

News snaps

3 gamblers arrested

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, July 20: Haluaghat police arrested recently three gamblers from Joyramkura area. Following an information police arrested the gamblers with gambling materials while they were engaged in gambling near Joyramkura Missionary Hospital. They were identified as Bijoy 40, Majbur, 26, and Afazuddin, 35.

Man beaten to death

NAOGAON, July 20: A man was beaten to death by his rivals over a land dispute in Mohadevpur thana on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Atoar Rahman, 45, of Panditpur village in Chandash union came under attack allegedly by one of his cousins while he was working on a disputed land nearby their residence. Police said his cousin Mokhes aided by his associates beat Atoar as they found him working on the land. They later brought Atoar to Chandash UP premises and left him there in a critical condition, where he died at about 2pm. His wife filed a case against 17 people, including the UP chairman.

Record in loan disbursement

PIROJPUR, July 20: Pirojpur Krishi Bank has set a record by surpassing its loan disbursement target by three per cent during the last (1998-99) fiscal, reports UNB.

Officials said the Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) regional office disbursed Tk 16.48 crore among 18,567 farmers through 21 branches against its target of Tk 16 crore. Of the loans, Tk 91 lakh were distributed for Aus. cultivation, Tk 1.33 crore for Aman, Tk 3.95 crore for Boro, Tk 2.23 crore for potato, Tk 56 lakh for banana and Tk 1.64 crore for sugarcane. Besides, Tk 1.86 crore were disbursed for socio-economic sector, Tk 55.72 lakh for buying cattle, Tk 10.66 lakh for dairy farms and Tk 3.24 crore for other sectors.

14 shops sealed off

KHULNA, July 20: The authorities sealed off 14 shops in New Market of the city as the owners kept those under lock and key during an anti-smuggling drive on Saturday, reports UNB.

Officials said a joint team of Customs, police and paramilitary, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) raided the market at about 12 noon on the day. Seeing them, some shop owners closed down their shops forcing the law-enforcers to seal those off. They, however, broke into another shop, Jamdani House and found eight staff and customers locked inside. They recovered 82 pieces of Indian saree from the shop.

Attack on JCD leader

RANGPUR, July 20: A local leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was critically injured in an attack by his rivals at College road here on Sunday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Rubel, 22, former General Secretary (GS) of JCD's Rangpur Carmichael College unit, came under attack in front of Grameen Bank when he was returning home at about 2 pm. He was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Seven arrested

MANIKGANJ, July 20: In a pre-dawn swoop police arrested seven people on Sunday while removing a boundary pillar installed during British period in Shibbalaya thana, reports UNB.

Police also recovered firearms and ammunition, including a pistol and a pipe gun, from their possession. The arrested were identified as Nurul Alam, Razu Chowdhury, Khalid Rahman, Babul Atoar Rahman, Shahjahan and Rafiqul Islam. Earlier, a series of clashes between two rival groups of people took place at Muktanagar village over lifting the pillar.

Workshop concludes

PATUAKHALI, July 20: A two-day workshop on farm system research development concluded here on Sunday, reports UNB.

Directorate of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) in collaboration with Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) organised the workshop. The workshop discussed the future plan to raise the country's foodgrains production to 2.5 crore mt and achievements of various agricultural organisations. Officials from DAE, BARI and BARC and Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Soil Resources Development Institute took part in the workshop.

686 uplift projects undertaken

KISHOREGANJ, July 20: District Relief and Disaster Management Department has taken up 686 development projects in 13 thanas of the district under Test Relief (TR) programme in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government sanctioned 1,046 tonnes of wheat for implementation of the projects. The work of the projects included reconstruction of rural roads, educational institutions and development of graveyards and crematoriums. The thana-wise break-up of projects is: Aatragram 42, Baitpur 42, Bhaichab 130, Hossainpur 22, Itna 55, Kandi 92, Karimganj 80, Kishoreganj sadar 14, Kuliarchar 84, Nikli 10, Pakundia 32, Tariat 40 and Mithamoin 43.

Three killed by lightning

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, July 20: Three persons were killed by lightning in separate incidents at Nachol and sadar thana recently, reports BSS.

