

## News snaps

### Housewife commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 16: One housewife committed suicide recently by taking poison. Police sources said, Moslema Khatun, 45, wife of Kabir Molah of village, Rajnagar in sadar thana took poison and died on the spot. Family trouble was the reason of her suicide, police sources said.

### Boy electrocuted

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, July 16: A boy was electrocuted recently at village Nowdha in Trishal thana. The victim was identified as Bazul Rahman, 14, a labourer of Jabbar Ali Poultry Farm. The victim came in touch with the live electric wire when he was feeding the poultry birds. He died on the spot.

### Lightning claims 3 lives

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 16: A pregnant mother with her two little sons were killed recently by lightning. Fazrunnessa, wife of Akkas Matubbar and their two sons, Daud, 12, and Gaus, 10, of village Kamaleswari in Boalmari thana while having their meals in a house a thunderbolt struck the house during heavy downpour killing them on the spot.



Unusual beauty: The rare arum flower grew in a crop field of Sailkupa, Jhenidah. —Star photo by Delwar Kabir

### 3 hijackers caught

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 16: Three hijackers along with a bag containing money were caught recently by the local people near Muragacha club of Khoksa thana.

The hijackers were taken to the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) first where they confessed how they snatched the money from the Khoksa branch of Sonali Bank. They were immediately handed over to Khoksa thana police. They confessed they are the residents of Khulna and Barisal district. They are Sekendar Molla, son of Aktar Molla of Rupsa thana in Khulna, Yousuf Ali, son of Ismail Hossain of village Motbaria in Barisal district and now residing in Khulna and Abul Kashem, son of Hatem Ali of Khatipur in Khulna district.

### Kidnapped girls yet to be traced

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 16: Police are yet to rescue two girls who were kidnapped in two separate incidents in Katiadi thana recently.

Taslima Khatun, 16, daughter of Md Nurul Islam of village Kamarkona and one SSC examinee of Katiadi Pilot Girls' High School was kidnapped while returning home from her private tutor's house on February 2 last. In another incident, Seema Rani Ghosh, 18, daughter of Upendra Nath Ghosh was abducted while she came out of their house in response to the call of nature on June 9 night.

### 693 TR projects completed

From A Correspondent

NARSINGDI, July 16: Six hundred ninety three projects has been completed under Test Relief (TR) programme against an allocation of 1201 metric tons of wheat at six thanas including two pourasabhas in the last fiscal year.

The projects had been taken up under the rural infrastructure development programme which aims at the development of play ground of educational, religious institutions.

### Unabated smuggling in S-W dists

MADARIPUR, July 16: Organised groups of people are engaged in smuggling through different routes of four border districts in south-west region, reports UNB.

A variety of goods and commodities of daily use coming across the border have flooded the markets of Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj and Barisal. Although of inferior quality, the smuggled items attract the consumers due to competitive price. Grocery shops and traders in the market say that the demand for local products have been declining. Informed sources say smugglers have safe routes through water and land borders. The bootleggers frequently use microbus, motor boats, private car and motor cycle to carry the contrabands like gold, alcohol, cosmetics, electronic goods, tyre, tube, silver and cigarette.

### Mosque committee GS attacked

NAOGAON, July 16: A group of terrorists attacked the General Secretary (GS) of a mosque committee in Manda thana recently and snatched away Tk 32,000 from him.

According to a delayed report, Abdul Majid was preparing accounts of the committee in the mosque in the evening when he came under attack by the group. Police said another devotee was also injured during the attack.

### Anti-smuggling drive

MEHERPUR, July 16: An anti-smuggling drive has been intensified by different law enforcing agencies in the border areas during the last few weeks, an official source said, reports BSS.

Smuggled goods worth Taka 1.52 crore were seized by the agencies between January 1 and June 30 from border areas. A BDR source said Indian smuggled goods seized during the period include sugar, salt, onion, silk sarees, katan sarees, ready-made garments, shawl, bed-sheet, grapes, apple, orange, stainless steel utensils, bicycles, toiletries, cosmetics and contraceptive pills. A total of 92 smuggling cases including 51 unclaimed goods cases were registered in this connection.

### Cattle disease spreading

NOAKHALI, July 16: Cattle disease has been spreading in the district in absence of proper treatment facilities, reports UNB.

