

News snaps

Problems grip telephone exchange

PANCHAGARH, July 26: The telephone exchange in Boda thana is beset with many problems causing immense sufferings to the subscribers, reports UNB.

Telegraph and Telephone (T&T) sources said the exchange still functions through the age-old magnet system for which telephone sets and other spares and equipment are not produced anywhere in the world. The 25-line exchange has 24 connections in paper. Of those, 21 are now functioning, the three others remained inoperative for long. Besides, the Boda-Debiganj physical circuit line has been lying inoperative for the last one year and the channels remain almost inoperative due to various problems.

Snake kills man

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, July 26: One person named Yasin Ali, son of Nur Mohammed Sardar of Bholahat Bazaar in Bholahat thana died of snake-bite recently, reports BSS.

Local people said, a snake bit the victim on his way home from the nearby paddy field. Snake charmers tried to bring the poison out from his body, but failed.

Buffer Stock officials suspended

NAOGAON, July 26: Three officials of Santahar Buffer Stock, including its in-charge, have been suspended on charge of misappropriation, reports UNB.

Sources said stock in-charge Asaduzzaman in collaboration with his accomplices, Hafizur Rahman and MN Alam Siddiqui, embezzled 470 mt of urea fertiliser kept for distribution among the dealers. The authorities took action against them as the investigation committee found them guilty of misappropriation.

Arms, ammunition recovered

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, July 26: Gaibandha Detective Branch (DB) of police in three separate drives recovered two pipe guns and three rounds of live ammunitions from village Ghorabandha in Palashbari thana.

On July 19 Gaibandha DB police raided the house of Shamsul Huq of the aforementioned village. They recovered two pipe guns and three rounds of live cartridges from a shallow pump house. Police could not arrest anyone in this connection.

Massive B Aman farming scheme

NETRAKONA, July 26: A total of 7,500 hectares have been brought under Broadcasting Aman paddy cultivation in 10 thanas here in the current season, reports BSS.

The Agriculture Extension Department sources said, production target of B Aman paddy has been fixed at 8,200 tonnes. Meanwhile, the Aman growers have been provided with improved variety of seeds and fertilisers by different government agencies including Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC). The farmers have also been provided with agriculture loan by the Krishi Bank and other commercial banks.

Woman dies in road mishap

SATKHIRA, July 26: One middle-aged woman was killed in a road accident at Nathpara on Satkhira-Kaliganj road in the sadar thana on Friday, reports BSS.

Police and eye-witnesses said the accident took place when the victim, Shandha Rani, 40, wife of Biman Chandra Nath of village Alipur in sadar thana was run over by a speeding minibus. She was crossing the road and died on the spot.

34 killed in six months in Meherpur

KUSHTIA, July 26: Thirty-four people were killed in Meherpur district in last six months, signaling a serious deterioration in law and order situation, reports UNB.

Police said of the murders, 22 took place in sadar thana and 12 in Ganjuli thana. Of the total, seven people were killed in the month of January while six in February, five in March, nine in April, four in May and three in June. A total 15 people were killed during the same period of 1998 and 1997 each while 17 in 1996.

Workshop at BAU

MYMENSINGH, July 26: A workshop on 'options for use of farm power for cultivation on small farms in Bangladesh' was held last week at Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU), reports BSS.

The workshop was jointly organised by Natural Resource Institute and DFID of BAU. Prof S A Faruq presided over the workshop. Officiating Vice-chancellor of BAU Dr S M Bulbul was the chief guest. Team leader of the project Martin Adam and Prof P I Sarker spoke on the occasion. Ten scientific papers were presented in 10 technical sessions of the workshop.

Workshop to review ADIP activities

KISHOREGANJ, July 26: An orientation workshop to review the activities of the Agricultural Diversification and Intensification Project (ADIP) was held last week at the office of the Agriculture Extension Department here, reports BSS.

The Project Coordinating Director Rafiq Ahmed was present in the workshop as the chief guest. The workshop was addressed among others by Rafiq Ahmed, Wasiuzzaman Akand, Dr Mahbubur Rahman and Md Habibur Rahman. The workshop discussed various activities of the ADIP.