Witnesses said Lokman Uddin, 20, of village Amline died by lightning while he was working in a paddy field. He died on the spot. Two other victims were killed as thunderbolt hit them when they were collecting mango in a garden during rains.

Indian smuggled goods seized

JOYPURHAT, July 20: A special squad of anti-smuggling taskforce seized a huge quantity of Indian goods worth about Tk 18 lakh from Panchbibi thana, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, the team, comprising DC, BDR commander and a magistrate, recovered 219 sacks of sugar from a truck at Fikhar ghat on Panchbibi-Kamdia road and six bags of onion from a bus in Miroiti area. The haul was deposited with Hill Customs Office, according to officials.

Tragedy of a rickshawpuller's family

NARSINGDI, July 20: Worn down by poverty, a rickshawpuller killed his wife and then took his own life at village Asmandirchar in sadar thana recently, reports UNB.

Villagers said Ratan, 35, and his wife Pariban, 30, had a brawl over shopping on the day. At night, Ratan hacked his wife to death and then committed suicide by hanging himself. Pariban was asleep when Ratan swooped on her. The bodies were sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Uplift project progressing

MADARIPUR, July 20: A development project, involving Tk 53.79 lakh, is being implemented in sadar thana with financial assistance from Local Government Engineering Department, reports UNB.

The project works, including construction and reconstruction of roads and schools, are expected to be completed this month.

Saplings distributed

MANIKGANJ, July 20: British-American Tobacco, Manikganj Leaf Regio distributed saplings of different trees among the tobacco growers and farmers at a function held here recently, reports BSS.

Manikganj Leaf Region Manager Ahsanul Karim and Kushiya Leaf Region Manager Golam Faruq Nayan were, among others, present on the occasion. Saplings of Mehngani and other plants were distributed free of cost among the tobacco growers under the social afforestation programme of the company.

Loan for poor men, women

BARISAL, July 20: The Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) disbursed a sum of Tk 10,46,22,000 among 5,962 poor men and women in 10 thanas as loan in the 1998-99 fiscal, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the loan was disbursed for creating employment opportunity and socio-economic development of the marginal farmers and poor people. Of the total amount, Tk 41.90 lakh was disbursed among 1,052 members of 96 families, Tk 68.32 lakh among 1,463 women members of 68 families and Tk 9.36 crore among 3,447 members of 1,105 families of the BRDB.

Telephone service in shambles

From Abdul Monayem Khan

COX'S BAZAR, July 20: Telephone subscribers of Cox's Bazar auto-exchange and Chokaria, Ramu, Moheskhal and Teknal exchanges have been suffering much due to several problems which include disorder of telephone sets, inaudible sounds, cross-connection, connection to the wrong number, pending of bills, inflated bills without any specific data and negligence of duty of the employees.

A total of 700 out of 3,200 telephone sets of the above mentioned live exchanges have gone out of order since May 1999 causing untold sufferings to the subscribers. In spite of lodging complaints by the affected telephone owners, the telephone officials are seemingly quite indifferent to put their telephones in order.

When contacted an official of the telephone exchange said that most of the phone sets had gone out of order as the underground cables were cut by public health workers and pourasabha contractors while placing underground pipes for supplying water.

Many subscribers complained, in most cases their sets transmit inaudible sounds. Besides, ghost calls come off and on to the great vexation of the subscribers.

Cross-connection is another problem that is annoying most of the subscribers as they simultaneously hear two persons speaking from two different sets. Very often calls go to the wrong number causing financial loss to the caller and annoyance to the receiver. Sometimes a caller gets his right number after four or five times in futile dialing attempts.

Telephone bills are not regularly supplied to the subscribers. It is alleged, the subscribers are not getting telephone bills for four to five months. Some others complained that they had received

three month's bill at a time though five month's bill are lying pending with Telegraph and Telephone office in Chittagong.

The subscribers receiving three months bill complained that bill of each month was far more greater than the usual ones. A gross amount was inserted in the bill without mentioning any break-up.

