

News snaps

Indian national held

NAOGAON, Aug 21: Three robbers, including an Indian national, were caught red handed by local people at Shiront village in sapahar thana of the district, recently reports UNB. Police said local people caught three dacoits along with firearms while they were leaving with the booty after committing a robbery at a house in the village. Angry people also beat up the dacoits and later handed them over to the police. The identity of the dacoits could not be known immediately. The injured dacoits were admitted to the local health complex. Two cases were filed with the police in this connection.

Man killed by uncle

MYMENSINGH, Aug 21: A man was killed allegedly by his uncle over a land dispute at Tarati Westpara village in Muktagachha thana recently, reports UNB. Police said Allez Ali aided by his associates attacked his nephew Muzammil Hossain Khoka, 32, when he went to work on a disputed land. Khoka died on the spot. Victim's mother Zohra Khatun, 50, and his wife Farida, 25, were also injured when they tried to save Khoka. The injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Young man gets 10-yr

TANGAIL, Aug 21: A court here recently sentenced a young man to 10 years rigorous imprisonment in an arms case, reports UNB. According to prosecution, police arrested Zahid, son of Syed Shamsul Haq of Mosque road in the town, in connection with a double murder case along with a sophisticated German revolver and four rounds of bullet on June 27, 1998. Later, police filed a case against him for possessing illegal arms. The judge after examining the records found him guilty of holding unauthorised arms and pronounced the judgement.

Tk 23.65 cr agri loans disbursed

MADARIPUR, Aug 21: Bangladesh Krishi Bank disbursed Tk 23.65 crore as agricultural loans among farmers in four thanas of the district during the last fiscal year ending in June, exceeding the target by Tk 5.65 crore, reports UNB. The loans were extended to 21,707 farmers. The recovery of loans during the period was not immediately available. The bank officials noted with satisfaction that adequate loans to the farmers resulted in higher production of two main cereal crops, aman and IRRI-Boro, last year.

Teak worth over taka 3 lakh recovered

RANGAMATI, Aug 21: Officials of Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division have recovered about six hundred cubic feet of teak timber worth over Taka 3,00,000 near Shilchhari Bazar in Zurachhari thana of the district in a joint raid with the army personnel recently, reports BSS. The timber was taken away illegally from the nearby reserved forests and being carried to Kaptai on a raft through the Kaptai Lake, an official said. None was arrested in this connection. The pilferers engaged in smuggling managed to flee, the official added. The timber has been brought to Rangamati for taking further legal measures. A departmental case was filed in this connection.



Children participating in an art competition organised by Natore district Shilpakala Academy on the occasion of the 24th martyrdom anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. — Star photo

Survey on child literacy rate

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 21: The survey on children and literacy rate in 13 thanas of the district has been completed, reports BSS. According to District Primary Education Office sources, 3,12,497 children from six to ten years of age, out of 4,17,323, are studying in the schools. The rate of admission is about 74 per cent. The rest 1,04,826 children of the district have not yet got themselves admitted in the schools during the period. The literacy rate is, however, not satisfactory in the district.



Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Minister for Environment and Forest inaugurating a 10-day divisional tree fair in Sylhet by planting a sapling at Sylhet Range Reserve Police line ground on Friday. — Star photo

198 schemes implemented

RANGPUR, Aug 21: Some 1998 projects for Food-for-Work under rural infrastructure renovation programme were implemented in eight thanas of the district in last fiscal year (198-99), reports UNB. About 2,525 metric tonnes of wheat were sanctioned to implement the projects, official sources said. Of the projects, 29 were implemented in sadar thana, 41 in Mithapukur, 31 in Pirganj, 25 in Pirgachha, 17 in Kaunia, 19 in Gangachhara, 26 in Badarganj and 10 in Taraganj thanas. To implement the projects, 390 metric tonnes of wheat were allocated in sadar thana, 528 tons in Mithapukur, 390 tons in Pirganj, 331 tons in Pirgachha, 167 tons in Kaunia, 310 tons in Gangachhara, 274 tons in Badarganj and 135 tons in Taraganj thanas. The programme included construction and repair of roads and earth filling in different educational institutions.

Cultural competition

PARBATIPUR, Aug 21: The prize distribution ceremony of the cultural competition organised by Bangabandhu Shishu-Kishore Mela, Parbatipur unit was held on August 3 at Young Star Club premises here, reports BSS. Prizes were distributed among the participants of the competition of recitation of poems, essays and music. Convener of Parbatipur Thana Awami League Md Rezaul Karim distributed prizes as the chief guest of the function.

