

News snaps

Teen commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, July 21: One person committed suicide by taking poison at village Govindpur under Sadar thana in the district recently. Police said Delwar Hossain, 18, son of one Mozaffar Hossain took poison. The reason behind his taking poison could not be known immediately. Hossain was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) in a critical condition where doctors declared him dead.

Man chopped to death

From A Correspondent

NARISINGDI, July 21: One person was killed over land disputes allegedly by his brother-in-law at village Daulatpur under Monahardi thana in the district recently. According to witnesses and police the victim, Hafizuddin, was chopped with sharp weapons to death by his brother-in-law, Rahmat Ali. A case was filed with police in this connection.

Housewife commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 21: A young housewife committed suicide by hanging at village Dhala in Tarail thana recently. Rahima Begum, 20, wife of Md Zahar Ali and mother of a child hanged herself from the ceiling of the house at night, family sources said. Police recovered the body in the morning and sent it to the morgue for post-mortem. The cause behind the suicide could not be ascertained. An UD case was registered with the police in this connection.

Child drowns in pond

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, July 21: A two-year-old child drowned in a pond at village Chhadhat under Nagarkanda thana in the district recently. According to family sources, Mehedi Hasan, son of one Fazlur Rahman, fell in a pond and drowned. The boy was playing by the side of the pond. The body was recovered few hours later.



Recognising the sacrifice: Benazir Ahmed, police superintendent, Kishoreganj, distributing scholarships to students of freedom fighter's families at a recent function organised by Syed Nazrul Islam Stipend Fund

Protest procession

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 21: A procession was brought out in the town protesting the "attempt to stop" madrasa, religious school, education in the country. The procession led by Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi MP, General Secretary of Kushtia district BNP, started from Kushtia Jame Mosque after Friday prayer recently and paraded the town streets. Later the processionists held a rally at Majampur Gate area.

Housewife commits suicide

SATKHIRA, July 21: A young housewife allegedly committed suicide by setting fire to her body at village Kashempur in Shannagar thana Saturday, reports UNB. Family sources alleged that Aleya Khatun, 24, mother of two, took her own life having failed to endure the torture by her husband. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

Life term for outlaw

MAGURA, July 21: A young man, said to be a member of outlawed Purbia Banglar Communist Party, was sentenced to life term imprisonment in an arms case here on Monday, reports UNB.

The convict was identified as Binoy Kumar Sarkar, son of Bindabak Sarkar of Molladangi village in Sreepur thana. His father Bindabak Sarkar is also serving life term in jail for possessing illegal arms. The case history in brief: Sreepur police raided the residence of one Sujit in Molladangi village on May 19 last year and arrested Binoy with a loaded revolver. The District and Sessions Judge after examining the evidences and witnesses delivered the judgement in a crowded court on Monday.

Aus cultivation

JESSORE, July 21: Aus has been cultivated in 20 thousands hectares of land in eight thanas of the district, reports BSS. Of the total land 15 thousands hectares have been cultivated with 'Uphshi' variety and five thousands hectares with the local variety. According to Agriculture Department sources, the farmers have been trained up with necessary information for the better production of the crops. Manure and insecticides have been made available. The sources further informed that in order to increase the production of crops the Agricultural Department has equipped the farmers with different types of training under the scope of different programmes declared by the government.

Series of robberies committed

SATKHIRA, July 21: A series of robberies were committed at village Tausardanga in Assessuni thana of the district Saturday night, reports UNB. Police said armed bandits stormed the houses of Kirshnapad, Amal and Niranjana, and looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth about Tk two lakh. The robbers fired shots and exploded crackers when the villagers chased them, leaving three people critically injured. The injured were admitted to the thana health complex. A case was filed.

Interest free loan distributed

MAGURA, July 21: Social Service Department distributed interest free loan amounting to Tk 29 lakh among 580 poor people in sadar thana during the 1998-99 fiscal in a bid to alleviate poverty, reports UNB.

Officials said the interest free loan was given to the poor people of 61 villages in the thana so that they can undertake income-generating projects. They said the creditors would be encouraged to buy rice crushing and sewing machines, rickshaw, van, and take other small projects like pisciculture. The department also distributed Tk 1.70 lakh among 1170 people in the same thana under the old age allowance programme. Besides, a total of 1170 widows and divorced women received Tk 1.17 lakh from the department under the onetime allowance programme.

