

Unhealthy Environment

KURIGRAM, Aug 16: About 25,000 workers, including children and women, engaged in tobacco factories in the northern region have been suffering from respiratory and other complicated diseases, reports UNB.

Medical source said the poor workers in more than 100 tobacco factories in the region work in unwholesome environment. Many of them have been suffering from respiratory problem, lung complications, TB and ulcers. The female workers are also suffering from

Bidi factories violating rule of health test

gynecological diseases.

In Rangpur district, more than one lakh people are directly or indirectly involved in about 100 tobacco factories. There are two tobacco factories in Kurigram.

Besides, there are about 200 organs of tobacco factories from where the workers collect tobacco and supply those to the factories.

Sources said although there is a rule for health test of industrial workers in every three months, it is never followed by

the tobacco factories.

While visiting a 'bidi' factory in the district, 75 workers out of 270 complained that they were suffering from various respiratory and skin diseases.

They used to earn Tk 20 to 30 per day which is not enough to procure two square meals. They cannot buy medicine or pay the doctor from the poor income.

Country's most bidi factories are located at Haragach of Rangpur district. Each of the factories produce 50 lakh to one crore biddis per day.

Ambitious programme aims at achieving T-Aman production target

JOYPURHAT, Aug 16: Inspired by bumper harvest of IRRI-Boro paddy in the last season, a massive programme has been taken up here to make transplanted Aman production a tremendous success in the current season, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources said some 8,000 committees comprising the owners of irrigation pumps and the rich farmers has been formed to provide irrigation facilities in some dry areas.

A total of 4,150 people in five thanas were imparted special training on how to check the attack of pests and the use of pesticides.

Of the total given training, 2,000 were Imam of mosques while 500 are ideal farmers, 400 co-operators, 650 schoolteachers and 650 dealers of fertiliser and pesticides.

Besides, other necessary steps to help the farmers by the AED have also been taken to make the programme a success.

Seedbeds on a total of 187 hectares of land were reserved apprehending that flood or drought might damage Aman seedlings.

AED sources said 71,250 hectares of land were targeted for cultivation of transplanted Aman this year. Of this, 64,450 hectares would be brought under 'Ushi' (high yielding) variety and the rest under local variety.

About 90 per cent of the targeted land have already been cultivated, which is much higher compared to same period of the last year, they said.

Aman cultivation might be hampered due to less rain and adverse weather as 1,977.85 mm of rain was recorded in the district in last year while only 765.16 mm of rain in last six months this year.

To cope with the adverse weather, AED formed the committees to provide irrigation facilities after identifying some 17,000 hectares of land in Sadar, Khetlal, Kalai, Akkelpur and Panchbibi thanas as drought-prone areas.

The irrigation programmes included some 468 deep and 1,315 shallow tubewells operated by power and some 165 deep and 7,783 shallow tubewells operated by diesel.