5 police outposts set up

SYLHET, Aug 21: In a bid to check the growing trend of crimes, district Police Department has set up five temporary police boxes in the town recently, reports UNB. The police boxes were set up at Choukidethi, Shahjalal Bridge, Medical Road, Shahi Eidgah and Keen Bridge areas.

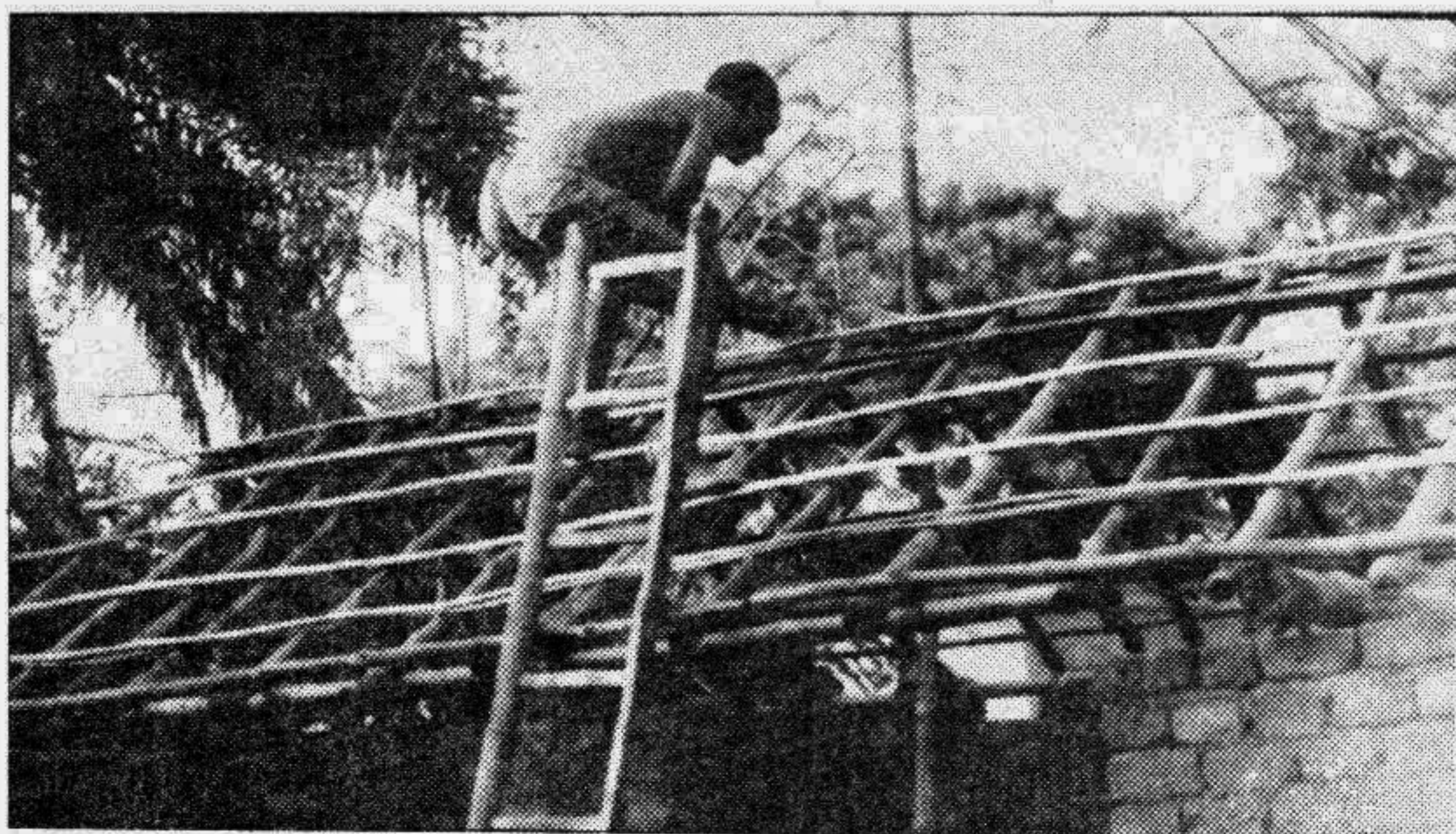
468,543 voter ID cards prepared

PATUAKHALI, Aug 21: Some 468,543 voter identity cards have been prepared for distribution among voters of the district, reports UNB. This was disclosed at a meeting on voter identity cards, held here with DC Abdus Samad in the chair, recently. The meeting was told that some 440,182 voter ID cards have already been distributed among the voters of the district. It was further informed that photographs of 5.4 lakh people out of 7,39,423 eligible voters of the district have been taken.