Old man dies as boat capsizes

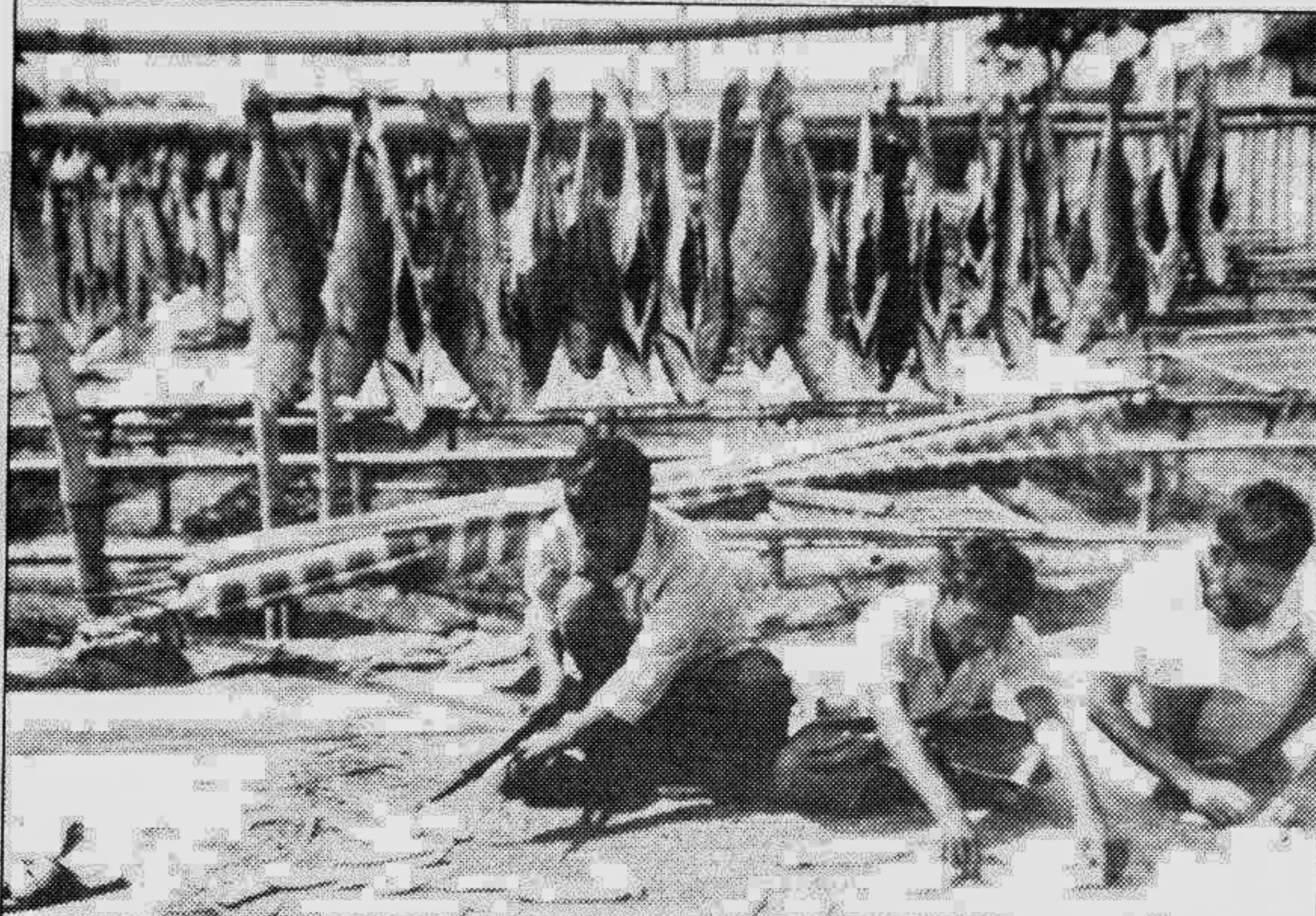
From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, July 21: A 70-year-old man drowned when a passenger boat capsized due to over loading in the Brahmaputra river near Khurighat jetty in Hossainpur thana recently. The boat was on its way to Pitalganj from Hossainpur thana headquarters. The victim was identified as Abdul Latif Khan of village Gar Machua under Hossainpur.

Robbers loot cash, valuables

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 21: Daring robberies were committed in eight houses in village Fulbaria and Kamirhat of Mirpur thana recently. Dacoits on gun points looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth taka two lakh. Armed dacoits entered the houses of Shah Alam, Koresh Ali, Ayub Ali and Akmal Hossain of village Fulbaria and the houses of Razzak Malitha, Rahamat Ali, Rehen Ali and Nazrul Islam of village Kamirhat and decamped with booty. They also fired several rounds to create panic in the area. Separate cases were filed police.