Terrorists ransack two houses

BARISAL, July 26: Armed terrorists ransacked two houses and looted valuables in Kaunia area of the town on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said the assailants numbering 20-25 swooped on the two houses — one belonging to a cultural activist, Khairul Alam and the other of a transport businessman, Abdus Samad. During the raid, the reason of which is not known, the group also beat up the family members in two houses. Police arrested eight people on the basis of FIR lodged with the Kotwali thana.

Indian timber seized

MYMENSINGH, July 26: In a pre-dawn swoop, BDR jawans seized 450 cubic feet of Indian timbers from Haluaghat thana on Friday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, the border guards raided Monikura area and seized two truckloads of timbers worth about Taka three lakh. The timbers were handed over to the Forest Department on Saturday.

Many poultry farms shut down

KUSHTIA, July 26: Lack of cold storage and treatment facilities have forced many poultry farm owners to shut down their farms, reports UNB.

They alleged that although the government, on various occasions, promised to provide us with various facilities, but virtually we are getting nothing. "Whatever the treatment facilities we are getting from veterinary hospitals of the district are too inadequate to meet our demands," said a poultry farm owner accusing the officials concerned of negligence of their duties. During the summer, he said they need cold storage facilities to preserve slaughtered chickens and huge number of eggs.

BRAC workshop at Satkhira

SATKHIRA, July 26: A day-long workshop on 'creating mass awareness to stop women molestation' was held at the local BRAC office on Monday, reports BSS.

The workshop, organised by BRAC, Satkhira, was conducted by Nital Chandra Bhounik, Abdul Gafur, Chairman of Bramorajpur Union Parishad, Advocate Shaiful Islam Khan, advocate Shah Alam, Aminul Islam, Sheikh Farid Ahmed Moyna and Advocate Hasna Hena spoke in the workshop. The speakers urged people of all walks of life to help stop child marriage, dowry, acid throwing and incidents of rape.

Parbatipur poura budget

PARBATIPUR, July 26: Parbatipur pourasabha has announced a Taka seven crore budget for the fiscal year 1999-2000, reports BSS.

Pourasabha chairman MA Wahab announced the annual budget at a meeting at the pourasabha building last week. Officers, local elite and journalists, among others, were present in the meeting. Allocations have been made in the budget for increasing the civic amenities of the pourasabha. The amount will come from the municipality tax, government grant and the World Bank.



Living in a floodplain: Erosion of the River Ganges has rendered 5,000 people, homeless in Kandirpar village, Daulatpur thana, Kushtia. — Star photo

Massive literacy drive in Pabna launched

From Ranesh Maitra

PABNA, July 26: "Pradipta Pabna", a campaign to increase literacy rate in the district, has been launched to make 7,50,659 people literate within a short span of nine months.

A total amount of taka 17 crores and 91 lakh has been earmarked for the implementation of the ambitious project. Deputy commissioner of Pabna at a press conference formally launched the campaign recently.

He said five thanas of the district— Sadar, Ishwardi, Surjanagar, Bhanguara and Faridpur— and Pabna, Ishwardi and Faridpur municipality areas will come under the jurisdiction of the campaign for implementation of literacy drive.

However, Sathia, Bera, At-

gharia and Chatmohar thanas and Sathia, Bera and Chatmohar municipality areas have been placed under NGOs, the deputy commissioner added.

The Deputy commissioner, Mahbubur Rahman, while giving details of the project, said that if the project implemented the district will have no illiterate men and women.

The DC said that a total of 1,40,910 persons, both male and female, are found illiterate in Pabna sadar thana and all of them will come under the drive. For this purpose, 4,697 centres have been inaugurated, he added.

Centres were also set up in other areas for the purpose. Under the gigantic project, a total

of 19,179 literacy centres with 1,304 blocks have been opened.

For each centre there will be one teacher and for each block there will be one block supervisor.

Classes in the centres will be held everyday. In the afternoon, women will be imparted education from 4 pm to 6 pm while men will be taught from 6-30 pm to 8-30 pm.

Men and women belonging to the age groups between 11 years and 45 years will be brought under this literacy programme.