Livestock officials admitted that 45 cattlehead died during the last few weeks and more than 2,000 have been attacked by khura disease. Farmers are facing serious problem in tilling lands for transplantation of aman seedlings for lack of cattlehead. In some areas men are found pulling the plough. Livestock officials said they have not adequate medicines to meet the requirement.



Rewarding the best: M Ishaq Bhuiyan, deputy commissioner, Natore, distributing prizes among winners of the Islamic cultural competition held at local Islamic Foundation. —Star photo

# Outlaws active in Chalan Beel area

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 16: Activities of armed 'Sarbahara' men, the underground terrorist group have increased recently in the vast Chalan Beel areas.

On June 23, Abdul Wahab, one youth was shot dead at Biash bazaar area in Shingra thana. Two other unidentified youngmen were killed in Tarash thana of Sirajganj district on June 25 last. In both the cases, the killers, numbering 10 to 12, left the spots chanting slogans in favour of Sarbahara Party.

According to reports, many extremists of the south-western region have fled to the remote Chalan Beel villages to avoid arrest. The extremists, cornered by recent drives of different law enforcing agencies, are now trying to build strongholds in remote Chalan Beel areas.

Senior police officials of Natore, Pabna and Sirajganj districts discussed the atrocities of Sarbahara men at a meeting held at Natore SP office on July 10 morning with Nurul Islam, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of police, Rajshahi range in the chair. On July 11, in pre-dawn raids in the remote Chalan Beel villages, police arrested at least 35 persons, allegedly belonging to the Sarbahara Party. About 300 policemen of Natore, Pabna and Sirajganj districts conducted the joint operations in Shingra and Gurudaspur thanas of Natore, Chatohor and Bhangura thanas of Pabna and Tarash and Royganj thanas of Sirajganj.

Chalan Beel area which consists of parts of Natore, Pabna, Sirajganj and Naogaon districts, was very peaceful throughout the year except occasional attacks by dacoits during the previous years.

Recently the largest beel in the country, has turned into a sanctuary of the extremists. There are about 150 armed Sarbahara men in the beel region. The group also includes a number of female terrorists. At least 15 villages situated in the middle of Chalan Beel (where foot is the only means of communication) are the dens of the outlawed group.

About two decades ago, the Sarbahara group built stronghold in this region. They used the banner of East Bengali Communist Party during late 70s. But, now, they prefer to be known as Sarbahara men.

The outlawed group circulates themselves as Sarbahara men through wall-writing, posters and leaflets at different places of Sathpukuria, Ayash, Biash, Borogram, Berabari, Tetulia, Tarash, Itali, Dahia, Sukash, Kachua, Khanjanpukur and other places creating panic among the public.

Various sources informed this correspondent that the Sarbahara men of this region had been involved in different

June 23 is an example of such punishment.

The Sarbahara men resort to terrorism when they face obstacles. On June 18 in 1995, the villagers of Badhopara village in Shingra thana caught two persons, belonging to the Sarbahara group and kept them locked at Biash union parishad of fice. In the evening, armed Sarbahara men attacked the office and snatched them away. During chase and counter chase between the villagers and the armed group, a villager Zillur Rahman, son of Mohammad Ali of the village had been killed by bulletshot. These Sarbahara men were believed to be engaged in the daring dacoity at Gurudaspur police station in Natore in 1984.

Natore police is yet to ascertain whether the Sarbahara men were associated with the police arms snatching in November '97 or not. On the day some armed dacoits fled away with the arms of petrol police. Police foiled their (dacoity) attempt of dacoity at Jamtalhat in Shingra thana on Natore-Bogra highway.

The Sarbahara men have built their strongholds in the almost inaccessible middle portion of Chalan Beel area. They are responsible for most of the crimes being committed in the greater Rajshahi region. For this very reason, this year's Atrial murder raised rumours that the extremists had been involved with the murder.

Life of the rural people in the Chalan Beel area has become uncertain now. This is because of lack of sufficient number of police outposts or camps in the area.

In most cases, police fail to reach the spot of any incident due to bad communication system. Police do not even dare to carry arms with them if any police camp with them. A heavy contingent of police was deployed at Biash bazaar after the murder of Abdul Wahab, but they did not carry arms with them.

People of the beel areas have demanded improvement of the communication system. Many people want more combing operations.