New fish on the line: Bhetki and Poa fish being dried in Cox's Bazaar as they have a huge market in Japan

—Star photo by A K M Mohsin..

Prices of essentials up in Satkhira markets

From Abu Ahmed

SATKHIRA, July 21: Prices of essential commodities rose significantly in different markets, causing much inconvenience to the people especially the low income groups.

On a spot survey, in different markets, it was found that prices of essential commodities went up by Taka 5 to Taka 8 in different markets of seven thanas of the district.

Essential commodities including vegetables, pulses, fish, meat, onion, potato, brinjal, lady's finger are being sold at higher prices in this period of economic hardship to the common people.

Price of onion, a must item for every one has shot up by Taka 6 per kg. Locally produced onion is now being sold in the local markets at the rate of

Taka 32 per kg as against Taka 26 in last week. Imported onion is selling at Taka 26 to Taka 28 per kg instead of Taka 20 to Taka 22 previously. But the locally produced onion is not available here according to the requirements. Garlic is being sold here at Taka 50 per kg instead of Taka 45. Potatoes are sold at Taka 12 per kg as against Taka 10 in the previous week. Lady's finger is selling here at Taka 16 per kg instead of Taka 10 and brinjal at Taka 12 per kg as against Taka 8 in the previous week. Ginger is being sold at Taka 80 per kg as against Taka 70.

Following high prices of vegetables prices of all kinds of pulses have also registered rise. Mug pulse is now being sold at Taka 42 per kg as against of

Taka 36, Mushuri pulse at Taka 36 per kg instead of Taka 32. Green chilly is being sold at Taka 30 per kg as against of Taka 18 a few days ago. Dry chilly is being sold at Taka 75 per kg.

Prices of rice are comparatively cheap. Rice is being sold in the local markets at Taka 400 to Taka 700 per maund according to different qualities. But price of fine rice has shot up abnormally. The commodity is now being sold here at Taka 42 to Taka 45 per kg as against of Taka 34 to Taka 36 according to different varieties.

Fish has almost disappeared from the local markets. Hilsa, if available, is being sold at Taka 150 to Taka 180 per kg as against Taka 120 a few days ago.

14 unions badly affected by flood, erosion in Faridpur

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, July 21: Fourteen unions of the district have been badly affected by flash flood and unabated river erosion.

The unions affected by flash flood and erosion include Char Jhawakanda, Char Hariampur, Char Bhadrason, Gazirtek, Char Nasirpur, Narikelbaria, Akoterchar, Vashan Char, Dhewkhal, Char Manair,

North Channel, Decreeer Char, Char Madhabdia and Chandra. Crops on a vast tract of low-lying areas have been damaged. Besides, erosion of the Padma and the Atrial Khan rivers which started from the very beginning of the monsoon season has been continuing unabated. The rivers have been devouring corn fields, home-

steads and educational institutions continuously.

The affected people have been living a sub-human life. When interviewed some flood victims said they are yet to receive any relief. They need relief, both in cash and kind.

The authorities concerned should also remain evervigilant for proper protection of the town protection embankment.



Price of unplanned urbanisation: Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu of RCC visited water-logged areas of Rajshahi city

—Star photo

Smugglers transport goods in passenger trains

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 21: Smugglers are using passenger trains of different routes in the northern districts to transport their goods.

The smugglers in connivance with a section of employees of the railway department and members of law-enforcing agencies are carrying their illegal goods safely, local business men alleged.

They said illegal traders are transporting their smuggled goods like Indian made sarees, cosmetics, sugar, salt, shaving blades and what not in power vans, buffet cars, water tanks and toilets of passenger trains to other parts of the country.

Some members of law-enforcing agency give signals just before a train reaches a station and after receiving signals from smugglers throw their goods from the train, witnesses said. Trains on Rajshahi-Chapalnawabganj, Rajshahi-Ishwardi, Abdulpur-Natore, Sirajganj and Kushtia routes have become safe carriers of smuggled goods.

Trains unusually go slow when reaches stations for the conveniences of smugglers to throw their goods from trains,

passengers said. For this, trains cannot reach destinations on schedule, causing immense suffering to the passengers.