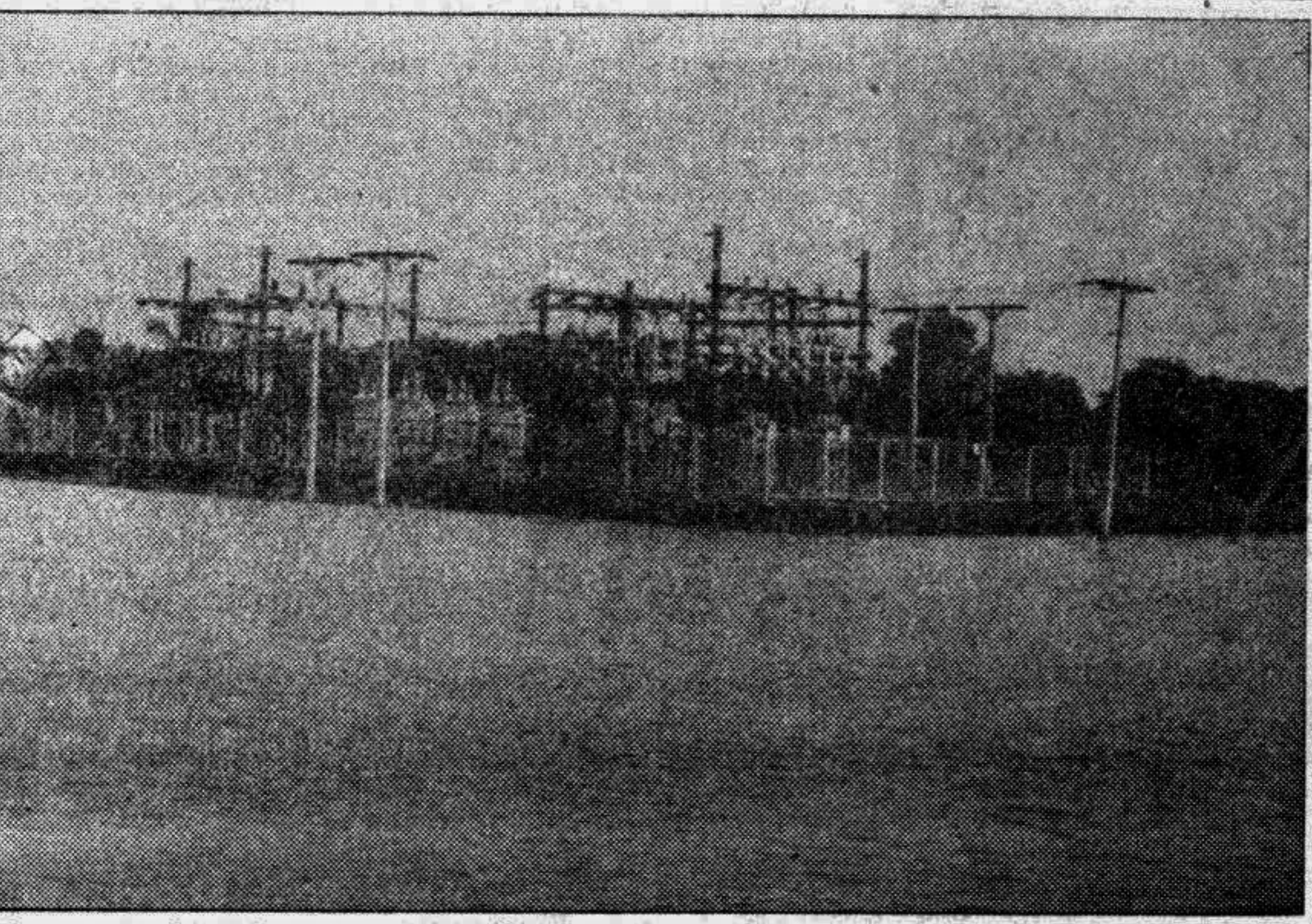
Block supervisors and field workers are continuing mass contact with the farmers for taking care of the seedlings aimed at achieving the production target of transplanted Aman.

BSS from Kishoreganj reports: Agriculture Extension Directorate (AED) has taken a programme to plant Dhanchia (Sesbania) in ropa Aman fields in 13 thanas here.

According to the AED official sources, the programme has five objectives. These are: to make arrangement in the root zone for supplying Nitrogen Fertiliser, to decompose the leaves of green Dhanchia to improve the soil fertility, to supply additional fuel at the rate of around 300 to 400 kilograms per hectare, to harvest additional seeds of Dhanchia and the most important and economic aspect of the programme is that huge number of birds will be sitting on the standing plants and shall eat the harmful insects.

Another report from Lalmonirhat says: About 15,000 hectares have been brought under Aman cultivation in five thanas here this year.

According to Agriculture Extension Department office sources, sufficient rainfall helped the farmers to cultivate Aman. The farmers are expecting bumper production, if natural calamities like flood does not happen.



Power station threatened: Sharp rise in water level of Chalan Beel in Shingra thana of Natore district has posed a threat to the Palli Biddyt Samity power station.

—Star photo by Anwar Ali

Foodgrains procurement surpasses target in Joypurhat dist

JOYPURHAT, Aug 16: The procurement of irri-boro rice and paddy in the district has surpassed the target this year, reports UNB.

Officials said they have already procured 17,095 metric tons of rice since July. Besides, procurement of paddy stood at 5,695 metric tons as against the target of 5,000 metric tons.

They said formalities for buying another 5,000 tons of rice have been completed to exceed the procurement target of 22,000 metric tons of rice.

The Food Ministry has okayed permission to procure 5,000 metric tons but the pro-

cess was delayed in the absence of adequate godown facilities.

Joypurhat is a rice surplus area. Fair price to farmers was ensured by additional procurement of rice by the government.

Officials said they were ready to procure yet another 1,000 tons of rice from the district if the authorities take the lot to some other part for stocking.

The farmers of the district have huge stocks of paddy as they had a bumper harvest of about 2.27 lakh metric tons of paddy this year as against the target of 1.29 lakh tons for the district.

As the government procure-

ment price is higher than the market price, the farmers would be benefited if the volume of procurement in the district was raised, officials said.