However, Natore police told this correspondent that steps were being taken to intensify police activities in the area.

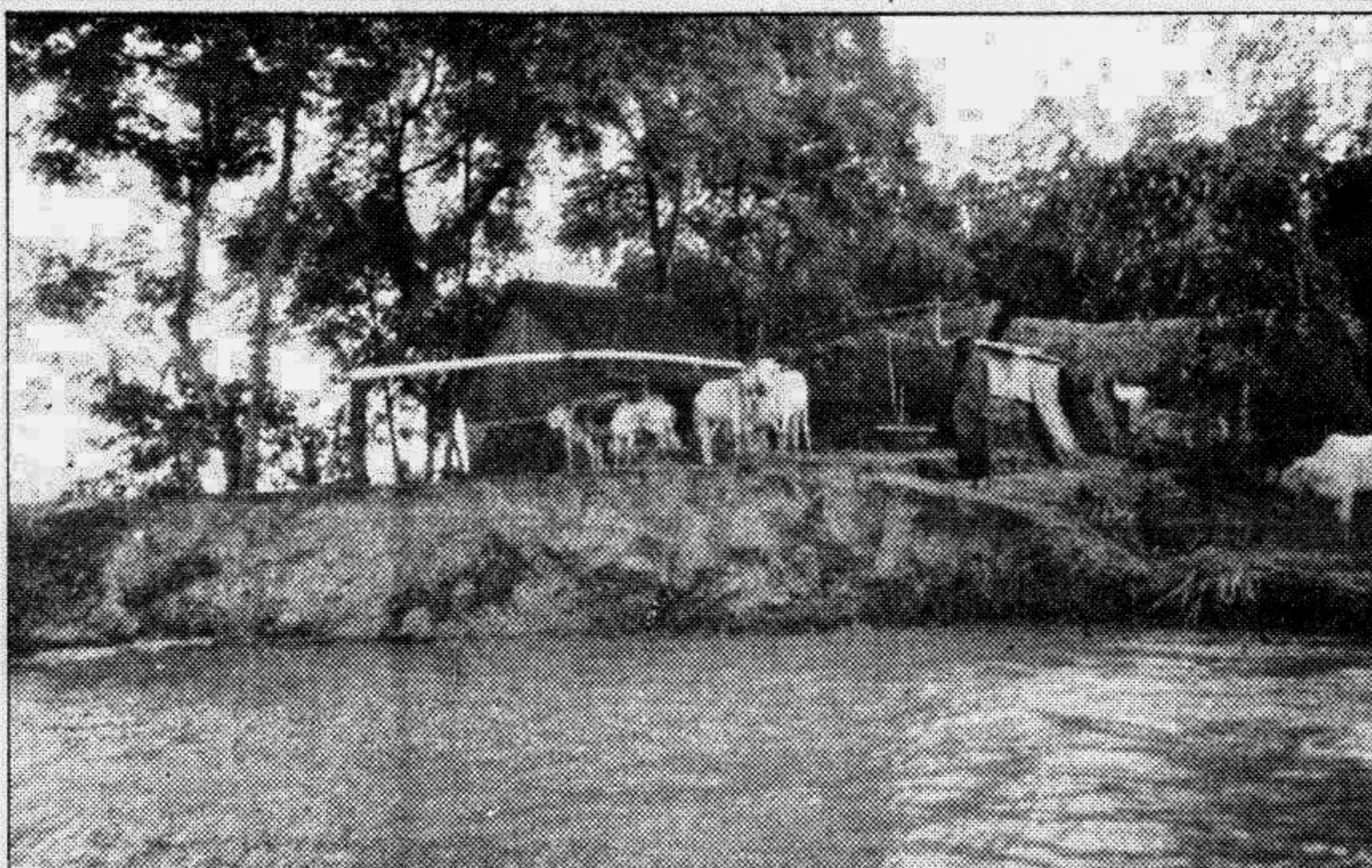
**There is no security of life in the Chalan Beel area. Usually police fail to reach the spot of any untoward incident on time due to bad communication system. Even police do not dare to carry arms with them if any police camp is set up in the disturbed area.**

road dacoities, secret killings and illegal toll collection from prominent businessmen.

