

News snaps

Alleged accused of murder case held

From Our Correspondent
KISHOREGANJ, July 13: Pakundia police arrested an accused of Selim murder case named Borhanuddin recently from Phulkeghat bazaar.
Khandakar Omar Faruk Selim, a freedom fighter and Vice-President, Pakundia thana unit of Awami League was called out of his house at dead of night on June 18 and his body was found floating in the Singua river, one kilometre away from his house in the next morning. Earlier, police took Shamim and Ratan into custody, on suspicion, of having their complicity in the murder.

Demonstration plots for Boro paddy

From Staff Correspondent
NETRAKONA, July 13: A total of 46 block demonstration plots for Boro paddy have been set up in 10 thanas this year under the supervision of Netrakona district Agriculture Extension Department.
An official source here said, the demonstration plots were set up to acquaint the farmers on irrigation management, fertiliser use and integrated pest management system.

Goods worth Tk 10 lakh looted

From A Correspondent
NARSINGDI, July 13: A dacoity was committed recently in the Meghna river, near Alokbal.
The dacoits looted goods worth Taka 10 lakh. Eye witnesses said the dacoity occurred at the aforementioned place near six km of the sadar thana. When an engine boat with 50 to 60 passengers which was bound towards Morichakandi from Narsingdi thana ghat suddenly a gang of 10 to 12 dacoits attacked the boat. They looted booty worth Taka 10 lakh. They managed to escape with booty safely.

Bi-cycle rally

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, July 13: As part of International Day against Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking several hundred cadets of Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC), Mahastan regiment of Rajshahi brought out a hundred mile long bicycle rally recently.
Cadets from Pabna, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Natore and Rajshahi participated in the bicycle rally. On way, they made a massive mass contact against drug abuse and drug trafficking at various points.

Man killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, July 13: One person was killed in a road accident at Shambhuganj area on Mymensingh-Haluaghat road recently.
The victim, Murshad, 25, was going towards his house at Char Kharicha village under Sadar thana from the district.

Child drowns

From Our Correspondent
GAIBANDHA, July 13: A one-year old child of village Fulchari in the sadar thana drowned recently.
The ill-fated child was playing on the yard of their house while his mother went to the nearby house for some purpose. Meanwhile, the child followed a few ducks heading towards nearby pond. The victim fell into the pond and drowned. After a frantic search the body was recovered from the pond.



Green campaign: Rotary club of Barisal launched its 'Tree plantation campaign '99', recently. — Star photo

Life term for 3 rapists

From Our Correspondent
JAMALPUR, July 13: A court here convicted three persons and awarded life term imprisonment recently for raping a teenage girl.
The imprisoned persons are Sujon, 22, Farid, 22, and Akbar, 25. According to the prosecution in brief, the convicted persons kidnapped a girl aged about 12 on her way home from village Dowail in the sadar thana. They took her in an abandoned shallow tubewell room and raped her the whole night. On the next day the victim's father rescued her. Additional District and Sessions Judge Alhaj Monowara Betum after examining nine witness and relevant documents found them guilty and awarded the punishment.

Smuggled Indian sugar seized

JOYPURHAT, July 13: An anti-smuggling task force in a surprise raid seized 66 sacks of Indian sugar from the district bus terminal on Sunday, reports UNB.
The task force led by Deputy Commissioner Abu Nasir Ahmed, raided the terminal for about an hour and recovered the sugar worth about Taka One lakh.

Shishu mela in Kushtia

KUSHTIA, July 13: A four-day long Shishu Ananda Mela and Science exhibition concluded recently at Shilpakala Academy here, reports BSS.

Prof Mohammad Kayesuddin, Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University was present at the concluding function as the chief guest. The function was presided over by Md Abdus Salam, Deputy Commissioner, Kushtia.