A massive publicity drive is launched throughout the district for motivating the people to make this gigantic programme a success.



The endless onslaught: Md Rezaul Karim, deputy commissioner, Chandpur and Bangladesh Water Development Board officials visited the erosion affected areas of Haimchar thana. — Star photo

Modern tech in fish cultivation stressed

RAJSHAHI, July 26: State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Prof Zinatunnesa Talukdar on Sunday stressed the need for using modern technology in fish cultivation with a view to achieving self-sufficiency in fish production in the country, reports BSS.

She said this while formally opening National Fisheries Week-99 at Zila Parishad auditorium here with Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Humayun Kabir in the chair.

Khondokar Shaheb Ali, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Motaharul Huq, district fisheries officer and Rawshan Ali, a fish cultivator, among others, spoke at the function.

A colourful rally participated by fishermen, BNCC cadets, Ansars and officials and employees of fisheries department was brought out from Matsha Bhaban and dispersed

at Zila Parishad premises.

Rawshan Ali Bachchu, Khondokar Taudidul Karim and Liakat Ali were awarded prizes for their best performance in fish production in Rajshahi by the state minister on the occasion.

Prof Zinatunnesa said that mass awareness and motivational programmes were essential for boosting fish production. She hoped that jobless people would come forward to contribute in the development of socio-economic condition particularly in fish production.

Later on the minister released fish fries at a pond.

An official source said that twenty-four thousand fingerlings will be released in seven ponds of nine thanas of Rajshahi district during the fisheries week. The source said that Taka fifty thousand each will be distributed among unemployed youths and poor in nine thanas under poverty allevia-

tion programme so that they could cultivate fish in derelict ponds and other water bodies to become self-reliant.

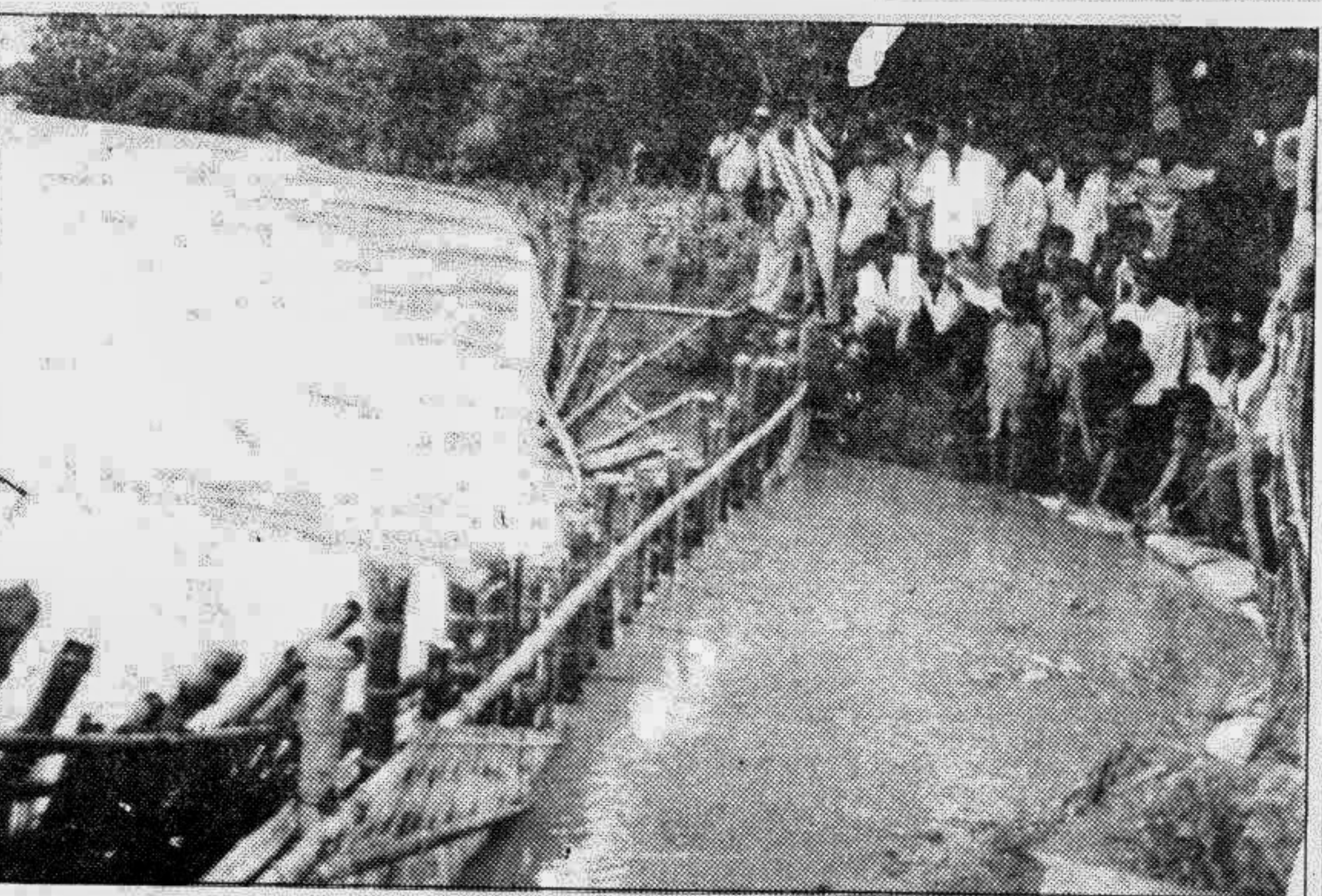
Another report from Madaripur says: The National Fish Week '99 has been inaugurated as in other parts of the country on Sunday.