Our Netrakona correspondent says, Railway passengers of different routes in Netrakona district have been facing various problems due to poor service of the state-owned Bangladesh Railway.

Thousands of passengers travel through Mymensingh-Mohanganj via Netrakona, Mymensingh-Shamganj routes daily but the service they receive from the railway authorities is not at all satisfactory, local people alleged.

The condition of 33 kilometers long track from Mymensingh to Mohanganj and 22 kilometers long track from Mymensingh to Jaria-Jangail constructed during the British period is poor.

The tracks have lost weight due to constant use during the long period. The trains have to run slow to avert accidents, taking unusually long time to reach destinations.

The sleepers of tracks should be changed in every 12 years to avert possible acci-

dents. But sleepers on the tracks are not replaced by new ones for many years", said a source.

The pebbles are not found in many parts of the railway lines which are necessary to keep the tracks fit.

The numbers of compartments are insufficient in trains which cannot cope with the heavy rush of passengers, forcing many to travel on roof tops and foot boards at the risk of life.

The trains very often run without first class compartments and the ticket holders of the class are compelled to travel in the overcrowded second class compartments and guard room.

Passengers complain that members of security forces often occupy a number of compartments, aggravating the accommodation crisis.

Almost all the compartments of the trains have no light, water, fans, doors and windows, much to the sufferings of the passengers.

Moreover, train compartments remain dirty.

Some unscrupulous traders carry goods like cloths, vegetables, milk, fish fries and fish in passenger compartments.

Most card-phones in Barisal inoperative

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, July 21: Most of the card-phones in the division have remained inoperative due to various reasons.

Out of 72 card-phones in the division, 42 have remained inoperative for a long time due to absence of proper maintenance by the authorities concerned.

A Telegraph and Telephone (T&T) source said, to avoid the problems which also include technical troubles, 'electrochips system' is being introduced instead of the existing 'electromagnetic system'.

So far, there are 1,368 card-phones in four telecom regions across the country of which 713 are with ISD facilities and the rest 655 are running with NWD system.

According to ANM Afzal, General Manager, Card-phones and Iftikharul Alam, chief of the central monitoring station, card-phones of Telephone

Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) (old 'electromagnetic system') is not viable to continue the regular card-phone service for more than five years. It should be changed now, they opined.

Besides, the phone cards can not be used for a long time as the effectiveness of the electromagnetic strip on the card is likely to be damaged. This is because of its continuous touch with ball-point pen, key rings or in sudden contact with high voltage electricity, high degree of heat and damp weather, they added. Out of the total 13,68, 589 card-phones were installed in Dhaka. Of those 334 are with ISD facilities and the rest with NWD. In Chittagong, Khatina and Rajshahi telecom regions there are 311, 296 and 172 card-phones respectively.

TSS had started the installation of the cardphones in 1992. The cardphones were supplied

by an Italian company Urmedco. The responsibility of maintenance and servicing was vested to its local agent Totaltel at least for five years.

TSS retained its commercial operations, management and local maintenance. Later on it failed almost in every sphere. The Divisional Engineer, Telephones (DET) here said, the overall telecommunication system here is still in a mess due to various reasons.

Besides, the card-phones installed in all the nine thana headquarters except the sadar thana in Barisal district remained inoperative since long due to absence of regular maintenance by the concerned companies.

So far a contract has been signed with the German company Siemens to maintain this system, according to a T&T source.

Despite PM's announcement

NETRAKONA, July 21: Despite government campaign and efforts for compulsory primary education in the country, a large number of registered primary school teachers have not received government portion of their salary for last four months, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced at the conference of the registered primary teachers in December last that the government portion of their salaries would be paid regularly.

But some 75,000 teachers of 20,000 registered primary schools of the country, including Netrakona district, are yet to receive their salaries for four months since February.

This has put the teachers along with their family members in acute hardship and seriously hampering academic activities in those schools. Nearly 1.5 crore children are enrolled in the schools.

A registered primary school teacher gets maximum Tk 1,153 per month with which one could hardly support a family. And if such a small sum remains outstanding for four months how could one pass his days, a teacher asked.

He said the Prime Minister had also announced in the conference that the government would enhance its portion of salaries to the registered teachers to 80 per cent from July 1999.

The authorities concerned, including the Ministry of Education, should take immediate steps to ensure regular payment to the registered teachers to save them from further hardship.

Novel way of smuggling illegal drugs

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, July 21: Large quantities of various kinds of contraband drugs are entering into the country through different border areas here posing serious threat to public life, reports UNB.