Folklore confce

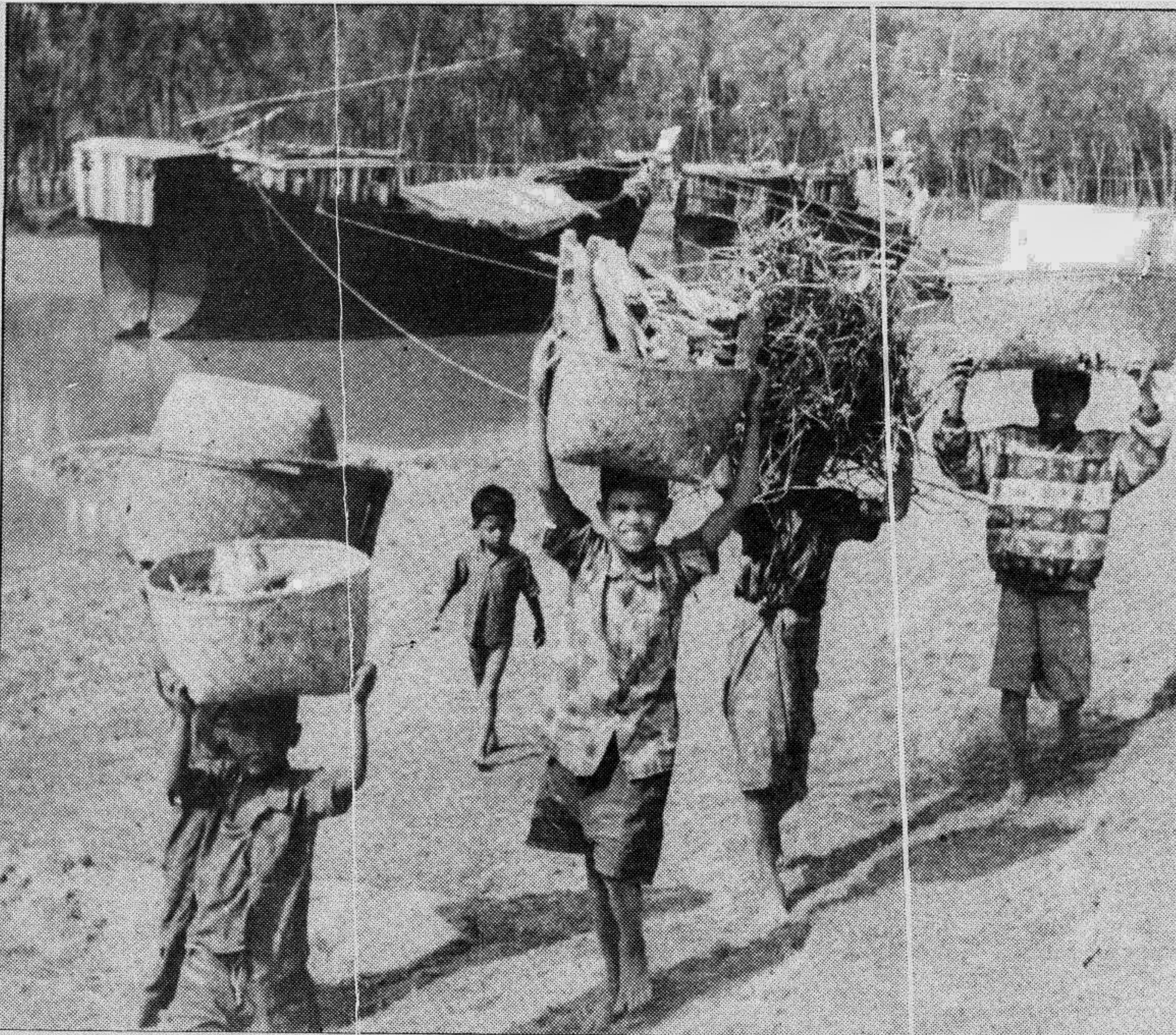
RAJSHAHI, July 13: A two-day international folklore conference, organised by Folklore Department of Rajshahi University, concluded at the university's Senate Bhavan recently, reports UNB.
National Professor Kabir Chowdhury inaugurated the conference. Over 100 researchers from India, Nepal and host Bangladesh took part in the conference. Chaired by RU Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdul Khaleque, the inaugural function was attended, among others, by former Vice-Chancellor of the university Dr Mazharul Islam, Director General of National Museum Shamsuzzaman Khan and RU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof M Saidur Rahman Khan.