On June 10, the passengers and staff of a Gurudaspur bound night coach coming from Dhaka foiled a robbery attempt on the Dhaka-Natore highway. Seven robbers including a 25-year-old woman were caught in the incident. No gangs of dacoit except the Sarbahara group have female members.

These outlaws usually avoid pre-occasions or slogans. But on September 4 in 1996, about 50 armed Sarbahara men entered into Khulbipur village of Gurudaspur thana in Natore by three shallow engine-driven boats. They announced their existence by blasting a powerful bomb and brought out a procession chanting slogans like: "Langol, nouka, dhaner shish, sob soper aek bish", "Sarbahara sob ek hao".

The villagers of the villages where the Sarbahara men have strongholds do not dare to say anything against them who frequently change their names and places. In many villages, Sarbahara men appoint their informers who usually collect tolls in favour of them. Any of the informers is punished to death in case of failure. The murder of Abdul Wahab at Biash bazaar on



Unending woes: A house at Pathalia near Jamalpur municipal building is faced with erosion. —Star photo

## Controversy

NATORE, July 16: Controversy arises over the construction of a sculpture of Bangabandhu at district Bar Association office premises in the town, reports UNB.

Local Awami League leaders decided to erect an sculpture of father of the nation at the place and State Minister for Women and Children's Affairs Professor Zinnatunnesa Talukder formally laid its foundation on July 4.

But district Bar Association, the owner of the house, which was rented to district Awami League General Secretary Advocate Hanif Ali, Ali Sheikh, objected to the plan.

General Secretary of the association filed a case in the court against the President and General Secretary of District Awami League for lying foundation stone of the sculpture at the association's own property.

The court, however, issued show cause notices against the Awami League leaders.

## 'Terrorism, black money destroying politics'

By Staff Correspondent

Eminent freedom fighter Major General (retd) Subed Ali Bhuiyan has said it is not possible to ensure development and welfare of the country and its people without honest, dedicated and ideal leadership.

He said terrorism and black money are destroying the politics of the country and it is not possible to ensure welfare of the nation without cleaning the country from these two evil forces.

Speaking in different programmes during a week-long massive mass contact drive at his Daudkandi constituency from July 5 to 10, the retired general said the previous leadership at Daudkandi never dedicated themselves for the development of this thana although there was scope for development.

He said the politics and law and order of Daudkandi are now being controlled by the terrorists and called upon all to come forward to resist the terrorism to free the society from terrorism and black money.

Bhuiyan during his week-long mass contact drive addressed the people at Mohamadpur union, Itakhola, Bashra, Roynagar, Kazirkona, Iliotganj, Gazipur high school and Chandra Shekhardi. Local elite, elected representatives and politicians accompanied him.

He will undertake another mass contact programme from July 16 and is expected to visit seven unions of Daudkandi.

## Flood damage rehabilitation projects progressing

COMILLA, July 16: Work on 27 projects under flood damage rehabilitation programme is progressing fast in four pourasahas here, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the projects include construction and reconstruction of roads.

The Local Government Engineering Department has been implementing the projects at a cost of Taka 1.28 crore.

## Separate incidents kill 14 in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 16: A total of 14 people were killed in separate incidents in the last month in the district.

Armed terrorists hacked a man to death on May 31 night at Nandalalpur Bazar of Kumarkhali thana.

The victim was identified as Rafiqul Islam, Kanak, 34, a member of JSD Gonobahini.

He was killed in connection with dispute over leasing of Nandalalpur Bazar, local people said.

On June 1 ASM Sultanul Arefin, 25, a teacher of Pradaha Girl's High School, was killed in a road accident.

A passenger bus (No. Bogra BA 5752) on Poradaha-Bheramara road hit a bi-cycle, injuring the school teacher. He was riding the cycle. Later ASM Sul-

## RKUB disburses Tk 316.63 cr loan in 16 dists

THAKURGAON, July 16: Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RKUB) has disbursed Tk 316.63 crore loans in 16 districts of Rajshahi division during the last fiscal year under post-flood rehabilitation programme, reports UNB.

The amount was Tk 108.42 crore higher than that of the 1997-98 fiscal year, officials said.

During the period, the bank realised Tk 255.58 crore loans. Meanwhile, RKUB disbursed more than Tk 13.37 crore through its 13 branches against the target of Tk 15.07 crore under the post-flood agricultural rehabilitation programme in the last fiscal.