There are, however, complaints from the farmers that the food officials were buying from the middlemen instead of buying directly from them, thus depriving them of the fair price.

A monthly meeting of the district development and coordination committee urged the Deputy Controller of Food to move the higher authorities for procuring additional 50,000 tons of rice and 50,000 tons of paddy from the district.



BWDB officials and staffers trying frantically to check the erosion by the River Meghna at Katakhal point of Chandpur irrigation project.

—Star photo

Erosion renders 7,500 homeless in Gopalganj

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Aug 16: Erosion by the river Madhumati and Kumar has taken serious turn in the last 20 days, rendering about 7,500 people of five thanas under Gopalganj district homeless.

About 4,500 acres of land with 600 houses, 75 shops and standing aman and aus paddy were also devoured during the period.

The worst affected areas are Bhatia Para, Chaptal Ratal, Ghanapara, Kamarhol, Tillichara, Gopalpur, Fukra under Kasiani thana and Jalalabad, Sufia, Eshkhali, Durga, Suktail, Kekania, Tala Modhupur, Ghosherchar, Charmanikdha, Manikdha, Paddarchar, Gobra, Char Gobra and Ghonapara under Sadar thana.

Bhatia Para river port under

Kasiani thana of the district has been threatened by the river Madhumati and major part of the port may be washed away any time.

Bangladesh Water Development Board, Faridpur started a project at a cost of Tk one crore 30 lakh in 98-99 financial year for the protection Gopalganj-Bhatia Para road and Bhatia Para river port. But the Water Development Board has completed the only half portion of the work. The rest of the work has been abandoned due to shortage of fund, sources said.

On the other hand, Gopalganj-Takerhat road was partially damaged recently at Hariduspur and Bherahat by river erosion.

The Water Development Board has taken up a Tk 10 crore 30 lakh project to protect the road.

Malaria research centre at Bandarban sought

From Our Correspondent

BANDARBAN, Aug 16: An advocacy meeting on the prevention of malaria sponsored by the Health Department was held at the local Circuit House on August 12, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by Civil Surgeon, Bandarban Dr Sarfaraz Khan Chowdhury.

Bandarban District Council Chairman Thowaiing Cha Prue Master was present at the meeting as the chief guest.

Dr P R Armani, South Asian chief of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Abdul Hannan Bangali, National Programme Officer of the Health Directorate and WHO Consultant Dr Pushpa R J Heraz attended the meeting as the special guests.

Master speaking on the occasion called upon the government to establish a malaria research centre at Bandarban which is a malaria prone area in the country.

Photo exhibition on Bangabandhu

MYMENSINGH, Aug 16: Vice-Chancellor of Agriculture University Dr Mohammad Husain on Friday paid glowing tribute to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman saying the nation awakened and spirited by the War of Liberation would always remember him for his self-less contribution, reports BSS.

He was inaugurating a three-day Photo Exhibition on 'Father of the Nation Bangabandhu' at the Central Library of the campus here to mark his 24th martyrdom anniversary.

The function was attended by teachers, students and officials of the Agriculture University. At least 100 photographs on Bangabandhu have been displayed at the exhibition.

The Agriculture University has also chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the martyrdom anniversary of Bangabandhu in a befitting manner.

The programmes include teachers-students rally, replay of Bangabandhu's speeches and patriotic songs, hoisting of national flag at half mast and black flag atop, placing wreaths beside the portrait of Bangabandhu, discussion and special prayer.

Besides, a seminar on Bangabandhu will be held on the campus on August 16 to be organised by the local unit of National Mourning Day Observation Committee and Mukti-joddha Sangsad.

Another report from

Comilla says: District Information Department has chalked out a programme of showing film on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the history of Liberation War and the birth of independent Bangladesh on the occasion of National Mourning Day.

This film will be shown in Chowdagram, Laksham, Burichang, Sadar and Debiduar thanas.

Primary school student slaughtered

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 16: A primary school student was slaughtered by unidentified assailants in Jasudal BADC godown area in sadar thana on Friday evening, reports UNB.

Police said the miscreants slaughtered Enamul Haq alias Enam, 11, a class IV student of Jasudal Government Primary School and son of the godown's night guard Siddiqui Rahman, when he went out of his house for playing.

As Enam did not back home in the evening, his family members looked for him and discovered the beheaded body in the godown area at about 8 pm, police said quoting Siddiqi's statement.