Tk 28 lakh project work completed

COX'S BAZAR, July 13: Fifty-four small projects were completed in 1998-99 at an expenditure of Taka 28 lakh while 10 more projects are being implemented in Ukhiya thana at a cost of about Taka one crore, reports BSS.
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) office sources said that the completed projects included development of infrastructures, reconstruction of Sonarpara Shaheed Abdul Mannan Road, nine primary schools and construction of Haldia Polong Union Parishad building. Ten projects are being completed at an expenditure of Taka 93 lakh. Road construction and reconstruction, repair of primary school buildings are among the development projects.

Arum cultivated on 905 hectares

MEHERPUR, July 13: Arum roots was cultivated in 905 hectares of land in the two thanas in the current season, an official source said, reports BSS.
A total of 735 hectares were fixed as the target for cultivation but the target had been exceeded by 170 hectares. Last year arum was cultivated on 843 hectares in the district. Not only the roots of arum but also its stalks and leaves are used as vegetables. Because of bumper production arum it has been selling at an exceptionally low price in the local market in the current season. Yields of other summer vegetables including Mukhi kachu (Alocasia Escutentia), Mankachu (Alocasia indica), other varieties of arum, beans, cowpe, turnip and brinjal have been satisfactory here this year.



Fire from the forest: Boys collect fuel from the artificial forest at Jahajmara on the southern tip of the off-shore island Hatiya. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Outdoor patients in KMCH do not get treatment

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, July 13: Doctors of some of the departments of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) do not attend their patients properly and regularly. They keep patients of the outdoor departments waiting for a long time. Despite frequent complaints the KMCH authorities did not take any necessary action to end sufferings of the patients in the outdoor department.

It is learnt from patients that doctors of the outdoor departments do not sit in their chambers before 11 am. None of the doctors is usually available in the hospital to attend the emergency patients. Specialists, in particular, become annoyed if patients call for their special attention.

There are allegations that patients suffering from fatal diseases have to wait for hours together to get a specialist for check-up as part of treatment.

This correspondent recently counted as many as 700 patients in the outdoor department of KMCH.

Dr Rawshan Ara, an eminent gynaecologist of KMCH was not found in her office chamber at 1-45 pm. But she was supposed to sit there at 10 am to attend the patients of outdoor department. An associate professor of KMCH, Dr Rawshan Ara has been posted in Khulna since 1987 cancelling

her transfer orders four times. She remains busy with patients in her private chamber from 4 pm to 12 mid night. She usually forgets to attend patients of the outdoor department of KMCH.

So is the pitiable condition of outdoor patients. In the Medicine Department where the specialist Dr Abu Bakar Siddique is an associate professor. He very often goes to attend patients after 1 am. But the patient allegedly get his misconduct instead of service.

There are further allegations that some doctors do not forget their time schedule for visiting patients of private clinics in the city. As a result, their official chambers in KMCH remain under lock and key most of the time even for days together.

When asked, the Residential Medical Officer (RMO) of KMCH Dr Nazim Uddin Ahmed told this correspondent that despite frequent warnings given to some doctors including specialists for their irregular attendance in the outdoor department it did not yield any positive result.

The Superintendent of KMCH was also not available in his office till 3 pm for his comment regarding the allegations of RMO against the doctors.

However, the RMO assured to take up this matter with the higher authorities for remedy.

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Jute farming falls sharply in 10 S-W dists

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, July 13: Jute cultivation has fallen drastically in 10 districts of southwestern region. Lack of buyers and decline in price of jute have discouraged the growers to go for its cultivation.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) jute has been cultivated on one third of targeted land this year. It has been cultivated on 41,070 hectares of land including 40,848 hectares of Tossa variety and 222 hectares of local variety.

The target was 1,13,714 hectares of land including 1,11,769 hectares of Tossa and 1,945 hectares of local varieties. Besides, the rate of jute productions was assessed at the rate of 12 bales per hectare.

During the last year, jute was cultivated on 73,217 hectares of land all over the region. Jessore presented the highest record. It was 13,670 hectares, while Bagerhat was the lowest. It was 199 hectares.

Failure by the BADC to supply seeds from beginning of the season throughout the region has been the main cause for the fall of its cultivation.

During a brief survey conducted by a group of local pressman to find out the cause

of drastic fall in jute cultivation this year, they got two contradictory reports.

AED source mentioned that continued drought during the peak-period of the season was the major cause of fall in jute cultivation.