It is also alleged, employees working at different sections such as inquiry, telephone booking are quite negligent to their duties. When any subscriber calls a call at 17 or 109 to collect information or for booking a trunk call, the telephone set goes on ringing for minutes together but no one bothers to attend the call. Though they attend the call after four or five minutes, they are quite impatient and restless to give a hearing to the caller's problem. Besides, the employees working at 17 are not found forthcoming. They cannot supply the callers with correct information.

Over and above corruption is allegedly looting large in every sphere of the department eating into the vitals of the national economy.

Besides, overbilling and mismanagement are plaguing local telephone exchanges. There is no billing office here. The bills are submitted from Chittagong divisional office. So subscribers have to go to Chittagong with complaints.

Meanwhile, Cox's bazar based correspondents of different dailies of the country are facing a lot of problems as they can not send news to Dhaka and other places because of frequent disturbances in the telephone and fax lines. People of the district urge the government to introduce digital telephone system in the district as early as possible.

On the other hand, most of the card phone booths have been lying inoperative for

months together due to lack of maintenance.

Four card phone booths were installed by the Telephone and Telegraph department in the town and five in different thana headquarters in 1996 to provide better telephone service to the people.

Local users said the service of the booths was satisfactory at the beginning, but it deteriorated as the time passed due to negligence by the Telegraph and Telephone men in maintaining the lines and machines.

They complained that the technicians responsible for maintenance of the card phone booths are not always available even after repeated reminders by the officials.

Some of the sets have turned into 'unit eating machines', they said adding that these are now eating up more units when they made call. Even valid cards are being rejected by some machines as out of order, they said.

Moreover, some machines eject the cards as soon as the respondent receives the call and the card is shown as 'used up'.

The card phone users here said the Telegraph and Telephone men have been showing reluctance in maintaining the booths as their illegal earning decreased substantially with the introduction of the card phone system.

Besides, cards have become scarce in the post offices. But the users said, these are available in black market at a rate higher than the actual price.

Card phone users have urged the authorities to take measures to fix the phone and stop black marketing of the cards to ensure easy telephone services to the people.

Two killed in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Jessore and Comilla.

UNB from Jessore says: An aged man was killed in a road mishap at Gopalpur square on Jessore-Khulna highway on Monday.

The victim was identified as Shaymapada Adhikari, 77, of village Ghoshnagar in Bagerpara thana in the district.

Police said the mishap occurred when an autorickshaw on which Adhikari was travelling hit a roadside tree while giving side to a microbus coming from opposite direction at Gopalpur square in the morning.

Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue

Three killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 20: Three people were killed and ten others injured in a road accident at Bagat on Faridpur-Jessore highway in the morning recently.

According to eye witnesses, the accident took place when a Rangpur-bound BRTC passenger bus from Barisal ran over passersby near Bagat, killing three instantly.

The dead were identified as Satya Ranjan Biswas, 95, Selim Fakir, 25, and Shyamal Kumar Ghose, 35.

The seriously injured Jiban Ghose, 35, Shuchitra Rani Biswas 30, Shubhash Chandra Shutra Dhar, 35 and Abul Khaleque, 50, were admitted to Madhukhali Health Complex.

Law & order worsens in Sarisabari thana

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, July 20: Law and order situation in Sarisabari thana of the district has deteriorated with the incidents of terrorist activities increasing alarmingly.

Free movement of armed terrorists, clash between rivals, murder, rape, kidnap, mugging and toll collection have become the a common feature in the thana.

At least 12 killings and about 20 clashes between rival groups occurred during the last six months in the Sarisabari thana.

At least 30 people were injured in a recent clash at Jamuna Fertilizer Factory. A gruesome murder was committed at Jamuna Fertilizer housing complex on June 5. Housewife Tania Rahman allegedly killed her domestic help Shamim, 10. Later police arrested the housewife and her husband.

One Mahabur Rahman was robbed of taka three lakh at gun point at Jagannathganj Ghat area on June 3. In another incident, one Monjurul Alam was robbed of Tk 55,000 on May 30 in Bhatara area.