Godagari villagers fear flash flood

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Aug 21: Hundreds of families in Godagari thana, who lost their houses during the last year's devastating flood, could not be able to rebuild their houses. They are living in their tottering shelters. They are passing time in great panic fearing fresh floods this year in the wake of rise in water level of the Padma. When this correspondent visited Godagari recently he saw Setab Ali and his wife busy in constructing a house for living with their children. "There was a house with walls of mud and a roof of straw." "Last year's devastating flood had completely destroyed the house," he said. Suddenly a vast area had been inundated due to breakage of a dam-cum-road in Matikata union of Godagari thana. Setab Ali, a marginal farmer of Matikata village had a house on the homestead with four fences of Calkin plant and roof of the same plant. "Now I have some money in hand because of a good harvest of Boro paddy this year." So he is making a house with three walls of third class bricks cemented by muds. The front wall and the roof will be made of straw.



Setab Ali rebuilding his house damaged by last year's flood. — Star photo

"I have heard of the government assistance for building houses and saw some flood victims receiving Taka 500," Setab Ali said, but he, along with many others, did not get the assistance. Thana administration sources informed that a total of 20,500 houses had been damaged completely and partially in seven unions of the thana during the last year's devastating floods. But only the assistances should be given to the most needy persons on a priority basis. But such rule is not followed in distributing the money, he alleged. "Those who have close relations with the members, chairmen, government officials and leaders of the party in power are fortunate people to receive the assistance," Setab Ali said. The assistance of Taka 500 only was, however, too little for a family in comparison with the need, rather only seven or eight bamboos could have been bought with Taka 500. Ekramul Huque of Basudebpur, Samiul Hasan square kilometre area in seven unions of the thana had been inundated by floods last year. A total of 83,120 people of 18,850 families had been affected and a total of 20,500 houses and 146.28 kilometre of pucca and kutcha roads had been damaged completely and partially. The government had distributed 216 metric tonnes of rice, biscuits of 40 tins, 20 cartons of soaps, 360 pieces of blankets and cash money of Taka 306 lakh among the flood affected people. Later on, VGF cards were given to 13,750 families under the rehabilitation programme.

Suman of Pirpur and Abu Taher of Godagari village also expressed the same feeling. While visiting the areas this correspondent came to know that most people, who got the assistance, had spent the money in buying foods. "Scarcity of food is the main problem and I used the money for buying food", said Kalu Mia of Matikata village. Godagari thana was the worst affected thana among nine thanas of the district. A total of 55.47

Many people in the thana could not yet compensate the losses caused by the ravaging floods. Ekramul Haque, a landless farmer said that his land lord had taken the land back from him as he had no money to cultivate the land. Samul Hasan Suman of Pirpur, son of a land lord and a college student said, "Many marginal farmers could not be able to cultivate their lands for want of money to buy seeds and other inputs and pay labour wages" They had to lease the lands or mortgage some of the lands to have money for cultivating the rest of the lands, he said. Many people are yet to have their damaged houses rebuilt completely. Meanwhile, many landless people, who had taken shelter in other places owned by the government and private owners, have not yet returned to their original places. This has created social unrest in some places. One person has already been killed in such a clash. The newly constructed bypass road is yet to be inaugurated. For more than one year, both the sides of the road have been encroached by hundreds of flood-affected families. "Where shall we go when we have no land to build a house?" said Salmullah, Fatema Bewa said, "We got a place where flood water will not be able to touch us." She intends to sell her homestead of about 10 'kathas' later in her village. Almost all people from all sections of the area fear, "We shall be ruined if a flood like that of the last year hits us this year when we are yet to compensate the losses of last year's flood."

