

News snaps



RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY: Dr Rafique Ahmed (C), Professor of Geography and Earth Science of Wisconsin University -La Cross, USA, handing over a cheque of Taka 50,000 for the proposed Syeda Barera Smriti Puraskar and Rafique Ahmed Puraskar which will be awarded to the student who secures the first place in Geography Department of this university. Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Sayedur Rahman Khan (extreme left) is also seen on the dais. — Star photo

Man chopped by terrorists

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 5: A gang of terrorists recently chopped the son of a shopkeeper at Baitul Mokaddem market in the town. The terrorists demanded toll from the victim Mizan, 25, son of Habib Mia owner of Habib Garments. But when Mizan refused to pay the toll, they chopped him and left the scene. Mizan was admitted to Faridpur General Hospital from where he was shifted to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka.

Four missing as cargo vessel sinks

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 5: Four persons have been missing and two others sustained injuries when two cargo vessels collided head-on recently in the river Thinauk near village Alua in Itna thana. One of the vessels named MV Haji Kala Mia bound for Sunamganj which was carrying sand sank in the river. Those who were missing are Kamrul Islam, 20, Ripon, 17, Aminur, 25, and Shawkat, 30. Besides, Rezaul Karim, 40, and Zahid, 20, who sustained injuries were admitted into Itna Hospital. All of them were the staffers of the two vessels.

Outlaw surrenders

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 5: Sanwar Hossain alias Sabuj, 36, an activist of outlawed JSD Canababini at village Gobra-Chandpur in Kumarkhali thana of Kishoria district surrendered with a sophisticated gun and two rounds of ammunition to Saikupa police recently.

Vitamin 'A' Week observed

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 5: Vitamin 'A' Week has been observed in Kushtia town recently. Kushtia Pourasabha took up an elaborate programme in observance of the week. Khondakar Israil Hossain Apu, Chairman of Kushtia Pourasabha inaugurated the week by giving a Vitamin 'A' capsule to a three-year-old boy at Kushtia Azizur Rahman Primary School premises. Some of the poura commissioners along with poura medical officer Dr Santosh Kumar Saha were present in the inaugural function.

Phensidyl recovered: Man arrested

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, July 5: Police arrested one person and recovered 212 bottles of phensidyl recently from his possession at Akhaura railway junction station. According to police sources, acting on a secret information a team of police headed by Sayed Saheed Uddin, OC of Akhaura Police arrested Abu Bakor from a room at Akhaura railway station and recovered the item from his possession. The seized the bottles of phensidyl.

Land projects processing

GAZIPUR, July 5: Implementation of 221 projects in the five thanas of the district under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) will be completed soon, reports BSS. An official source said, the work on these projects included earthwork, rural infrastructure development, development of markets, secondary town infrastructure development and construction of bridges, culverts and roads.

Terrorism prevention body formed

SIRAJGANJ, July 5: A 170-member terrorism prevention committee was formed in a meeting of a cross section of people held here last week, reports BSS. An official source said, meanwhile at least 14 terrorists of Shialkol union in the sadar thana have surrendered to the Anti-terrorist committee. They have pledged to lead a normal life and work to maintain law and order in the society. The terrorism prevention committee consists of the members and chairmen of union pariasads, local elite and social workers.

Training course on fruit production

MADARIPUR, July 5: A three-day long training course on fruit production and preservation concluded at the TTDC Training Centre here recently, reports BSS. Sponsored by the Agriculture Extension Department (AED), the training programme was inaugurated by the Deputy Director, Agriculture Extension Department, Mohammad Sayed Ali. A total of 200 fruit growers including 60 women were imparted training on modern method of cultivation of various fruits.

Fate of projects uncertain

BANDARBAN, July 5: The fate of a number projects in the district, undertaken in 1997-98 fiscal, hang in the balance for non-allocation of funds, reports UNB. The projects are construction of three thana buildings in Ruma, Roanagchhari and Ali Kadarn and a barrack, a vocational training centre and radio sub-station at Balishti in Roanagchhari. Officials said no allocation has yet been made for the projects undertaken at a cost of Tk 24.88 crore. They said a lump sum amount was allocated only for feasibility study and survey works of the proposed schemes.