A clash occurred at Sarisabari on April 5 over the governing body election of a local organisation. In the clash one Mantaz Ali, 28, was killed and over one hundred were injured, including TNO (Thana

Nirbahi Officer) and a police officer. Following the clash section 144 was imposed in the area.

One Mina Begum, 37, was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry at village Dangur on April 19. She was strangled, villagers alleged.

One Joinal Abedin, 28, was allegedly killed over land dispute at village Char Adra on April 21. The killing, however, was shown as suicide. Several marks were found on the body, witnesses said.

A young woman was found dead at village Menda on January 15. The victim was identified as Fatema, 22. Police recovered the body and arrested her husband Badsha. Besides, one Moksed Ali, 35, was beaten to death at village Shengur on January 16.

A burglary was committed at Pali District Complaint Centre on March 5 night. Miscreants broke into the complaint centre and stole a motor cycle.

Cow lifting is increasing day by day in Char Nandania, Char Chunia Potol, Char Adra, Char Jamira, Char Rouha, Char Sataria and Boira areas. At least 300 cows were lifted in the areas recently.

A section of unscrupulous traders are running illegal business of phensidyl syrup and ganja in Jagannathganj Ghat and Pighna areas.

Banana cultivation gaining popularity in Natore

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 20: Banana cultivation has started gaining popularity in the district with the growers making good profit from the crop.

The growers are now cultivating the crop commercially. The main banana producing areas of Natore are Chandpur, Laxmipur, Ahamadpur, Haybatpur, Kholabaria, Moukhara, Banpara and Halsa.

Local farmers started banana farming in mid 80s.

Most of the growers interviewed by this correspondent told 'anupam' and 'sagar' varieties

are popular among buyers in local markets.

A farmer can easily earn Tk 10,000 to Tk 13,000 by cultivating these varieties of banana on a bigha of land.

'Anupam' variety of banana sells in local markets at Tk 70 to Tk 250 depending on the size per 'kandi', 'sagar' variety sells between Tk 100 and Tk 150 per 'kandi' while other varieties are being sold between Tk 50 and Tk 80 per kandi.

Most of the growers sell their crop in Baneswar and

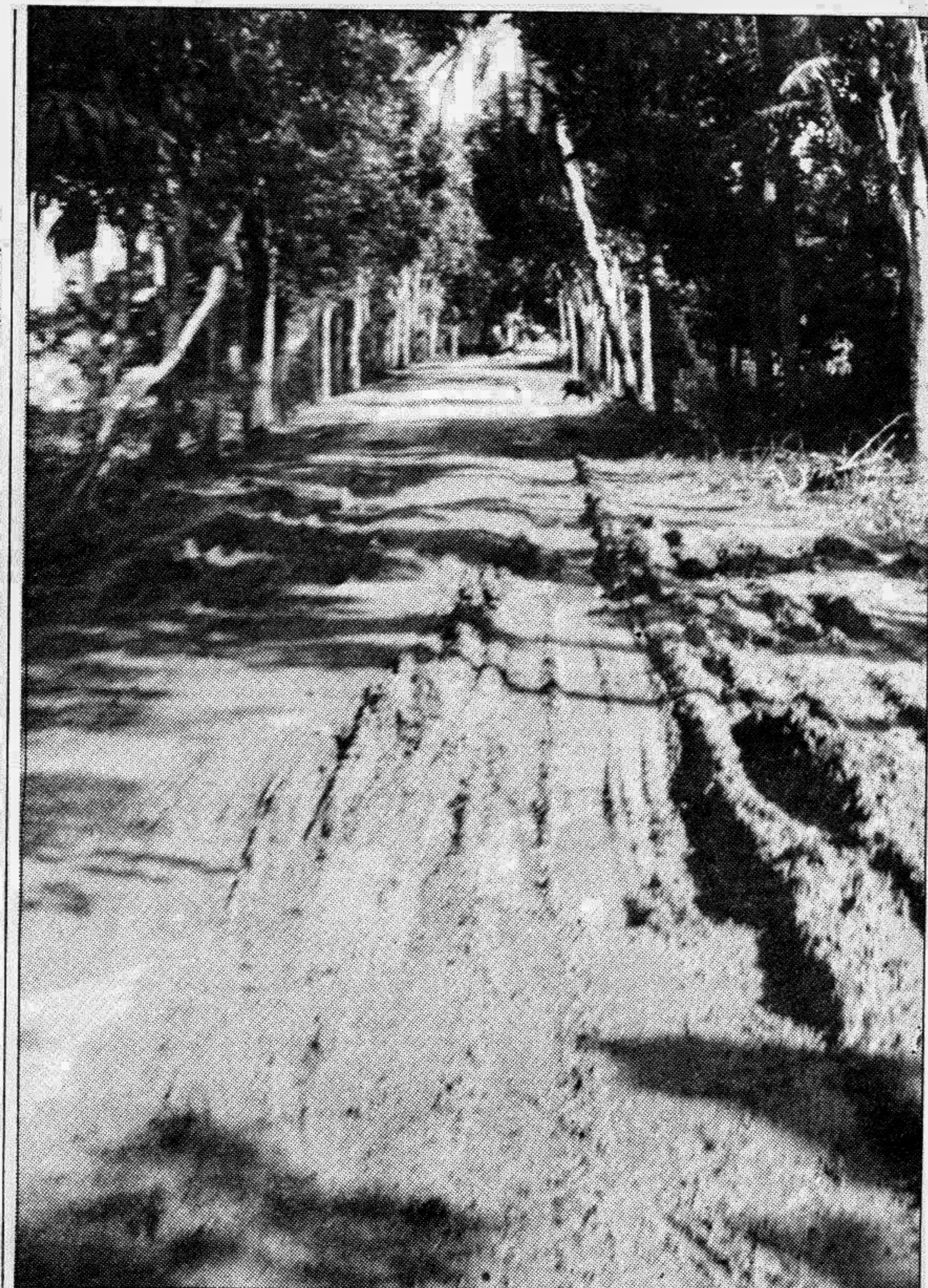
Jhalmalia, Moukhara, Ahammedpur and Puthia markets.