In neighbouring Panchagarh district, RKUB extended loans of Tk 9.98 crore through 16 branches against the target of Tk 12.58 crore loan during the same period.

The bank realised over Tk 11.04 crore loan from Thakurgaon and Tk 7.91 crore from Panchagarh districts during the same period.

However, over Tk 35.91 cr outstanding loans remained unrepaid from farmers 26,603 farmers of Thakurgaon and more than Tk 38.69 crore from 30,727 farmers of Panchagarh district till June 30.

tanul Arefin succumbed to his injuries in Kushtia General Hospital.

On June 10 Zahidul, 30, an employee of non governmental organisation BARC, was crushed under the wheels of a bus at Bittipara, 15 kilometres away from Kushtia town on Kushtia-Jhenidah road on June 11.

On the same day one Sharifuddin Gazi of village Majla under Sadar thana committed suicide by taking poison. Reason behind the suicide could not be known immediately.

One Rajan, 22, son of Bhadu Sardar of village Barokhada, was also crushed under the wheels of a running truck near Trimohani, five kilometres away from Kushtia town, on Kushtia-Bheramara road on June 11.

One unidentified youth, who was injured when a speeding train hit him, succumbed to the injuries at Kushtia General Hospital on June 13.

On June 14, Minarul, 30, of village Laximidhardiar of Chitholia union under Mirpur thana, was killed by lightning.

One person was killed and 5 others were injured when a truck hit a tri-wheeler at Bittipara on Kushtia-Jhenidah road on June 14.

The dead was identified as Jalaluddin, son of Rahazuddin of village Abdulpur under Sadar thana. Injured persons were rushed to Kushtia General Hospital.

On June 10 one person drowned in the river Padma while catching fish. His body was recovered on June 12 by local people.

The victim was identified as Bholu Mondol, son of Rahat Mondol of village Baitragir Char of Maricha union under Daulatpur thana.

Khoksa thana police recovered a body of a woman on June 20. The dead was identified as Zulekha, 32, daughter of Kader Ali of village Ekartapur of Khoksa thana. Police suspected that the woman was murdered. Reason behind the murder could not be known.

One Gopal of Panti union under Kumarkhali thana died after taking rectified spirit on June 21. Details of the incident could not be known.

Another body was recovered from the river Padma on June 20. He was identified as Arshad

Ali, 40.

One Khorshed Ali, 28, son-in-law of late Wasim Ali of village Goalgram under Boalia union of Daulatpur thana, was allegedly beaten to death by his brother-in-laws on June 21. The incident occurred due to family feud, neighbours said. The victim hailed from village Shehala of Daulatpur thana.

One Masud, 24, of village Barokhada, was electrocuted recently. Masud is the son of one Mohan Ali.

## Tornado hits Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 16: A severe tornado swept recently over village Ghoramara in Aria union of Daulatpur thana. It damaged 50 houses and uprooted a large number of trees, according to a delayed report received here.

The tornado created havoc within five miles of the area and many houses were raged to the ground. No casualty was, however, reported fifteen people were injured who were rescued by the people of the neighbouring villages immediately after the incident. Loss was estimated to be over Taka 20 lakh. About 150 people have been rendered homeless. No Government help was, however, extended so far to the affected persons.

Local science teachers get

Most of the school and college students usually employ their school teachers as private tutor for intensive studies to do well in the examinations.

Local science teachers get

When completed, Dr Amanullah said, the people of major thanas of Mymensingh district will be benefited and their long-felt desire would be fulfilled.

The state minister directed the concerned authorities to expedite the construction work of the bridge so that it could be completed within the stipulated time.

BALUKA, Mymensingh, July 16: A bridge will be constructed over the river Kheru near Baluka bazar under the district at a cost of taka six crore, reports BSS.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Amanullah laid down the foundation stone of the bridge yesterday.

When completed, Dr Amanullah said, the people of major thanas of Mymensingh district will be benefited and their long-felt desire would be fulfilled.

The state minister directed the concerned authorities to expedite the construction work of the bridge so that it could be completed within the stipulated time.

## SOUND POLLUTION

## A serious threat to public health

NETROKONA, July 16: Sound pollution created by vehicles, cassette players and loud speakers has been posing a serious threat to the public health in the town, reports UNB.