Being informed, police recovered the body and sent the same to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Irregularities in Chandpur Ansar-VDP complex work

CHANDPUR, Aug 16: Helped by the local administration, the Bureau of Anti-Corruption has unfolded massive irregularities in construction of an annex building of the local Ansar-VDP complex and earth filling of its parade ground, reports UNB.

Official sources said 1,290 mt of wheat, out of 1,350 mt allocated for implementing the project have been embezzled.

They said on February 8 this year Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry under the government's Food for Work Programme allotted 850 mt of wheat for extension of the Ansar-VDP complex and 500 mt for earth filling of the parade ground.

But the sources said, 85 mt of wheat was enough to implement the project. However, the au-

thorities reportedly used only 60mt of wheat for the project.

As per the FFW rules, the project implementation authorities were supposed to form a union parishad committee through the thana committee to left the wheat from Chandpur godown in at least four installments.

But violating the rules district Ansar-VDP Adjutant Alamgir Mridha allegedly lifted the wheat from a godown in Narayanganj and sold it off with the help of one Kazi Salaudhin.

Meanwhile, the local administration and Anti-Corruption Bureau have formed separate investigation committees to probe the matter.

News snaps

Three bio-gas plants to be set

RANGMATI, Aug 16: Local municipality will set up three bio-gas plants in three commercial areas of the town, involving Tk 13.26 lakh, reports UNB.

The plants will be constructed in Reserve Bazaar, Tabalchhari and Banorupa under Mid Town Infrastructure Development Project in the current fiscal. Upon completion of the plants, it would be possible to supply gas to 100 kitchens and small welding shops initially, officials said.

6 more barrack-type houses built

RANGPUR, Aug 16: Six more barrack-type houses under the government-sponsored Ashrayan project have been completed at a cost of Tk 12 lakh, reports UNB.

Some 830 mts of wheat were spent for the construction of the houses named as Chalo Rupai, Chalo Rupai Extension, Baghdohora, Calchandpur, and Chilikhal in Gangachhara and Pirganj thanas. Meanwhile, 800 land-less families have been rehabilitated in the houses. Another report adds: Construction works on 15 bridges and culverts were completed under rural infrastructure development programme in the two thanas during the preceding fiscal, spending Tk 44,10,898. Of the bridges and culverts, 11 were constructed in Pirganj and four others in Badarganj thanas.

Food poisoning: 20 fall sick

RANGPUR, Aug 16: At least 20 people fell sick after taking meals in a wedding ceremony at village Protap Joysen in Pirgacha thana recently, reports UNB.

Later, the affected people were admitted to the thana health complex. Doctors at the hospital said the guests became sick after taking poisonous foods.

Tk 4.5 cr electricity bills unpaid

PABNA, Aug 16: Already fighting to emerge from its rising system loss, arrears electricity bills of Power Development Board (PDB) in Iswardi thana now stands at Tk 4.5 crore, reports UNB.

Official sources said North Bengal Paper Mills alone owes Tk 2 crore to PDB. They said bills totalling Tk 75 lakh remained unpaid by residential consumers. Tk 36 lakh by irrigation pumps, Tk 25 lakh by cottage industries, Tk 20 lakh by government offices, Tk 80 lakh by business establishments, Tk 8.00 lakh by Palli Biddyt and Tk 19 lakh by the municipality. Of the total unpaid bills, 50 per cent account for government and semi-government organisations, and autonomous bodies, the officials said.



A colourful cultural programme was arranged recently at the Natore district council auditorium on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Awami League.

—Star photo

Chhatra League men donate blood

MANIKGANJ, Aug 16: Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Manikganj district unit, recently donated 50-odd bags of blood at a function here marking the 24th death anniversary of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

Later the blood was handed over to the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. Besides, the BCL, Manikganj unit chalked out a elaborate programme on the occasion of the National Mourning Day. The programme included discussion meeting on the life of the Father of the Nation.

581 killed in train mishaps in 13 yrs

PABNA, Aug 16: Some 581 people were killed and 5461 were injured in over 3000 train mishaps in last 13 years across the country, reports UNB.

Railway sources said a total of 3,257 train accidents, including 22 heard-on-collisions and 3235 derailments, took place from 1984 to 97. Apart from these, some mishaps occurred due to fire outbreak and engine breakdown. Different probe committees on various occasions ascertained the causes of train mishaps as negligence and faults of drivers, wrong signalling of stationmasters, poor condition of rail tracks and negligence of employees concerned.

Alleged rapist commits suicide

MANIKGANJ, Aug 16: An alleged rapist committed suicide apprehending arrest by police at Bathymuri village in Ghior thana, reports UNB.