RAJSHAHI: Eminent litterateur and Head of the Department of Bengali in Rajshahi University Prof Sheikh Ataur Rahman distributed prizes among the winners of the literary competition arranged recently by Shahitya Dhara and Biswa Shahitya Kendra at Godagari on the occasion of the centenary celebration of birth of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and poet Jibananda Das. — Star photo

Erosion threatens Rajshahi town protection dam

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, July 5: Severe erosion by the river Padma has threatened the town protection embankment in the very beginning of the rainy season. The ongoing work on renovation of the embankment which was seriously damaged by the last year's floods did not progress satisfactorily.

The water level of the river Padma is increasing everyday on average by 30 cm. The rate of increase in water level this year is more than that of the last year.

Severe erosion along the Bangladesh side of the river from Godagari of Rajshahi district to Lalpur of Natore district has already washed away many lands. The erosion along the town protection embankment areas has made its renovation work difficult. The Water Development

Board (WDB) officials and the concerned contractors are apprehending that the works might not be completed as per schedule if rapid increase of water level of the Padma continues. Its work will also be hampered, they said. At some places, the halfily repaired embankment has already been submerged and eroded away. So to save the worst damaged T-groyne of the embankment, hundreds of cement block rocks and sand bags are being thrown into the river.

Both the heads of the T-groyne had been eroded away during last year's floods. The President, the Prime Minister, other ministers, WDB officials and experts from home and abroad had visited Rajshahi during and after the floods. They had recommended for

immediate renovation of the embankment before the ongoing rainy season for the protection of Rajshahi.

WDB sources said, they had submitted prospects accordingly, but the government did not allocate money before April.

Processing for the tenders took some time. Alleged terrorism done by some contractors affiliated to the ruling party for getting the contracts also delayed the process. "When we went to start the work the rainy season has already come with incessant heavy rains and onrush of waters from the upstreams," said an engineer of WDB.

"The town protection embankment is a very sensitive issue. Its breakage will submerge the city and its

suburbs under 10-20 feet water," said city mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu. He alleged that the government had not given due attention to the matter.

A total of Taka 10 crore will be spent for renovation of the T-groyne and Taka 12 crore for renovation of the 18 km long embankment.

Only 30 per cent work mostly of preliminary nature have so far been done.

"Continued rains, erosion and rapid rise in water level are likely to hamper the work after mid-July," an engineer of WDB said. "In that case, the work already done in the mean time, will almost go in vain and the T-groyne and the embankment may break anywhere if the pressure of water flow becomes severe like that in the last year," he said on condition of anonymity.

627 tubewells out of order in Feni

From A Correspondent

FENI, July 5: 627 tubewells have gone out of order in five thanas of the district, causing acute scarcity of drinking water.

Lack of proper maintenance and shortage of spare parts are the main reasons for the malfunction of the tubewells.

Of the total, 101 shallow tubewells and 21 deep tubewells are inoperative in Sadar thana, 136 shallow and 3 deep in Daonbhuiyan thana, 114 shallow and 19 deep in Sonagazi thana, 72 shallow and 40 deep in Chhagolnita thana and 93 shallow tubewells and 25 deep tubewells in Pushuram thana.

The local Public Health and Engineering Department sources said 100 deep tubewells and 59 shallow tubewells were installed in the district during immediate past current fiscal year.

Baby killed by food poisoning

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 5: One 18-month-old boy was killed recently by poisoning and his mother fell seriously ill by food poisoning here at Kakharail in Satkhira Pourasabha.

The victims were identified as Rubel and his mother Asma, 22, wife of Ziad Ali of village kukharail in Satkhira Pourasabha.

Police sources said, assuring Asma to marry, Ziad Ali made illicit connection with Asma as a result Asma. As a result she became pregnant and gave birth to a male child one and a half years back. Since the Ziad refused to acknowledge Rubel as his son. At last Asma filed a case with the police against Ziad following his refusal to acknowledge his son.

Later on Ziad Ali with the help of an another woman whose name is also Asma, 22, moved poison with the poison food prepared by Asma. After taking this meal mother and son male child died later on while Asma was taken to Satkhira Hospital in a critical condition.

Police arrested Asma -2, but Ziad Ali managed to escape.

Wayside markets hinder traffic movement

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, July 5: Wayside bazaars, markets and bus stands at many places from Gopalganj to Takerhat along Dhaka-Khulna highway are creating hindrance to smooth movement of traffic.

The areas where most of the bazaar and bus stands along the highway can be found are Takerhat, Jalipar, Bhennabari, Satpar Bazar, Baital Bazar, Ullur Tentulia, Bherarhat, Haridpur, Gopalganj Bazar, Gobra, Ghonapara, Molahat and Fakir Hat.