Experts said the tolerable limit of sound for human being was 45 decibel.

Dwellers here complained that the pollution has already crossed the tolerable limit. They said the problem has also spread to other parts of the district.

Local people said that the problem intensified further in the last year with the addition of baby-taxi, tempo and video shops responsible for creating high sound.

A section of drivers is habituated to use horns of their vehicles repeatedly without much need disturbing the passerby.

Most of the time, the drivers use excessive and high-pitch

horns while overtaking each other.

The cassette player shops have also been contributing to the pollution during their recording. Video shops are new addition to this race, said the sources. People living nearby these shops and passersby face serious problem due to this high sound.

According to the rules, playing cassette players with high sound is strictly prohibited. But there seems nobody to follow the rules and there were no authorities to check it, said the local people.

Doctors said a large number of people have been visiting them with the complaints like high blood pressure, headache, indigestion and mental stress. One of the main causes of these health complexities was sound pollution, they added.

## 7 murdered in Nandail in two months

From Our correspondent

MYMENSINGH, July 16: Seven people were murdered in the last two months in Nandail thana.

According to police, one Helal Mia, 35, was allegedly killed by his cousin on June 13.

Helal Mia, son of Fayez Uddin of village Kuchuri Purga Para under Singrahal union, was chopped to death by his cousin Mahtab Uddin, son of Ahmed Ali, over a land dispute, family sources said.

Mahtab Uddin entered the house of the victim at about 2 am and chopped him to death, the sources added.

In another incident, a new born baby was killed on the same day, at village Mussuli by unidentified assailants. The reason behind the murder could not be known immediately.

In village Badarnar, Maria, 1, a girl child of Rafiqul Islam, was strangled recently by some miscreants, family sources said.

On June 8 one Din Ali was also strangled at village Purga Kandha Para over a land dispute.

On the same day in the same village one Akhsar Ali was killed. Details of the incident could not be known.

In another incident, a housewife was killed allegedly by her husband at village Banail. The victim was identified as Julekha Begum, 28.

A Jubo League leader of Batgair union was killed by his ri-

vals recently. The victim was identified as Rafiqul Islam, 25.

Separate cases were lodged with Nandail thana in connection with the incidents.

Another report adds: At least three persons were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in Nandail thana recently.

One person was killed and 10 others were injured when a Kishoreganj-bound passenger bus from Kendua thana collided head on with a micro-bus from Mymensingh near Banghatti on June 30.

The dead was identified as Tara Mia, 38, of village Barai in Chandi Pasha union.

In another accident, at least two people were killed and another 15 were injured, five of them critically, in a road accident at Palihar Aumtali on July 4.

A Mymensingh-bound bus from Kishoreganj skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch as the driver of the vehicle lost his control, killing two on the spot.

One was identified as Aum-jat Ali Sharker alias Lal Mia, 58, a deed writer of Nandail Sub-Registry Office. Other victim was the helper of the bus.

The injured persons were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Kishoreganj Hospital and Nandail Thana Health Complex.

Two separate cases were filed.

## Bright prospect of rubber plantation in 8 N-dists

THAKURGAON, July 16: Eight districts of the northern region have bright prospect for rubber cultivation for its suitable land and climate, reports UNB.

A recent survey found large areas of follow lands in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat districts are useful for rubber cultivation.

The minimum annual rainfall of 100 mm needed to grow a healthy rubber plant is available in these districts.

A rubber garden owner in Panchagarh district, Anwar Hossain Abu, said rubber plants in his garden grow and spread easily which can be planted in largescale in the area.

From his success story, Abu said, he started with plantation on a small area. But after a few years he expanded his garden to 14 acres at Sakoa in Boas thana.

According to a preliminary estimate, about 300 plants can be planted on an acre with an yield of two tons of rubber giving proper care. From one acre rubber garden, Tk 14 lakh can be earned annually.

Abu said every year rubber plantation or garden can be set up with small loans from the government for afforestation from which local demand can be met and the government can earn profit.

He further said huge unemployed manpower of these areas may be engaged in rubber gardens.

## Private tuition becomes a commercial practice

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, July 16: Private tuition has become a commercial practice here and in seven thanas.

Local people alleged, teachers of both the government and private schools and colleges are engaged in private tuition to earn extra money.