But the growers informed that crisis of quality seeds, price hike of fertiliser and last but not the least, non-availability of reasonable price have compelled them to stop its cultivation.

It may be mentioned here that fall in the production of jute will adversely affect the production in jute mills in Jessore-Khulna belt. This will bring shortfall in the production of jute and jute products.

Ultimately all the jute mills of this belt will remain closed for four months together affecting the national revenue earnings.

When contacted, a number of growers told that jute might regain its lost glory if quality seeds are made available to the growers well ahead of season, banking credit facilities on easy terms and jute purchasing at the reasonable price. They also informed that in that case, the growers will get incentives in jute cultivation and it will revamp the economy also.

Cop held on charge of raping girl

RAJSHAHI, July 13: A police constable of Puthia thana was arrested on Saturday on charge of raping a tribal woman in Durgapur thana, reports UNB.
Police said constable Abdul Latif was arrested in connection with the rape of the tribal woman at a slum in Singa Paraipara village on June 29.
Villagers said Latif went to the slum to take alcohol on the day but raped the woman finding her along there. He fled the scene when the slum dwellers rushed to the spot hearing the screams of the woman.
Later on additional SP Nibas Chandra Majhi and ASP (Circle) Akhteruzzaman visited the spot and talked to the slum dwellers.
The constable, arrested on the basis of prime facie evidence, was sent to court on the following day.

Farmers face scarcity of Aman seed

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 13: Farmers in the district are facing acute scarcity of 'Aman' seed, hampering the cultivation of seedling.

BADC Seed Department has failed to supply adequate quantity of seed of Aman, a common variety of paddy, to farmers directly, the growers alleged.

Middlemen and brokers have already procured huge quantity of seeds from the department and now they are selling it in the market at an exorbitant price, local people alleged.

Poor farmers cannot afford to purchase HYV Aman seed. Every day farmers from remote areas throng to BADC (Seed) Centre for seeds but they come back empty-handed.

Many of the farmers are yet to start cultivating seedling for want of adequate quantity of seed.

Seeds of BR-11, BR-31 and BR-32 - all varieties of Aman - are not available at the BADC store. After failing to procure seed from the concerned department farmers now reluctantly depending on dishonest seed traders and buying seed at an exorbitant price.

In the local markets, Aman seed is being sold between Tk 300 and Tk 350 per bag. However, most of the seeds are of inferior quality, alleged farmers.

The farmers of Gaibandha district could not preserve Aman seed last year due to prolonged floods which damaged entire Aman crops.

Man gunned down in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, July 13: A businessman was gunned down at Chapail village along the west bank of the river Modhumati in the district recently.

Shah Alam Biswas, 35, son of Abdus Satter Biswas of village Manikdah under Gopalganj Sadar thana, was gunned down by armed terrorists.

Shah Alam was returning home from Narail district headquarters on a motorbike with one Kanchu Sikder. When they reached Chapail village the armed terrorist's numbering about seven stopped the motorbike and opened fire on Shah Alam Biswas and his relative Kanchu Sikder.

Shah Alam Biswas died on the spot. Kanchu Sikder, however, escaped.

A case was filed in this connection.

Arsenic now invades Gr Comilla

COMILLA, July 13: After invading most parts of the country's northern region, arsenic started contaminating the underground waters of greater Comilla, reports UNB.

According to an UNDP-funded survey, arsenic beyond permissible level was detected in tubewell waters of 18 thanas in Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Feni, Laxmipur, Chandpur and Noakhali districts.

Sources at Public Health Engineering Department said the tubewells water of which was found in intolerable limit of arsenic have already been sealed.

We have also asked the people not to take the waters of those tubewells, said an official.

The survey, conducted by an NGO, found 0.5 mg to 1.0 mg arsenic per litre tubewell water of Daudkandi, Barura and Chandina thana in Comilla.

Like Comilla, 0.5 mg to 1.0 mg arsenic was found in tubewell waters of Sadar, Kosba, Sorail and Nasirnagar thanas in Brahmanbaria district.

It also detected 0.01 mg to 0.05 mg arsenic in tubewell waters of Dagonbhuiya and Sonagazi thana in Feni, Ramgati, Ramganj, Sadar and Roypur thana of Laxmipur, Haimchar and Hajiganj thanas in Chandpur and Begumganj, Sadar and Chatkhil thanas in Noakhali.