'Self-evicted' RU JCD men yet to return to dormitories

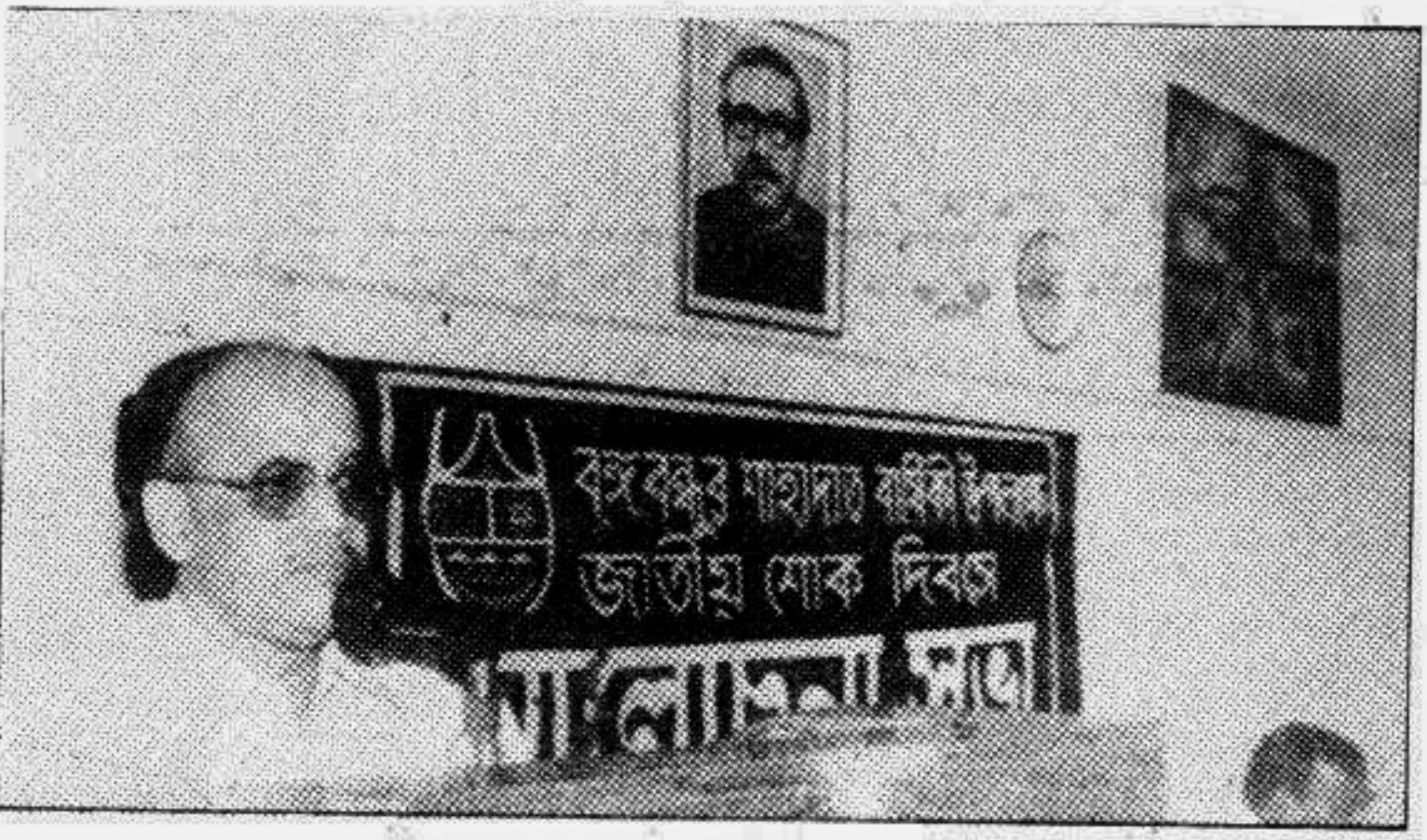
From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Aug 21: 'Self-evicted' student leaders of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of Rajshahi University unit have not yet started returning to their respective dormitories fearing possible 'attack' by the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) activists, although the university administration has taken tight security measures. Main opposition BNP-backed students organisation JCD leaders left their dormitories following a row with Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh-backed ICS activists over the alleged kidnap of an ICS activist by the JCD members, the resident students of Shahid Shamsujoha, Shahid Habibur Rahman, and Suhrawardy halls said. A JCD activist, Jewel, said an ICS activist, whose identity could not be known, was criticised by some JCD leaders while the ICS boy and his associates were abusing a female student of Tapasi Rabeya Hall at the Pashchim Para on the campus in the evening some days back. "Later, ICS activists left the place leaving one of their comrades alone after a scuffle with the JCD men. And after the incident ICS activists spread the rumour that an ICS activist was kidnapped." ICS activists then started intimidating JCD leaders, creating panic on the campus. Eventually JCD men left their respective halls. The 'kidnapped' ICS activist was found unhurt after a couple of hours of the incident, proctor of the university Professor Mokhelesur Rahman said quoting ICS men. The proctor said later he along with provosts of different dormitories visited residential halls and found no trouble. Meanwhile, the newly appointed vice chancellor of the university, Professor Sayeedur Rahman Khan, has assured the JCD leaders of taking all possible steps regarding their rehabilitation. JCD, however, has not filed written complaint with the VC or the proctor regarding the eviction.