Traffic jam on the highway has become a common phenomenon because of these bazaars, causing much suffering to long route passengers who cannot reach their destinations on schedule.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to remove the wayside bazaars and other structures for the easy movement of traffic.

Faridpur town lacks drainage

From Our Correspondent

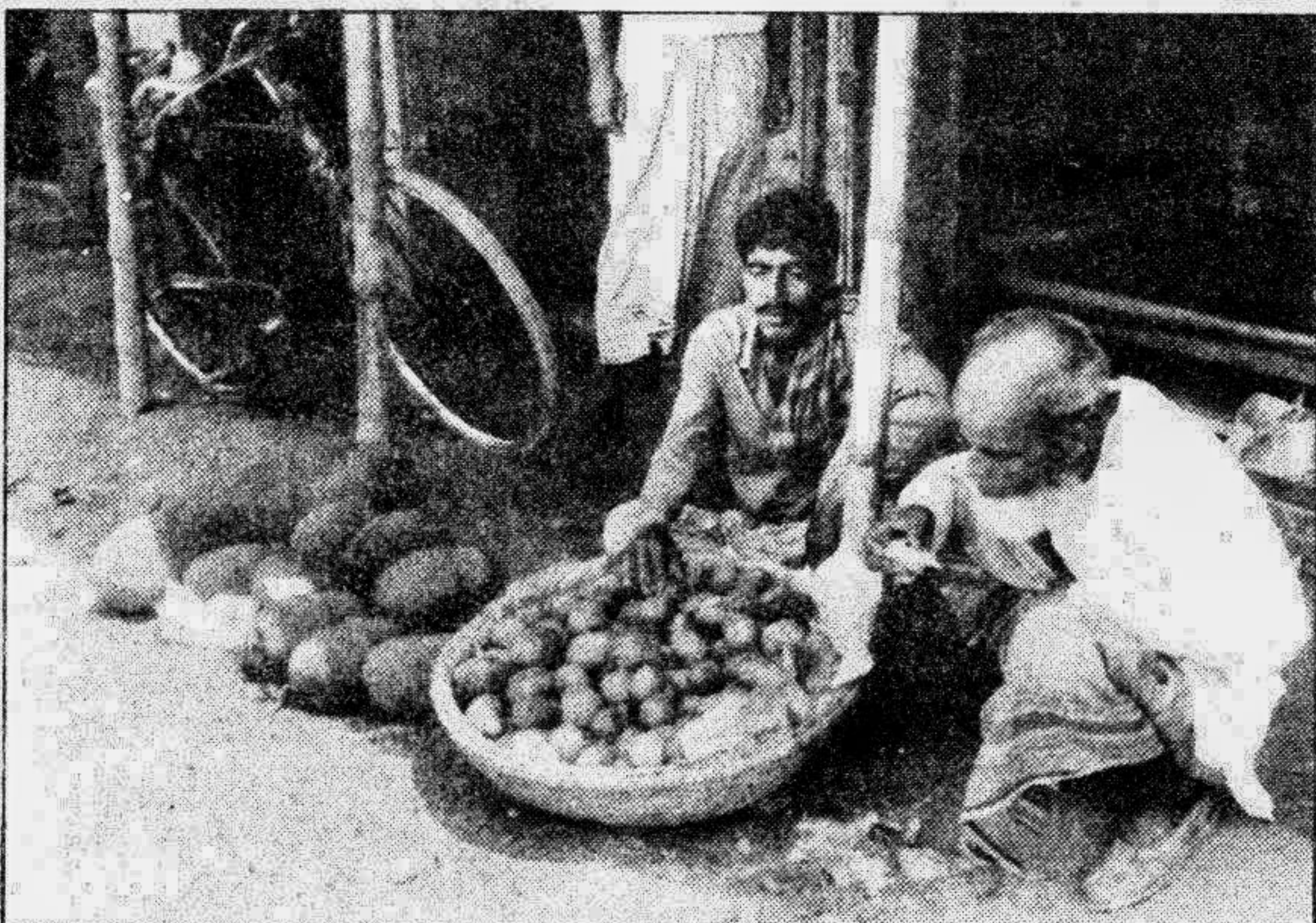
FARIDPUR, July 5: Roads, lanes and footpaths in the Faridpur municipality area go under knee-deep water in the rainy season as the town lacks drainage.