A discussion organised by the district fisheries department on the significance of observance of the week was held in the Muktijoddha auditorium here in the morning.

Deputy Commissioner Farhad Rahman was present on the occasion as the chief guest. The discussion was presided over by Sadar Thana Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Musa.

District Fisheries Officer A K M Nurul Islam and Pourashava Chairman M Khalilur Rahman Khan, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Fish fries have been released in the local police line pond on the occasion.



Spikes for protection: People are frantically trying to protect Ghutail bazaar, Islampur thana, Jamalpur. — Star photo

Natore markets dull for agri-products

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, July 26: The market for agricultural products is a dull here in this season. This situation has affected the local traders adversely.

As a result the businessmen are now passing through a critical situation of trade depression due to low price of agricultural products.

The economy of the tiny northern district of Natore largely depends on agriculture. There are about 130 big and small hats and bazaars in six thanas here. A number of business centres have also been developed throughout the town, thana sadars and its suburbs.

About 80 per cent of the total population here usually meet their economic demand from agriculture. More than 60 per cent people, residing in the ru-

ral areas, are directly involved with agriculture. As a result, the life style and trade of the district fluctuate with the price supports from agri-products.

Last year, most of Aman paddy, one of the cash crops of the district, was damaged by the century's worst flood and pest attack. The growers are yet to recoup the loss of Aman paddy.

A bumper Boro production last year delighted the growers when some early varieties of the paddy found a high market and were sold at Taka 280 to Taka 320 per maund. But within a few weeks the growers were dismayed by the paddy prices that fell at Taka 210 per maund.

Local traders believe that fair prices of agricultural prod-

ucts is the prime condition of having a 'good business'. Many growers of this region could not even recover the production cost, despite a bumper Boro output, traders alleged.

Government's paddy purchasing programme to provide price support, could not help the farmers as the purchasing centres were dominated by farias and middlemen.

Besides, there is no major industries in the district except two sugar mills and a distillery.

There is also the district chamber of commerce and Industries here to represent the local business community. It has also an elected committee. But the organisation has never taken any step to establish industries. They could not even save the interests of the businessmen.

Arsenic affected patients up in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, July 26: A large number of shallow tubewells identified as risky with high arsenic content in water are yet to be sealed off spreading arsenic related diseases at an alarming rate, reports UNB.

Water samples collected from the tubewells of the three thanas were tested in Dhaka in 1997 and 12 of the 58 shallow tubewells were found to be arsenic contaminated.

The authorities in a letter asked the Public Health Engineering Department to seal off the contaminated tubewells. But it has not been done as yet.