Of the districts, Laxmipur was said to be the worst affected area as 80 per cent people of the district have been hit by arsenic.

The report showed that 80 per cent tubewells in Sadar thana of the district, 95 per cent tubewells in Ramgati thana have been contaminated with arsenic.

Genuine fishermen passing hard days

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, July 13: Genuine fishermen in the district are facing various problems including high prices of fishing inputs and lack of capital.

Genuine fishermen are falling victim to exploitation by village touts and non-professional fishermen with the help of local influential, local people alleged.

Unplanned irrigation project is also hampering pisciculture in the district.

The Department of Fisheries cannot supply adequate quantity of fish fries to fishermen, although the district has a large number of water bodies suitable for pisciculture.

Besides, the genuine fishermen are also being deprived of the bank loan due to various reasons.

Moreover genuine fishermen are facing difficulties in procuring fishing appliances for want of capital.

The fishermen alleged that most of the jalmahals, water bodies, have been grabbed by non fishermen.

The old practice of sub lease of jalmahals in the name of

fake fishermen has been going on unabated.

Some unscrupulous fishermen are still netting fish fries, hampering bright prospect of fish production in the district.

Local people have urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and take necessary steps to safeguard the interest of the fishermen community in the district.

Teenage boy strangled

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, July 13: A teenage boy was found dead in a crop field at Mohorka village under Lalpur thana of the district recently.

The victim was identified as Quamrul Islam, 16, a domestic help at a house of one Akimuddin of the village.

Police said the boy was strangled. The reason behind the murder could not be ascertained immediately.

A fair with a difference

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 13: The Natore branch of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) recently organised a 'loan fair' - a function with a difference in the banking sector to collect loans from debtors.

Hundreds of debtors of the bank responded very enthusiastically in the whole day long loan fair. There the bank promised them (debtors) to enrol their names from the old account book to new one.

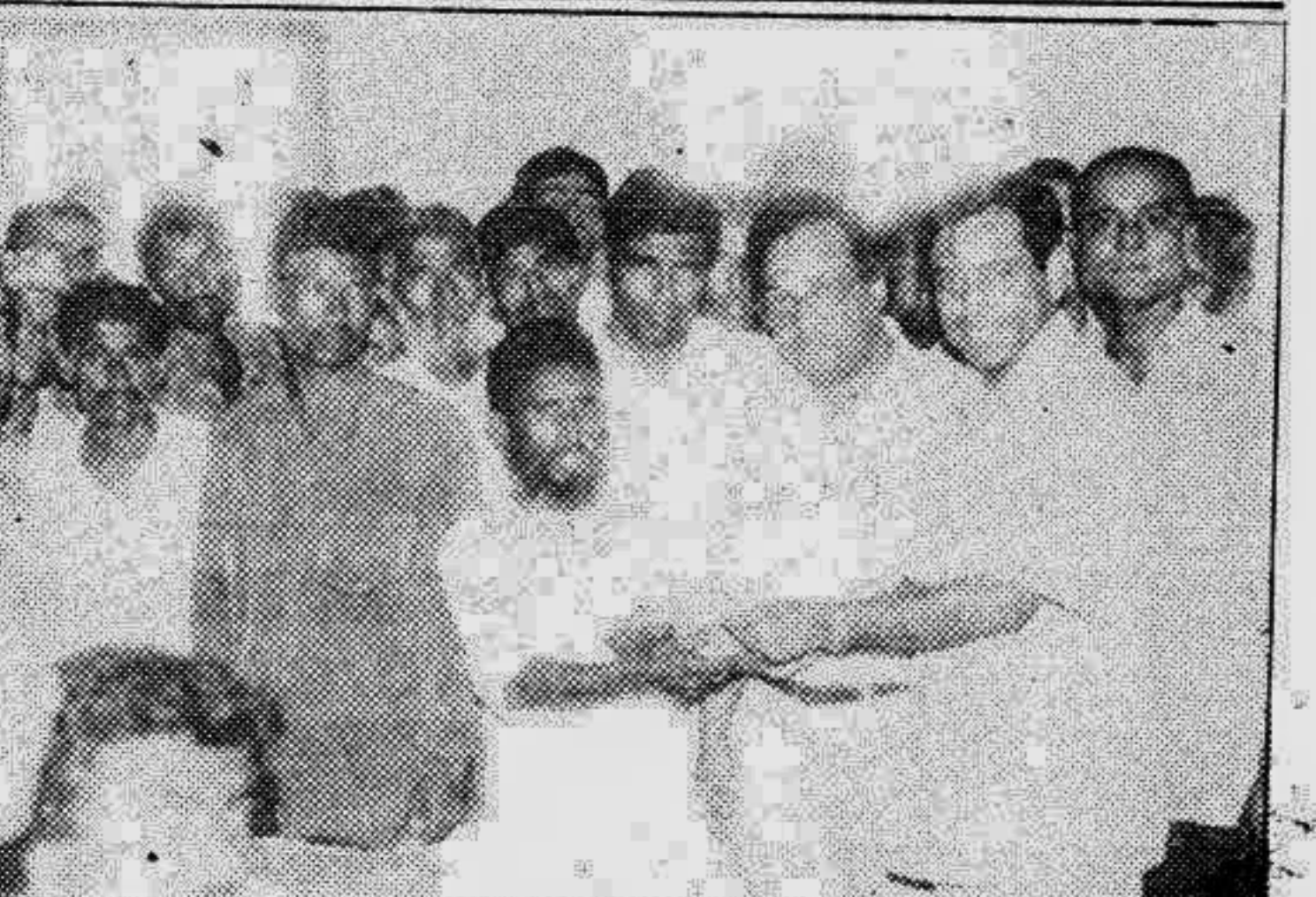
About Taka 60 lakh including Taka 15 lakh as classified loans were recovered from 1400 debtors of the bank on the day.