Usually banana season starts in the Bengali month of Falgun and continues up to the month of Ashwin. However, many varieties of banana are available in the markets throughout the year.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take steps to set up fruit processing plants in the northern districts, the main source of various kinds of fruits in the country.



Money spinner: Banana cultivation is very popular now in Natore, as farmers are sure of a good price. — Star photo



Perennially inconvenient: The Shekhpur-Shariatpur road at Shilair char has not been repaired after last year's flood inhibiting traffic. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Flood protection embankment under Chalan Beel project threatened

NATORE, July 20: A 147-km polder-C, the largest earthen flood protection embankment under Natore Chalan Beel Project, is threatened by flood, reports UNB.

Sources said the breach, which developed on the embankment during the last year's devastating flood, could not yet be repaired, making it more vulnerable.

With a sweeping vision to protect some 3.21 lakh acres of croplands in Natore, Rajshahi, Naogaon and Pabna districts from recurring floods, the government had taken the project in 1974, involving Tk 200 crore.

The ambitious project was taken with financial and technical assistance from World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Officials said every year crops worth about Tk 100 crore are lost due to flood in Chirudaspur, Bariagram and Shingra thanas of Natore, Bhanga and Chatmohor of Pabna, Tanor and Bagmara and Mohonpur of Rajshahi and

Atrai and Manda of Naogaon districts.

As per the project profile, a 298-km flood control embankment was supposed to be constructed with 24 regulators, 56 flashing inlets, 55 bridges, and 132 culverts.

A total of Tk 43.66 crore also had been earmarked for excavation of 187 canals under the project, the sources said.

For its smooth implementation, the project site had been divided into 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' polders in 10 thanas of four Chalan Beel districts.

But an official of the project, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the donor agencies have lost their interest in the project due to misuse and misappropriation of funds allotted earlier.

The Project undertaken by Water Development Board 25 years ago, could not be implemented yet for lack of fund.

Another report from Rajshahi says: Though they spend 60 to 70 per cent of their total income on foods, nearly three crore people of

Bangladesh take food below 1800 kilo calories a day.

WFP Country Representative Dr Werner Kiene disclosed this at a day-long workshop in Rajshahi on Monday.