Landless families increasing

SHARIATPUR, Aug 21: Despite pledges by the government to raise the living standard of citizens, the number of landless families here is increasing day by day, reports UNB. According to an official estimate, there are some 5,71,802 landless people here and 60 per cent of them lost their homesteads in erosion by the River Padma. Sources said sufferings of these landless people worsen during seasonal food crisis caused by natural calamities like flood and drought. They said food crisis breaks out in the area during the months of August-September when flood usually sweeps the country. "During this period, a large number of people who depend on day labour for their livelihoods leave their village homes in search of works," said an official of the local Agriculture office wishing anonymity. He said there is no special government programme to feed these hunger-stricken people, except some pre- and post-flood rehabilitation programmes. The overall socio-economic condition here has declined due to recurring floods, droughts for the last 25 years, forcing poor people to sell off their household appliances and animals to buy foods. On the other hand, the farmers who cultivate their farmlands under deadweight of loans do not get fair price of their produces after harvest. "The government alone cannot solve this problem, the NGOs too have a role in this regard," the official said.

Events of districts in picture



Prof Abdul Mannan, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University addressing a discussion meeting on Bangabandhu arranged on the occasion of National Mourning Day. — Star photo



Local artists of Natore rendering mourning songs at the district council auditorium on the occasion of the National Mourning Day. — Star photo



A discussion meeting on the life and works of Bangabandhu was arranged at Natore District Council auditorium. Advocate Hanif Ali Sheikh, General Secretary of the district unit of Awami League speaking there. — Star photo

Road accidents claim 17 lives in 8 dists

Father, son killed in Sylhet road mishap

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Aug 21: A father and a son were killed and 4 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Sylhet highway Wednesday morning. The accident took place at Chandpur at about 9 am when a Dhaka-bound microbus (Dhaka-Metro Cha 11-2280) from Sylhet hit a roadside tree after the driver lost his control, killing 60-year old man and his 25-year old son on board. The old man died on the spot. The names of victims could not be known immediately.

Interest free loans disbursed in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent JHENIDAH, Aug 21: Interest free loans were disbursed among 44 poor people in Sailakupa under Jhenidah district on August 16 on the occasion of National Mourning Day. The loans were disbursed at function held at Sailakupa thana parishad auditorium. Mir Shahabuddin, Director General of Ansar of Social Service (DSS): Golam Mor-taza, TNO Sailkupa; Noor Taj Ali, Deputy Director of Department of Social Service; Advocate Ayub Hossain; Abdul Hai, Hossen Ali Mollah and thana social work officer Abdul Aziz spoke on the occasion.