With occurring moderate rainfall, Thana Road, Baniapara Road, Jasimuddin Road, College Road, Eidgah Road, Alauddin Kha Road, Station Road and Mujib Sarak become pool of water, causing much suffering to the town dwellers.

Some of the roads are too narrow that two vehicles cannot pass conveniently. Moreover, huge cracks and potholes have developed on the roads.

The traditional 'kutcha' drains on both sides of the roads, however, have been filled up and occupied illegally by some people.

The local people have urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to solve the problem of the town immediately.



JHENIDAH: Huge quantity of mangoes are now available in the local markets. Prices are also within the reach of common people. This photo was taken recently from Kotchandpur town. — Star photo

BRTC bus service on Pabna routes demanded

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, July 5: State-run BRTC bus service to and from Pabna district, where only road communication is available, has remained suspended for a long time.

People in the district have to depend on private-owned bus services. But taking the advantage of non existence of other alternative means of communication like railway and river routes, private transport owners of Pabna often resort to wildest transport strikes, much to the suffering of the local people.

These transport strikes cause complete dislocation of daily activities. Trade and commerce of the district remain paralysed.

In the 60's, the then EPRTC bus service was introduced on different routes to and from Pabna district.

Later, a terminal was set up in a rented house and regular services on several inter district routes, including Pabna-Dhaka route, were introduced.

After the independence of the country, a large terminal and a workshop for the BRTC

were set up for the convenient of the services. And in view of increasing demand the number of buses for the Pabna Depot was increased.

But during the early days of the regime of former president Ershad, the services were closed and buses and trucks withdrawn from the terminal.

Following the closure of BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) service, complete monopoly in road transport management was established, local people alleged.

At present, the BRTC bus terminal and its workshop have remained abandoned, making the place safe haven for anti-social elements in this northern district headquarters.

People of all sections, irrespective of political affiliation, have urged the authorities concerned to re-introduce the BRTC bus service on various inter-district routes, including Pabna-Dhaka route, without further delay to end the monopoly created by private road transport owners and works.

Pabna Chambers of Com-

merce and Industries, Pabna District Bar Association, Pabna Press Club, local units of different political parties, social and cultural organisations of Pabna have also demanded of the government to immediately re-introduce the BRTC service.

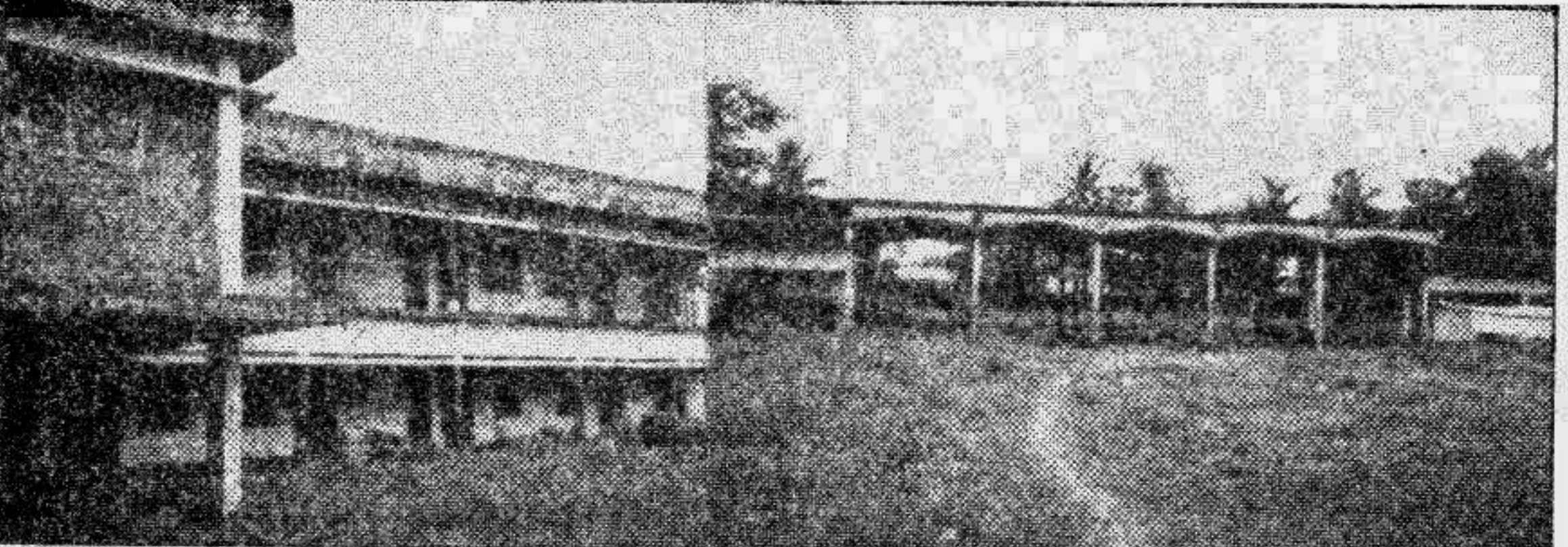
UNB from Moulvibazar says: Despite allocation of funds twice, construction works of a bus terminal in the district could not be started yet.

