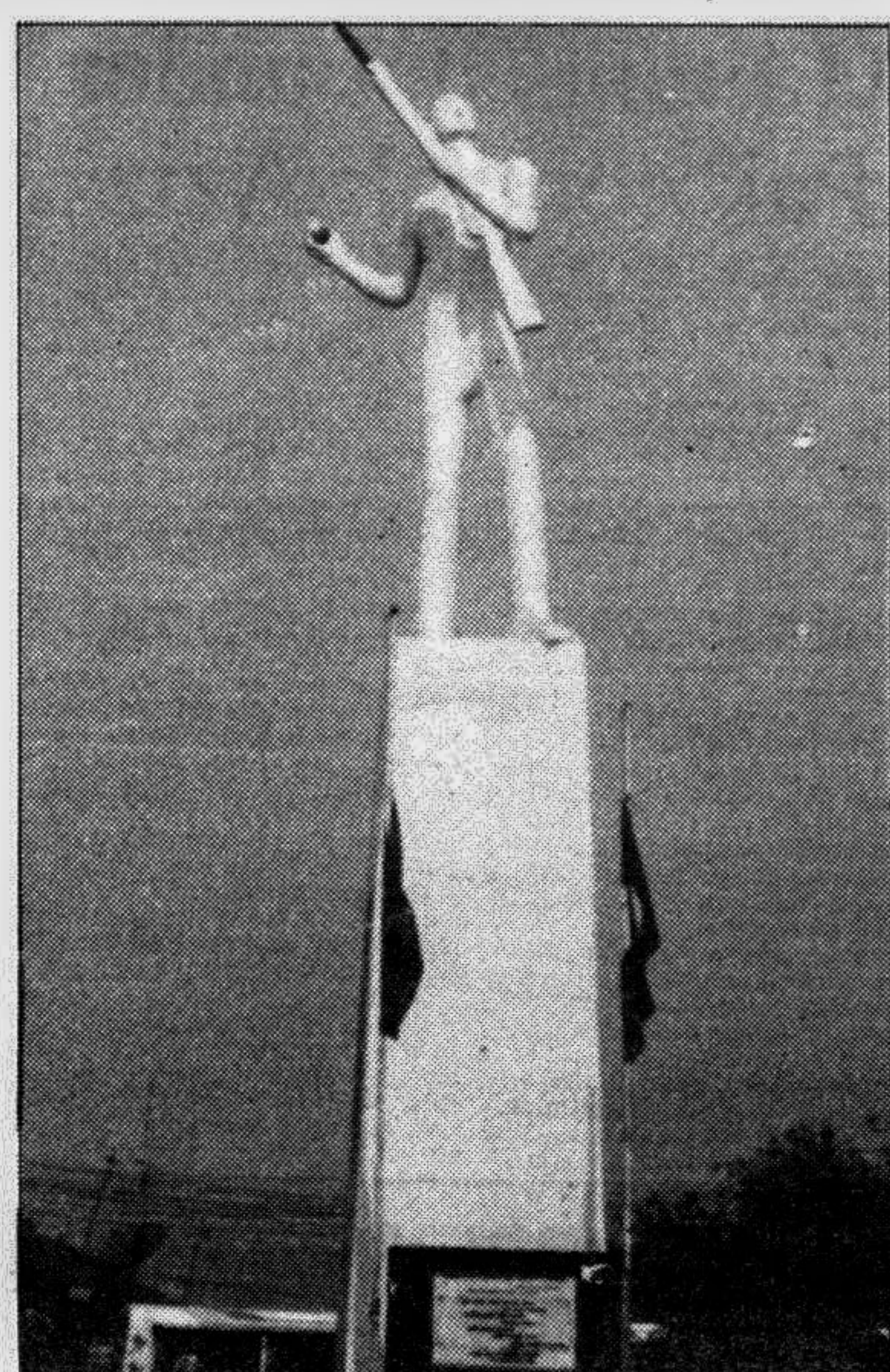
They further told that Bergobinda pur Baor Fisheries Project was the largest and most profitable project in the division under the Fisheries Department.

In size and productive capacity, this baor is on the top, but the target of production is lowest and not acceptable on any account. They have doubled this target as a strategy to deprive the government of actual revenue.

They suggested the government to appoint a team of specialists for survey of this baor and refix the target so that it brings greater amount of revenues.

It properly managed the production in this baor may boost up by 300 per cent, they added.

During the last one month, the lost wealth in this project is roughly over Taka 50 lakh



GAZIPUR: The Liberation War monument at Jagrate Chowrangi near Joydevpur crossing where the first bullet of liberation was shot at. Three including a boy were killed and 23 others seriously injured here by the bullets of Pakistani Occupation Army.

Rampant pilferage of rly property at Ishurdi

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, June 16: Organised gangs of miscreants have been stealing and looting property of Bangladesh Railways rampantly at Ishurdi railway junction.