Man killed in Sirajganj road mishap

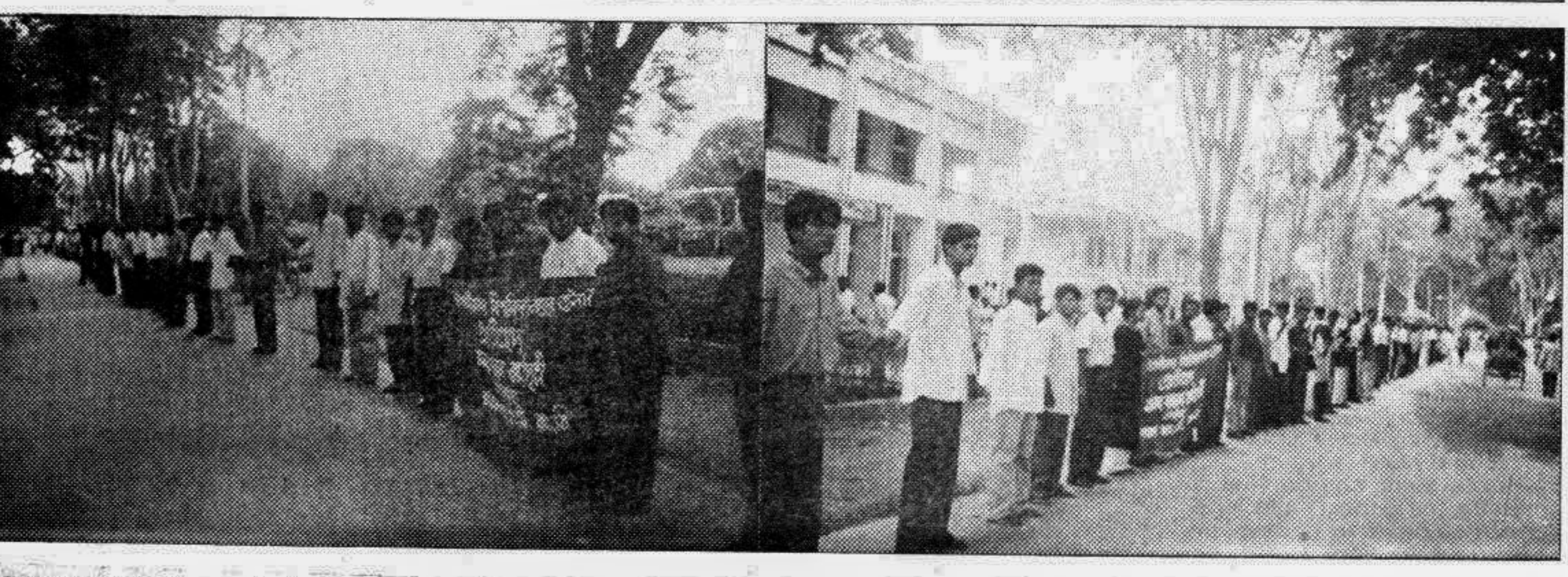
From A Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Aug 20: One person was killed and 25 others injured in two separate road mishaps on Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge link road near Koder Crossing here on Tuesday. Police sources said, a Bogra-bound bus from Dhaka fell into a ditch killing one Towhidul Islam, 35, of Sundarighi in Pan-chagarh district. A total of 15 passengers were injured, five of them critically while the bus was crossing Koder Crossing point and fell into the ditch. An information from Madaripur says: One person was crushed under the wheels of a truck at Sadur Bridge on the Barisal-Faridpur highway under Sadur thana on Tuesday noon. Witnesses said, a Takerhat-bound truck ran over Delwar Hossain Howlader, 35, son of Hafez Howlader of village Bagerpar in Madaripur town who he was trying to cross the road. He died on the spot. A report from Barisal says: A girl was killed in a road accident at Kashipur on Dhaka-Barisal highway on Wednesday. Police said Dalia, a student

A total of 17 persons were killed recently in various road accidents in eight districts, report agencies. A report from Mymensingh says: Two people were killed and 30 others injured when a bus ramed into a stationary truck on the Mymensingh-Haluaghat road at Rupchandpur in Tarakanda thana on Thursday night. Police said the accident took place when the Mymensingh-bound passenger bus hit the parked truck at about 9 pm, resulting in total damage to the front side of the bus and injury to 32 people on board. Fourteen critically injured passengers were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where two died after admission. The dead were identified as Abdul Hye, 35, and Billal, 30. A message from Tangail reports: At least three people were killed and 30 injured when a bus plunged into a roadside ditch at Gulla in Basal thana on Friday. Police identified two of the dead as Ansar Ali, 45, and Baku Mia, 55, of Tangail. Another one aged about 45 could not be identified immediately. They said the accident took place at noon on the Dhaka-Tangail highway as the driver of the Gaibandha-bound coach from Dhaka lost control over the steering after one of the front wheels of the bus deflated. Eight of the injured were admitted to Mirjapur Kumudini Hospital. An information from Madaripur says: One person was crushed under the wheels of a truck at Sadur Bridge on the Barisal-Faridpur highway under Sadur thana on Tuesday noon. Witnesses said, a Takerhat-bound truck ran over Delwar Hossain Howlader, 35, son of Hafez Howlader of village Bagerpar in Madaripur town who he was trying to cross the road. He died on the spot. A report from Barisal says: A girl was killed in a road accident at Kashipur on Dhaka-Barisal highway on Wednesday. Police said Dalia, a student