Officials said the government allocated Tk 2 lakh for construction of the bus terminal first in 1979-80 fiscal and then Tk 4 lakh in 1985-86 fiscal.

"Even then the works on the terminal could not be started," said an official wishing anonymity.

In absence of a bus terminal, he said, passengers of different routes, including Moulvibazar-Dhaka, Moulvibazar-Comilla, Moulvibazar-Habiganj and Moulvibazar-Sylhet, have to wait for buses alongside roads.

He said repeated appeals by transport owners to the authorities concerned to construct a bus terminal there went unheeded.



The Pabna depot of BRTC is now a grazing ground of domestic animals at day time and a den of criminals at night time. — Star photo

Tk 10 cr bridge construction project on Rangamati-Ctg road

RANGAMATI, July 5: The Roads and Highways Department plans to construct a new bridge at Ranirhat on Rangamati-Chittagong Road to replace the existing dilapidated bailey bridge, reports BSS.

The expenditure of the bridge has been estimated at Taka 10 crore.

Executive engineer of Rangamati Roads and Highways Department told the news agency that the construction of the bridge will be started shortly as all the preliminary formalities in this connection have already been completed.

Besides, to ensure usual over movement of vehicles through the Ichhamati river, a renovation work with an allocation of taka 25 lakh has already been started, he said.

Meanwhile, Kaikhali thana police of the district have been instructed not to allow heavy vehicles to ply through the bridge due to its dilapidated condition following a meeting of the district law and order committee held this month.

The meeting expressed its concern that the communications between Rangamati and Chittagong as well as other places would totally be disrupted if the bridge collapsed due to movement of heavy vehicles beyond five ton capacity.

Another report adds: Chairman of the Task Force on Repatriated Tribals and Internal Refugees Rehabilitation Affairs Dipankar Talukdar MP has said the present government has been giving highest importance on education sector to free the nation from the curse of illiteracy.

Termining the student community as future of the nation, he urged them to equip with proper education in order to guide the nation in future keeping the campus free from rowdism.

He was addressing as the chief guest recently at the foundation laying ceremony of Banglalia College in Razasthali thana of the district.

Chittagong Hill Tract Development Board has sanctioned taka 20 lakh for the construction of the ground floor of the college while Rangamati Hill District Council made a commitment for the construction of the first floor of the college.

Scarcity of books hits pry edn in Gopalganj

From Alimuzzaman

GOPALGANJ, July 5: Primary education in the district is being hampered due to inadequate supply of text books and shortage of teachers.

Many students of primary schools do not have new books, forcing them to attend classes without books.

The authorities of the schools, however, collected second hand text books from the students of previous years. But condition of those books was not satisfactory.

Besides, most of the schools have no toilet facility, much to the suffering of students and teachers.

In the absence of tubewells, the teachers and students have to fetch drinking water from nearby houses.

There are 1,372 posts of teachers in 415 government primary schools in five thanas of the district. Some 173 posts of teachers have been lying vacant for a long time.

Besides, many non government primary schools in 5 thanas are also facing various problems.

However, char areas of the district do not have primary

schools. Some of the areas are Durgapur, Suktail, Zalalabad, Paikandi, Kathi, Rahumathpur, Borashi Pathgati, Dumuria, Gopalpur, Kushi, Kur-pala, Kandhi, Kalabari, Radhag-pala, Katali, Shajil, Orakandhi, Shinga, Chapla and Fukera.

Local people urged the concerned authorities to take necessary steps to solve the problems.

5,000 affected by chicken pox in Moulvibazar

MOULVIBAZAR, July 5: Chicken Pox broke out in an alarming form in the district, affecting about 5,000 people, reports UNB.