M Ziaul Haq, General Manager of RAKUB attended the fair as the chief guest. As a token he received Taka 19,700 from a defaulter debtor named Md Abdul

Jalil. Natore zonal manager B A M Shafiqul Islam attended the fair as the special guest while the branch manager Sheikh Abdul Kuddus conducted programme.

The fair has set an example in 'debtor-banker' healthy relationship in the region. This is because the branch officials have managed to inspire the large number of debtors to pay off their arrears and enroll their names as the new debtors.

All the debtors, who came to the loan fair to pay off the arrears were entertained by the bank officials to give the programme the essence of 'Haikhat', a traditional means to recover arrears usually adopted by the business community in the country.



Loan fair: M Ziaul Haq, general manager of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB), receiving repayment for a credit at a loan fair in Natore. — Star photo

Netrakona hospital beset with various problems

From A Correspondent

NETRAKONA, July 13: Netrakona Sadar Hospital is beset with various problems, including shortage of doctors and medicines.

Despite up gradation, the number of beds was not increased from existing 50, said local people.

Many posts of doctors have been lying vacant for years in the hospital, depriving local people of proper treatment.

The hospital lacks specialist doctors in many departments, like surgery, pediatrics, medicine and gynecology.

Acute shortage of nurses in the hospital is also causing serious problems for patients.

Crisis of medicines is everyday problem. The hospital has no adequate number of medical instruments. There is no full fledged operation theater and ECG machine in the hospital, said patients. Only one X-ray machine (100 ML) is not sufficient for huge number of patients.

The hospital is supposed to have 12 beds meant for patients of contagious diseases and ten beds for children. But there is no existence of these beds in reality, said the hospital sources.

Patients have to buy medicines and other necessary medical items like gauge and bandage from outside.

The quality of food supplied

by the hospital authority is very low, alleged patients.