The workshop title "Policy and Technique of Food Aid in Bangladesh for the year 2001-2004" was jointly organised by the government and WFP at Rajshahi Parjatan Motel.

Dr Kiene said although these people have not yet been included in poverty alleviation programmes, but they could be involved in the country's development process by bringing them under various programmes.

The day-long workshop, chaired by Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Khan Shahabuddin, was addressed, among others, by A K M Khairul Alam of Bangladesh Economic Relations Department and Chief Engineer of Rajshahi Water Development Board Asaduzzaman Khan.

A total of 47 people, including female UP members, took part in the workshop.

Old man allegedly killed by first wife

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, June 18: An oldman was allegedly killed by his first wife and daughter at village Alampur in Mohespur thana. He was identified as Abul Khair, 60, a dead writer of Mohespur Sub-Registry office.

Police sources said, Abul Khair was called by his wife and daughter from his work place on June 10. Later on his family members took him at Mohespur Thana Health Complex as he had been affected by diarrhoea. He was then referred to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital. From there he was shifted to Jessore General Hospital in a critical condition. There he succumbed to his injuries.

Police have suspected that Abul Khair had relationship with his second wife who was reportedly divorced recently.

Workshop on HR held

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, July 20: A workshop on human rights, was held at Alamdanga BRAC office in the district recently.

Presided over by Fariduddin, area manager of BRAC, the workshop was attended among others by Ram Prasad Mohanto, Shafuddin Khan, Rabiul Hoque Ansari, Khondokar Salahuddin Muktar, Abdul Zabbar Ibn Syed Kochi and Chand Ali.

In the workshop, the speakers stressed the need for starting strong campaign against child marriage and dowry.

They also called for implementation of marriage registration act.

UP members, imams, marriage registrars, local journalists, teachers, local elite and female workers of BRAC took part in the workshop.

Oath-taking ceremony

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, July 20: Newly elected chairmen and members of two union parishads — one at Kulaura thana and another at Kamalgonj thana under Moulvibazar district have taken oath of their respective offices in two separate functions recently.

Oath-taking ceremony of the chairman and members of Number-5 Brahmin bazaar union parishad was held recently at Kulaura thana parishad auditorium. Newly elected chairman, nine elected members in general seats and three elected members in the reserve seats for women have taken oath of their office from Niazul Haque, the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Kulaura thana.

Earlier, newly elected chairman and members of Adampur union parishad under Kamalgonj district have taken oath from Md Iftekharul Islam Khan, the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Kamalgonj thana.

No-confidence against UP chairman

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 20: Members of Nalganda union parishad formally expressed no-confidence in Chairman Md Mozaffar Ahmed on charge of misappropriation of government fund recently.

Official papers regarding this was submitted to Deputy Commissioner of Gaibandha and TNO Sadar thana.

The members demanded immediate action be taken in this respect.

Rickshaw pullers' barricade

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, July 20: Agitated rickshaw pullers put up a barricade on Matlab-Baburhat road for two hours from 11 am on Friday protesting the alleged beating of some of their colleagues by a police official, reports UNB.



Asir Uddin's death anniversary tomorrow

By staff Correspondent

Death anniversary of Asir Uddin Ahmed, noted educationist and former headmaster of Nilphamari Model High School (now government boys' high school) will be observed tomorrow (Thursday).

Marking the occasion, a *milad mahfil* will be held at the Sabujpara house of the late educationist in Nilphamari town. Former students, friends and relatives of the celebrated teacher, have been requested to attend the *milad mahfil* and pray for the peace and salvation of the departed soul.

Asir Uddin was the first Bangalee Muslim headmaster of the century-old school, formerly named as Nilphamari High English School.

During his tenure of service, he extended a grand opportunity for free study to many poor but meritorious students. The school flourished as an ideal institution in various spheres including sports and culture during his period.

His second child Shaheed Captain Bashir was martyred in the Liberation War.

Youngman strangled

NARSINGDI, July 20: A youngman was strangled to death by miscreants at village Karachar in Shibpur thana on Monday, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Eskandar Ali, 38.