The worst affected areas are Sadar, Rajnagar, Kamalganj and Kulaura thanas. Majority of the affected people were said to be children.

Local people urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to combat the disease.

Logging of trees

Bid to turn forests into nat'l parks being foiled

MOULVIBAZAR, July 5: Unauthorised collection of trees and hunting of wild animals are hindering the government's plans to gradually turn the country's forests into sanctuaries and some of them "national parks", reports UNB.

As part its plans, the government has declared some 6.92 square miles of Kalenga and Rema beats of Habiganj range and 4.82 square miles of Moulvibazar range as "wildlife sanctuaries."

The government also has declared Lauachhara forest beat of Moulvibazar range as National Park and imposed a ban on hunting wild animals and collection of timbers, even by the Forest Department.

But a section of unscrupulous timber traders are logging trees from the forests defying the restriction.

Besides, the existences of wild animals have been under constant threat due to illegal hunting.

An official of the Forest Department admitted that most wildlife species of the country's forests have disappeared due to deforestation and unbridled hunting. "Finding no safer place here, most wild beasts started crossing the border for shelter in the forests of India," the official said.

He said massive logging of trees by the woodcutters is also obstructing the efforts to make a wildlife sanctuary at Moulvibazar and Habiganj beats and a national park at Lauachhara.

Seminar on Tagore's philosophy

MYMENSINGH, July 5: Mymensingh Press Club organised a seminar on Sunday at its premises to mark the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, reports BSS.

Tusar Kanti Sarkar present the key-note paper on "Rabindranath's religious thought and philosophy" in the seminar.

Among others Dr M Nurul Anwar of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Prof Sumita Naha of Ananda Mohan University College, Prof Anwarul Hakim Khan and Acting Principal of Nasirabad College Md Rezaul Islam participated in the discussion.

Duty Commissioner and ex-officio President of Mymensingh Press Club presided over the seminar. The seminar was followed by a musical soiree.

Patients deprived of service in M'bazar Sadar Hospital

MOULVIBAZAR, July 5: The Sadar Hospital here is beset with multifarious problems, including shortage of bed, toilet and medicine as well as poor diet, reports UNB.

The hospital was established in 1964 with 50 beds when the population of the district was only about one-fourth of its present population.

At present, increasing number of patient force the authorities to accommodate 80-100 people in a ward in unhygienic condition.

The annual allocation for the hospital is quite inadequate and shortage of medicine is an everyday problem. Patients are

compelled to buy medicines and other necessary supplies from outside as these are rarely available in the hospital.

The operation theatre is in a deplorable state, as modern instruments have not been added to it due to reasons best known to the authorities.

The hospital wards remain over crowded with patients. Bed sheets, pillows and blankets are not washed daily, it was alleged. The condition of the female ward is also not satisfactory and lacks a proper system for accommodating the patients.

Patients with infectious diseases are allowed to stay at the general ward of the hospital, which has no separate ward for cholera and diarrhoea affected people.

Another woman gangraped in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, July 5: A woman was gangraped at village Ronikhai in Companyganj thana recently.

Official source informed that, a gang of five entered into a kutcha house of village Salidigha by breaking open the doors at midnight. They tied the house owner and housewife with ropes and took away their divorce 20-year-old daughter.

The miscreants took her into an abandoned house at Ronikhai and raped her one after another and left her there.

The victim lodged a case with the Companyganj thana against five persons — Manik, Abu, Khurshid and two unnamed. Police then sent her to Sylhet M A G Osmari Medical College Hospital for medical test, the source said. No arrest has yet been reported.

New trapping device to destroy insects

SHARIATPUR, July 5: Adding to its success stories, Department of Agricultural Department (DAE) has developed a trapping device of light and net for jute growers to destroy insects, reports UNB.

The device has gained popularity among the jute growers as it does not require pesticides to eliminate insects from jute fields.

Meanwhile, DAE officials have set up a school here for the jute growers to help them learn the trapping device.

They also held a farmers rally in sadar thana on Thursday to make them aware about the adverse effects of un-planned use of pesticides.

Addressing the rally, they urged the farmers to use the trapping device of light and net in destroying insects instead of pesticides.



FARIDPUR: Local pourasabha chairman Hasibul Hasan (2nd from left) exchanging views with the people regarding ways to solve the prevailing water crisis in the district town. — Star photo