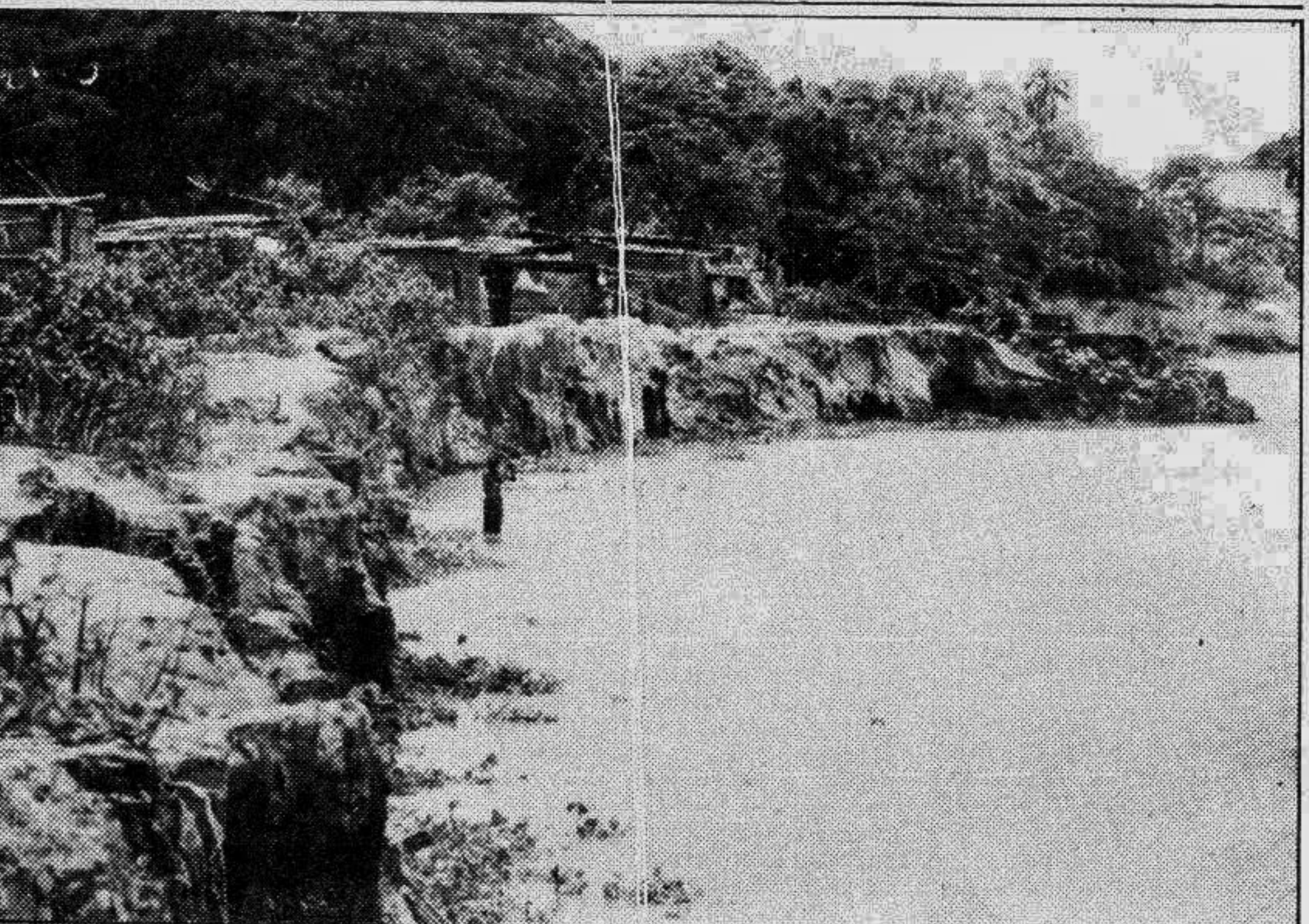
UP Chairman faces no-confidence

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, July 13: Twelve members of Balishimul union parishad in Kendua thana have brought a no-confidence motion against their chairman Matiur Rahman for his massive corruption, misuse of power, misappropriation of government money, nepotism and misbehaviour to the members and other irregularities.

Almost all the members of the union parishad have decided to abstain from all sorts of functioning of the union Parishad till dismissal of the chairman by the authorities concerned. A complaint has been submitted to Kendua Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) mentioning 12 allegations. The complainants demanded of necessary action against the aforementioned chairman.

The signatories are: Mukshed Ali, Jahannara Akthar, Jahura Begum, Rawshana Akthar, Abdul Hakim, Md Haidar Ali, Fardush Mia, Md Kanchan Mia, Sahidul Islam, Kazi Hosain, Abdul Aziz and Md Rahimuddin.



Turbulent Padma: People, rendered homeless, by river erosion have built the Srirampur slum on the Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment. — Star photo