The gangs are allegedly stealing rails from the railway lines, railway sleepers, fish plates, iron bars and oil. They are selling the same openly in collusion with a section of railway employees.

The miscreants are active at Ishurdi, Paksey, Bheramara and Sirajganj.

A Railway officer working at Ishurdi told this correspondent on condition of anonymity that during the last 15 to 20 years, these gangs had been operating under the protection of some influential persons, police and also a section of Railway Department officials of Ishurdi, Paksey and other places. According to him, railway property worth several crores of taka had been stolen and sold out to different parts of the country.

According to a police officer of Ishurdi, during April last, one truck-load of such stolen valuable railway materials had

been seized by police from Paksey ferryghat. The goods were being shifted to Barisal. Two persons had been arrested in this connection. They have been identified as Hasan and Al-Amin. Their gang-leader, however, remained untraced.

Railway sleepers are on open sale at Ishurdi and Paksey areas.

Bhangora station over Ishurdi-Sirajganj railway route is the den of such miscreants. Even railway wagons had been stolen and carried away over trucks from here by breaking wagons into pieces. Abandoned wagons, bogies, engines are being stolen very frequently from here.

Ishurdi loco-shed area which is one of the biggest loco-sheds of North Bengal, have been turned into a safe haven of such gangs. Ambagan area of Ishurdi town is a safe shelter of criminals and smugglers.

Another Railway official told that influential politicians usually intervene when any culprit is caught by police for stealing valuable railway property.

Spirit, sulphuric acid seized: One arrested

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, June 16: Barisal Kotwali police on Tuesday recovered and seized 400 bottles of rectified spirit and 10 containers of sulphuric acid from a truck.

The truck was loaded with merchandise goods from the port road in the town in early hours of the day.

Police said, there was wave to claim the illegal spirit and acid during the seizure.

BSS adds: Police arrested a youth from Hatkhola area in this connection.

The arrested was identified as Nuru, 30, a lineman of a transport agency. But the truck driver fled the scene.

Arms recovered

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 16: Police of Koira thana recovered on Saturday evening five guns, one pistol, one shutter gun and a pipe gun from the possession of a woman identified as Kanwa Begum, 30, of Mahaswaripur village.

Police said the woman is an activist of Biplobi Communist Party.

Besides, Kamaludding Badsha, Chairman of Ghatbhoj Union Parishad deposited 14 home-made guns and 19 cartridges to the Deputy Commissioner, Khulna on Saturday evening. Police Super said the UP chairman collected these arms from outlaws without their surrender.

12 die of malaria in 13 days in Khagrachhari

From Staff Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, June 16: Malaria has claimed 12 lives in the district during the past 13 days including six in 36 hours in Khagrachhari town and attacked over 4,000 people in the district, private medical professionals and relatives of the victims said, reports BSS.

Four out of six died of malaria on Saturday and Sunday at Khagrachhari sadar hospital were: Meher Chand (55), Aklima Khatun (seven months), Anwara Khatun (5) and Amit Bala Tripathy (2).

A child of seven months, Razibul Haque along with another whose identity was not available immediately, died of malaria at Khezurbagan of the town Saturday night, sources said.

Environment Day in Gaibandha

GAIBANDHA, June 16: World Environment Day was observed here recently.

On this occasion FEMA Gaibandha district committee arranged a discussion meeting at local Surbani Sangsad Hall. The meeting was presided over by Gobinda Lal Das and addressed by Advocate Shamsul Alam Prodhan, president district Bar, KM Rezaul Hoque, Syed Azharul Haq Lahu, Abdur Razzak Putu, Mostafizur Rahman, Bablu Khandker and Advo Samiul Haq Sani.



MAGURA: A free eye camp was arranged recently at Adara Primary School jointly by Shalikhra thana administration and Bondhon Shiphi Gosthi. — Star photo

Mymensingh farmers losing interest in jute farming

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, June 16: Jute cultivation has come down here very sharply.

The farmers have lost interest in cultivating jute due to its low price and other reasons for the last few years.

Mymensingh was once famous for quality jute, but now it has become a place where the farmers are forgetting jute cultivation day by day.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED), the jute cultivation target was not achieved for the last couple of years here.

AED sources said, in 1997, 28,600 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation, but only 16,057 hectares of land were cultivated. In 1998, a total

of 30,716 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation but jute was produced on 13,720 hectares which was also in poor condition.

A total of 30,716 hectares of land have been brought under jute cultivation during this season. But only 10,000 hectares of land have been cultivated till May 18, AED sources said.

Once the farmers got the fair price of jute, but now the scene is totally opposite. Now they have lost their interests in jute cultivation as they have to sell their produce at throughaway prices.

"We get nothing from jute cultivation but a huge loss every year," said Rahmat Ali, a farmer of shoal area in the

sadar thana. Hafiz Uddin, another farmer of shoal area where quality jute is produced echoed the same tone. He said, "I have already given up jute cultivation because of its low price." He also said that he had to sell each maund of jute at Taka 150-200 where the cultivation cost is much more than the amount.