Police said Fazor Ali, wanted in a rape case, killed himself by taking poison for fear of arrest on August 10. Fazor Ali allegedly violated a girl of a nearby village on July 20. Later, the victim's father filed a case against four people mentioning him as the main accused.

Training course for nurses

BANDARBAN, Aug 16: A four-day long training course on malaria treatment for senior staff nurses concluded at the office of the civil surgeon here recently, reports BSS.

Twenty-five senior staff nurses of Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts participated in the training workshop. The concluding function was attended by Thowaiing Cha Prue Master, chairman, Bandarban Hill District Council as the chief guest. Bandarban civil surgeon Sarfaraz Khan Chowdhury presided over the function. Dr Shamsul Huq, a director of the Health Directorate and Dr Abdul Matin Bhuiya, director of Health of the Chittagong Division, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Bodies recovered

PATUAKHALI, Aug 16: Bodies of a young man and a woman floating in river were recovered from near the town, reports UNB.

Kamal, 22, a trawler mechanic, in a clash at the launch ghat was struck down and fell into river. His body was found floating in the river recently. Another body of young unidentified woman was recovered from near the char of the Lohalia river by police recently. She was found wearing blouse and skirt. It is suspected that the woman was killed after physical torture.

Reception to social worker

COMILLA, Aug 16: A reception was accorded to Alhaj Mohammad Nurul Islam, founder of Danuakhola Adarsha Public College and a social worker, at a function held in the college premises on August 7, reports BSS.

Chairman of the executive committee of the college Sultan Ahmed presided over the function. Principal Manzur Kader, Local Union Parishad Chairman Ali Ahmad, Sahmsul Huq Masar, Nurul Alam, Farhad Hossain, Abdul Hye Babu, Abdul Ali, Dr Md Mosharraf, Abdur Rab Mastar and Rafiqul Islam Khan spoke at the reception. A cultural function was also held on the occasion.

RU AC session tomorrow

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Aug 16: The Academic Council (AC) session of the university will be held on August 18.

The Academic Council is going to sit after about eleven months. The last session was held in June last year.

The AC is to take a number of decisions regarding promotion of teachers and approval of Ph D and M Phil degrees.

The AC will also take decision regarding withheld results of 11 master's students of Library and Information Science Department, sources said.

198,117 children take vitamin-A capsules

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 16: A total of 198,117 children were fed vitamin-A capsules in the district during 'Vitamin-A Week' that ended on July 6. Civil Surgeon office sources said.

Sources, however, said authorities had fixed the target to feed vitamin-A capsules to 171,092 children in six thanas and 21,880 in five municipalities under the district.

In Jhenidah sadar thana 43,202 children and another 9,568 in the municipal area were fed capsules. 32,997 children in Salkupara thana and another 3,242 in the municipal area were given the dose.

While 20,234 children in Harinakundu thana, 27,328 children in Kaliganj thana; 4,892 in Kaliganj municipal area; 13,319 in Kotchandpur thana; 4,617 in Kotchandpur municipality and 38,718 in Mohespur thana were fed vitamin-A capsules during the week.

Civil Surgeon office sources said, the programme was implemented through 1,700 centres.

Tk 20.55 cr BKB loans realised in Netrakona

From Our Correspondent

NETROKONA, Aug 16: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) realised Tk 20.55 crore outstanding loans during the 1998-99 fiscal year in the district.

In the previous 1997-98 fiscal the bank realised Tk 9.52 crore outstanding loans.

AGM of BKB, Netrakona Md Nurul Amin said Tk 23.81 crore was disbursed among the farmers for cultivation of crops and Tk 10.47 crore for poultry and pisciculture in '98-99.

Moulvibazar BPUP biennial confce held

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Aug 16: The biennial conference of Moulvibazar district unit of Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad (BPUP) was held in a local temple, Natun Kali Bari, premises recently.

Rodhika Mohan Goswami, central vice president of the BPUP and Moulvibazar district unit president, presided over the conference, which was attended by representatives from all the six thana units of the district.

The Hindu community leaders in the conference expressed their concern over the increasing theft incidents in temples across the country.

They said local administration kept silent regarding theft of valuable statues.

They also protested the recent initiatives taken by the government to bring amendment to the Hindu personal law.

A 51-member committee for BPUP Moulvibazar district unit was elected in the conference. Radhika Mohan Goswami and Nihir Kanta Deb Maitu were made President and General Secretary respectively.