of class III, met the tragic end of her life when a tempo knocked her down in the area. Police seized the tempo, but the driver fled the scene. A report from Khulna says: One woman was killed and two others injured when a speeding passenger bus dashed against a rickshaw-van at Dumuria bus stand on Saturday. Police sources said, the passenger bus, coming from Paik-gachha met the accident near Dumuria bus stand at about 11 am on Saturday. The accident occurred when the bus dashed against a rickshaw van. Passengers Rehana and Hasina and the driver of the van were seriously injured and admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. Later, Hasina died at 6 pm in the hospital. Other seriously injured persons were sent to Dhaka in critical condition for treatment in hospital. Police seized the bus, but the driver managed to escape. A report from Jhenidah says: Three persons were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Sadar and Harinakunda thanas of the district on Sunday and Monday last. Hospital and police sources said, Amirul Islam, 40, of village Parbatipur under Harinakunda thana was run over by a Kaliganj-bound speeding bus on Kaliganj-Chuadanga highway at Paglakani in Jhenidah town on Sunday. He died on the spot. Police seized the truck, but the driver managed to escape. In another accident two passengers were killed and five others injured when a truck carrying them fell into a roadside ditch near Sreepur in Harinakunda thana on Jhenidah-Harinakunda road on early Monday. The dead persons were identified as Sonalibha, 50, and Azizur Rahman, 25. Five injured persons were hospitalised. Bodies were sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for postmortem. A message from Narayan-ganj says: Four on board a baby-taxi were killed and two

injured when a truck crashed into the tricycle on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Ruppaganj thana on Sunday. The dead were two siblings Russell, 23, and his sister Beauty, 22, of village Barpa in Ruppaganj, their co-villager Mahmuda Begum, 8, and the baby driver aged 26. Police said the accident took place at Khadun village on the highway when the Sylhet-bound speeding truck ramed taxi coming from the opposite direction at about 12.30pm. Two unidentified injured passengers were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition. A message from Rangpur says: Two people were killed and 35 injured when a coach hit a parked truck on the Rangpur-Bogra highway in Pirganj thana early Saturday. One of the dead was identified as Monotosh Bosh, 46. The injured were admitted to the Rangpur Medical College Hospital and six of them were in critical condition. Police said the mishap took place at Borodarga village when the Burimari-bound coach from Dhaka crashed into the electric pole-laden truck parked on one side of the highway. Police said reckless driving might have caused the accident. On Wednesday, at least 21 people were killed and 50 injured when a Thakurgaon-bound coach from Dhaka crashed into an iron-laden stationary truck on the Nagarbari-Bogra highway.

Another report from Gaibandha says: At least 30 people were injured in a road mishap on Dhaka-Rangpur Highway in Gobindaganj thana here on Wednesday. Police and witnesses said the accident took place near the Gobindaganj Thana Health Complex at about 10 am while the driver a Gaibandha-bound bus lost control over the steering during giving side to a motorbike. The critically injured people were rushed to local thana health complex and Rangpur Medical College Hospital.



Solidarity: General students of Rajshahi University formed a human chain on the campus protesting terrorist activities on Jahangirnagar University campus. — Star photo

Goiter patients increasing in greater Faridpur dist

SHARIATPUR, Aug 21: The number of goiter patients in greater Faridpur district is increasing alarmingly due to iodine deficiency, reports UNB. A recent survey by Shariatpur Development Organisation (SDO), an NGO, revealed that number of disabled people has also increased in the five districts of greater Faridpur due to iodine deficiency that hamper their mental and physical growth. The districts are Faridpur, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj and Rajbari. The NGO said that on average the daily intake of iodine for an adult should be 150 microgram, but this could not be procured from water and soil, the main source of iodine. Excessive rainfall and flood water wash away iodine every year. To meet the deficit of iodine in human body, the government enacted a new law in 1994 for producing, selling and using iodised salt. As per the law, producing and selling of non-iodised salt are strictly prohibited. But a section of unscrupulous traders, violating the government ban, are selling non-iodised salt for making windfall profit. They are selling such non-iodised salt in colourful packets labeled as iodised salt, it is alleged. It is also alleged that non-iodised salt from across the border has flooded the local markets and is being sold at a very cheap rate.