A huge quantity of illegal drugs is currently being smuggled into the country inside mango baskets, local sources said.

The smugglers use the border areas here as transit and later on they sent the illegal drugs to other parts of the country.

The contrabands include heroin, phensidyl, hemp and different kinds of liquor.

The narcotics bootlegging is going on uninterrupted although BDR and police occasionally seize some of the consignments.

It was alleged that the raids conducted by the concerned agencies were a mere eyewash to hoodwink the people. Smugglers are carrying on their illegal business by giving bribe to the law enforcers.

The criminals mostly use various frontier routes of Shilgaon and sadar thana and they have built up a network in these areas for their illegal business.

Iswarganj people exposed to chronic water-logging

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, July 21: People of Iswarganj Municipality are exposed to water-logging since long due to lack of proper sewerage system.

Most of the important roads of the town go under water even in light rainfall. Water remains stagnated for days together causing great sufferings to the inhabitants.

There is no proper drainage system in many important areas including Char Hossainpur Bazaar, Iswarganj Degree College campus, Public Hall, Press Club and Thana Parishad areas. Such important places are usually flooded after slight rainfall, said a student of Iswarganj Degree College. The students are the worst sufferers due to such water logging, said a girl student of the college.

After rainfall, the rain water usually enters into the public hall and press club premises.

The condition of Char Hossainpur cattle market in the rainy season is beyond description. The authorities concerned collect lakhs of taka as revenue every year, but they do not bother to pay heed to the sufferings of the people, it is alleged.

Workers Party rally at Srimongal

SRIMONGAL, July 21: A workers rally of the Workers Party of Bangladesh organised by the Moulvibazar district unit of the party was held on July 13 at Srimongal Town Hall premises, reports BSS.

Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon attended the rally as the chief guest. Dr Abdul Hannan Chinnu presided.

Ishaq Kamal, Syed Amiruzzaman and Md Sikandar Ali, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, Rashed Khan Menon exchanged views with the leaders of the Bangladesh Tea Workers Union at Srimongal Labour House.

Shortage of teachers hits schools, colleges

From A correspondent

FENI, July 21: Educational institutions in the district have been facing various problems, including shortage of teachers, political unrest and session jam.

Feni Polytechnical Institute, the only technical educational institute in the grater Noakhali district, has been closed for political unrest for the last two years, causing session jams.

Teaching staff of Feni Government College and Feni Commerce College are not sufficient, hampering severely academic activities. Moreover the post of principal of Feni Government Commerce College has been lying vacant for a long time.

50 posts of teachers in high schools in the district have been lying vacant for a long time.

Murder of two BNP leaders: 38 chagresheeted

SIRAJGANJ, July 21: After forum meetings of the murder of two BNP leaders in Ullapara thana during the last SSC examination, local police submitted chagresheet against 38 people on Sunday, reports UNB. According to a case filed with police, 45 people were injured, 21 seriously, during a violent clash between the villagers of Sikra and Ramkantar in a sequel to supplying copies in the local SSC examination centre on March 10.

Police managed to disperse the crowd charging batons, lobbing tear gas shells and firing rounds of gun shots.

Of the seriously injured, 30 BNP leader Ashraful Islam, 30, and Shariful Islam, 28, both of Ramkantar, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Chest Diseases Hospital on March 15 and 20 respectively.

A murder case was lodged with Ullapara police naming 31 people. After investigation, the Investigating Officer of the case submitted charge-sheet against 38 people.

Life term for 2 child traffickers

From our correspondent

SATKHIRA July 21: Two persons were awarded life term imprisonment on charge of child trafficking.

The convicts are: Nawsher Ali and Akbar Ali both of village Kajla in Kaliganj thana.

The prosecution case, in brief is that Sakin, 8, son of Rahmat Ali of village Kothanda in Assassuni thana was going to a nearby mosque for prayers when the aforementioned accused persons kidnapped him on June 13, 1997. Then they trafficked him to India.

Nine held in Chuadanga

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, July 21: Nine people were arrested on various charges from different places of Chuadanga district during the last 15 days.

Police also recovered three guns and ammunition.

The arrested persons were Khorshed, 24, Kalu, 20, Khokone, 30, Matiar, 37, Abdul Hamid, 35, Jinnah, 26, Ashadul, 25, Baharul, 32, and Moslemuddin, 25.



Investing in the future: A tree plantation program organised by the Rotary club of Mymensingh was launched on July 1

—Star photo