College after Syed Nazrul Islam

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Aug 16: An intermediate college with science, arts and commerce has been established in Myemensingh town after the name of Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam who was the acting President during the War of Liberation in absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

Preparations have been taken for admission into BSC classes in the current session, the college sources said.

An organising committee has been formed with Advocate M Zubeid Ali as the convenor. Former principal of Ananda Mohon University College Prof A K M Shamsul Islam has been appointed principal (Honorary) of the college.

Events of districts in picture



Rajshahi University Drama Association celebrated its 10th founding anniversary recently on the university campus.

—Star photo



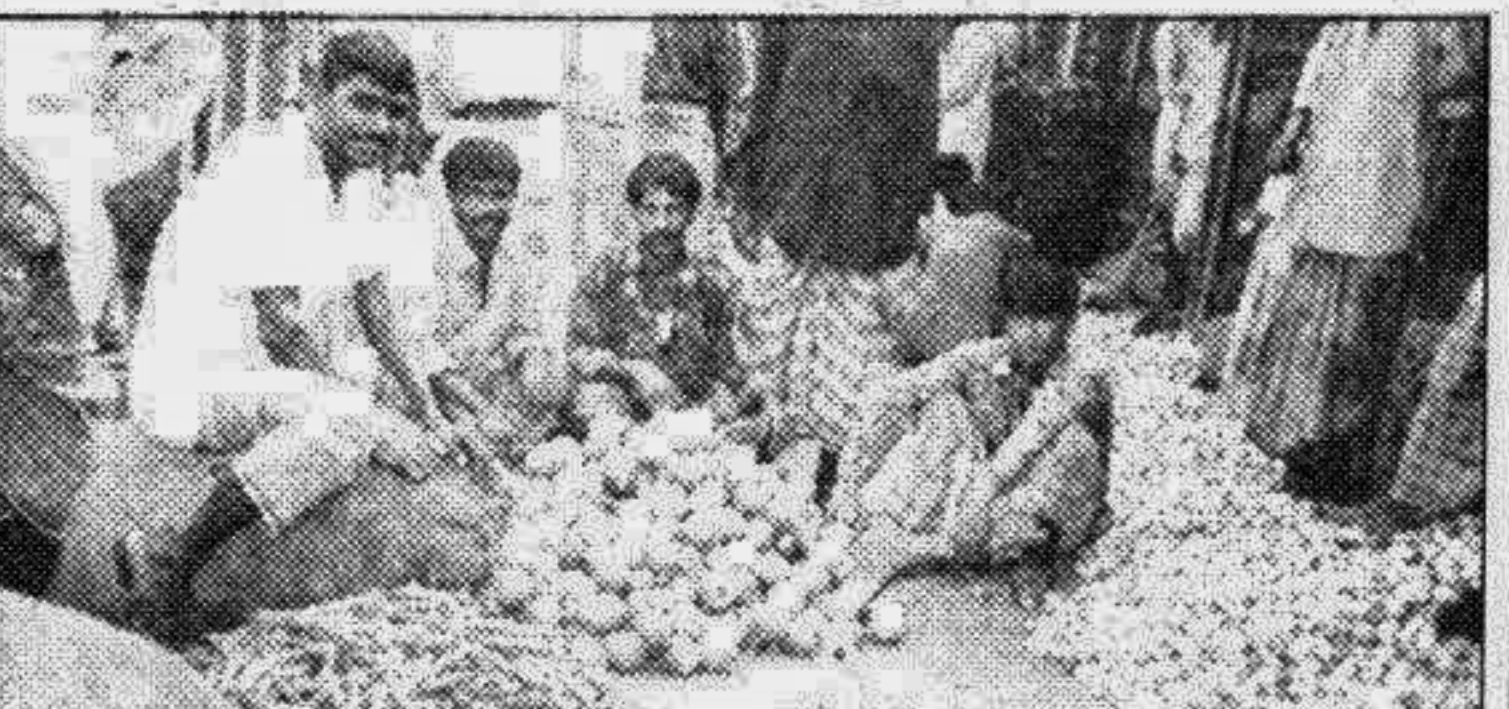
A painting exhibition of Mahmood Iqbal Mamun titled 'Humanity and Livelihood' was held recently at the Ananda Mohan College auditorium.

—Star photo



Fuel's substitute: Prof Md Moshuazzaman, chairman of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research visiting recently a bio-gas plant in Bangauzzal area of Natore district.

—Star photo



Abundant supply: There is an abundant supply of vegetables of different kinds in the hats and bazaars of Magura district this season.

—Star photo