After closure of the only jute mill in greater Mymensingh region, Shambhuganj Jute Mills, the farmers are facing huge loss in cultivating jute, said Hasnat Ali, another farmer of Char Ishwardia, a village close to Shambhuganj Jute Mills. Some farmers of Char Kalibari village also expressed the same view about jute cultivation fol-

lowing its continuous low price for the last one decade.

Some farmers have stuck to jute cultivation in a very small scale only to meet up their household demands. This is because, they have to use jute as firewood, fencing and other purposes. Some farmers also said that for want of quality seeds and other inputs, jute cultivation is being hampered greatly.

An official of AED told The Daily Star, if such trend continues, our country will lose its name and fame as the country of golden fibre. He also added that the authorities concerned should take positive steps in this regard.

Bad communication hampers smooth marketing

Bumper output of pineapple achieved in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, June 16: Bumper production of pineapple has been achieved this year in the sadar thana due to favourable climate.

Many pineapple trader are of the opinion that if the government takes the initiative then huge amount of foreign currency can be earned by creating market abroad for pineapple.

Pineapple has heavy demand in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other middle eastern countries.

Jamalpur is famous for growing high quality pineapple. The soil and climate of the district are favourable for growing pineapple. But the pineapple gardens here are not well planned and are growing without any care. The prospect of pineapple cultivation in all the seven police stations specially in the sadar thana is very bright. Pineapples are found in every house of the district.

But pineapple growers in the sadar thana here are losing interest due to lack of patronisation and damage caused by frequent natural calamities.

About 10 lakh hectares of land in Goradap, Itail, Ranagacha, Sharipur, Rashidpur, Sreepur, Digpait and Titpallah union of the sadar thana have been brought under pineapple cultivation.

The pineapple growers of the district do not use fertilisers and pesticides in the gardens. The do not know modern techniques and methods of cultivation of pineapple. They are dependent on the whims of nature for the production.

Agriculture experts have opined that production of pineapple could be double by

adopting modern methods. The experts also opined that the age of pineapple plants is also a vital factor for production. Most of the old plants of pineapple are used as firewood when dried up. But the maximum yield from a plant is expected between the ages 15 to 18 months.

Ripe pineapples are nutritious. Its juice contains 1.8 mg protein, 0.30 mg fat, 26 mg of calcium, 1.7mg of iron, 0.11 mg of vitamin B1, 0.15 mg of vitamin B2, 21.4 mg of vitamin E

and vitamin A, according to physicians.

Pineapple is a juicy seasonal fruit. A pineapple has to be consumed within five to seven days of its plucking from the plants. Nearly 70 per cent of pineapple are sent to various parts of the country including the capital city.

Most of the pineapples are produced in the hilly areas where there is no good communication. As a result pineapple growers are compelled to sell pineapple to the middlemen at a

very cheaper price.

The soil of Bangladesh is very much suitable for growing pineapple. Pineapple may be raised almost every where in the country. Thousands of pineapple may be planted on the sides of high lands and rural roads.

Government may take initiatives in this respect. Government media should encourage the people of all walks of life to plant more and more pineapple here and there to increase its production.



The traditional way of carrying pineapples to different markets of Jamalpur district by bikes. — Star photo

Bright prospect of crab export

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, June 16: Bangladesh can earn huge foreign currency by exporting crab, which is abundantly available in the coastal areas of this district.

Crab is a valuable and exportable aquatic life in Bangladesh which is a nutritious food. According to experts, crabs can emerge as a profitable export item.

This natural gift is available in plenty in the South Sea and there is no production cost for crab cultivation. According to Shraban and Bhadra months, Md Shamsur Rahman, a crab trader in Shyamnagar thana told this correspondent that transportation and vessels crisis and high transport fares have created manifold problems for crab exporters. He said an "A" grade crab is sold be-

tween Taka 200 and 300 per kg. He also said the crab exporters collect it from the coastal areas and export it to different Asian and European countries. He said, all these are done thru individual endeavour. He further said, lack of government patronisation, vessel crisis and non-availability of bank loan are among major impediments to crab export.

Experts viewed, if the Fisheries Department comes forward and takes initiative to explore through scientific measures for proper cultivation of crab, this can boost our national economy and provide employment opportunities for many.

While talking to this correspondent an official of Export Promotion Bureau of Khulna said, crab is a valuable export

item for the country. Some exporters viewed, there is an immense prospect of crab exporting.

New chairman of Melandah Pourasabha

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, June 16: The election of newly formed Melandah-Pourasabha was held recently.

Farhana Zahadi Sofen was elected the Poura Chairman by bagging 4 thousand 7 hundred votes while his nearest contestant who is the Joint Secretary of Awami League, Jamalpur district unit got 834 votes.