Meanwhile, participants of a workshop of Public Health Engineers held in Dhaka reiterated their concern over the gradual increase in arsenic contamination in this district. They referred to a UNICEF conducted survey in the five thanas of the district last year, which identified 16 more arsenic contaminated tubewells out of 160. But the local authorities due to unknown reason are not sealing off the tubewells.

As a result, the number of arsenic affected patients is increasing by leaps and bounds. They are being treated by quacks in absence of qualified physicians in the rural areas.

Local leaders have urged the concerned authorities to test all the tubewells of the district in phases and seal off the identified high risk tubewells immediately.

Contaminated water supplied in Debiganj THC?

PANCHAGARH, July 26: Patients in the Debiganj Thana Health Complex (THC) suffer from various water borne diseases due to supply of contaminated water in the complex, reports UNB.

Patients and local people told that instead of sinking a new water pump, an old one has been sunk in the THC compound by spending a huge amount of money resulting in the supply of contaminated water. Occasionally the patients suffer from enteric, skin, eye and other organ infections due to consumption of the contaminated water, they complained.

Local people alleged that in the name of purchasing different drugs and equipment, a large amount of money are being misappropriated. There are acute shortages of essential drugs, life saving oxygen and other medical equipment in the health complex.

The people demanded immediate solution to the problems the THC has been facing. Some local people recently submitted a memorandum to the authorities concerned to take necessary steps in this connection.

HYV Aush may fall short of target

NATORE, July 26: Production of HYV Aush in northern districts is unlikely to achieve the target this season for various reasons, including seed crisis, reports UNB.

Experts apprehended that the prevailing seed crisis, irregularities in distributing farm loans, inferior quality of seeds and pest attack might take their toll on Aush production.

Besides, flash flood, torrential rains and hill water from upper catchment for the last 15 days caused huge damage to Aush paddy on about 32,000 hectares of land in nine northern districts, including Natore, officials said.

There have been reports that some dishonest traders were selling quality seeds in black markets forcing the growers to buy seeds and other agricultural inputs from open markets at exorbitant prices.

Allegations are also there against bank officials. Farmers alleged that genuine growers were not getting farm loans on easy terms from different banks, instead they were being harassed for repaying loans.

Meanwhile, transplanted Aman on about 2,000 hectares of land in the districts was washed away by floodwaters, the officials added.

They said some 57,270 hectares of land were brought under Aush cultivation in the region against the target of 70,000 hectares.

Events of districts in picture



Rajiuddin Ahmed, MP, on behalf Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, handing over a cheque of Tk 200,000 to the president of Narsingdi press club Nibaran Roy. — Star photo



Abdur Rashid Sarker, MP, (Gaibandha sadar) handed over a cheque of Tk 100,000 as death claim to Aleya Shahadat of village Gideri, Gaibandha sadar. — Star photo



Professor Mohammad Kayesuddin, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University, Jhenidah, distributing free books to the students of Islamic University school. — Star photo



Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner, Satkhira, speaks at a workshop on resisting repression on women. The function was jointly organised by Khalishkhalil Satata Mahila Unnayan Prakalpa, Chupria Mahila Samity and Nari Unnayan Sangstha — three local NGOs. — Star photo

They got admitted showing fake certs

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, July 26: Eight students allegedly got admitted into government colleges by showing fake mark sheets and testimonials.

Magura Government Women's College authority recently has detected that seven students — Rita Rani Sikder, Shahnaz Parvin, Jannat Ara, Taslima Khatun, Jharna Khatun and Jesmin Ara— produced forged documents for admission. While Magura Government Degree College has detected the case of Ruksana Yasmin.

All the students got admitted themselves into intermediate classes and allegedly obtained fake documents from local

Dudhmallik Girls High School in 1997.

Letters were subsequently sent to Dudhmallik Girls High School. In reply, the girls' high school said Ruksana Yasmin was not its student while others appeared SSC examinations under Jessore education board from the school in 1997 but could not pass. The also confirmed that it did not issue any testimonial mark sheet.

When contacted a highly placed source of Jessore education board said some unscrupulous people have been engaged in preparing fake mark sheets, testimonials and other documents.