

## National

# Over Tk 3 cr scheme to protect Haimchar from erosion

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, Aug 25: A new scheme has been taken up on experimental basis to protect the erosion by the River Meghna at Haimchar thana here during the current season. The Netherlands Government will implement the scheme. An amount of Taka 3 crore 25 lakh has been sanctioned to implement the first phase of the scheme.

According to this scheme 20 groyne of bricks will be constructed parallelly along the river bank against the river's current. So far seven groyne have already been constructed along the bank of the River

Meghna from Katakhal to Akhanerhat. The scheme is also using geo-textile clothes to protect the erosion.

BSS from Chapai Nawabganj reports: Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak on August 23 visited the erosion affected areas of Ujirpur and Paka Narayanpur under Shibganj thana.

About 140 Km embankment have already been eroded by the Padma.

Addressing a cross section of people at the affected areas, the minister said the present government was fully aware of the

sufferings of the erosion affected people. To mitigate the sufferings of the affected people the government would do everything possible, he assured.

The government has already started the implementation of a Taka 6.9 crore project for the protection river bank covering Paka Narayanpur area. On completion of the project it is expected that thousands of people would be saved from the onslaught of the Padma erosion.

The Water Resources Minister later on visited the erosion affected areas at Nababganj town.

opment Board AKM Shamsul Huq and local Awami League leaders accompanied the minister during the visit.

UNB from Khulna says: A scheme has been undertaken to cement the 3-km Khulna City Protection Embankment stretching from Labonchara to Tetultala in Batiaghata thana.

Officials said Water Development Board (WDB) would implement the project spending Tk 1.60 crore.

The project, aiming at protecting the second largest port city of the country, is expected to be completed by the year-end.



## Night Queen smiles at last

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Aug 25: The Night Queen, a rare flower blossomed at a garden here on Friday night.

For the first time the flower has blossomed in my garden, said Mrinal Kumar Bhattacharya, Police Inspector of Mymensingh GRP circle.

He also told The Daily Star that he planted a Night Queen plant about three years ago. As a flower lover there are also various kinds of flower plants in his family garden at the Mymensingh railway quarter.

Bhattacharya's wife told this correspondent that she has been taking care of the plant with other flower plants in their garden for the last three years in the hope of observing the extraordinary beauty of the Night Queen.

## Khokan, godfather of Jhenidah truck hijackers yet to be arrested

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Aug 25: At last police have detected the godfather of truck hijackers.

Police also recovered some hijacked goods from his Jhenidah house, according to police sources.

When a Khulna-bound truck from Singra in Natore district loaded with 120 sacks of rice worth about Taka one and a half lakh reached near Jhenidah Cadet College at night recently the miscreants put up barricade on the road and took control of the vehicle. Then the armed miscreants led towards Magura with the booties. Later on the truck was recovered from Kola Bazaar in Kaliganj thana of Jhenidah district on the next day, but it was empty at that time.

Police said that rice of the truck had been sold to Lal Mo-

hammad alias Laltu and Shahjahan Mia at Siraganj Bazaar in Chuadanga district. Afterwards the goods were sent to Moksdepur Bazaar in Boalmari thana of Faridpur district.

### Bangabandhu Parishad's mohila unit

GAZIPUR, Aug 25: The convening committee of Gazipur district Mohila Unit of Bangabandhu Parishad was formed here on Tuesday, reports BSS.

Begum Rabia Khatun and Shamsunnahar were elected Convener and Deputy Convener respectively.

A discussion meeting was held at Gazipur Pourasabha auditorium.

### Navy recovers goods worth Tk 47 lakh

CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: Bangladesh Navy ships, during their routine anti-smuggling patrol, recovered smuggled goods worth about Tk 47 lakh from the outer anchorage and Patenga Sea Beach area last week, reports BSS.

An ISPR press release today said 19 crew and two mechanised boats were also impounded during the patrol.

and Shahjahan at Sarojganj and recovered some sacks of rice and other belongings.

Police also informed that they had seized two trucks bearing number Jessore Ta 0393 and Jhenidah Ta-11-0003 which had been used for hijacking.

Anwar Hossain Khokan is a owner of four trucks. He used to hijack other trucks through his followers who are yet to be nabbed.

At least seven trucks were hijacked from various areas of Jhenidah, Magura and Kushtia districts during the last couple of months. The trucks were recovered later on but the goods like rice, paddy, cement and other things remained missing.

However, accused Anwar Hossain Khokan fled away from his home sensing police action.

## New hall after Bangabandhu soon at RU

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Aug 25: Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Professor Saeedur Rahman Khan said a residential hall, 4th science building and 4th arts building will be constructed on the campus under the 5th five-year plan.

Under the plan, a digital telephone exchange and central science laboratory will also be set up, he added.

The newly appointed vice chancellor was exchanging views with local journalists at his residence on the campus recently.

Professor Khan said the new dormitory will be named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, adding that if constructed, the 11th male students' hall would surely contribute a lot to mitigating the existing accommodation problems.

Professor Khan, however, said the completion of the massive development work is subject to the approval of required fund by the University Grant Commission (UGC).

"If the proposed Central Science Laboratory is set up, the research activities will be geared up in the university", he hoped.

Professor Khan also disclosed that a new ambulance would be purchased for RU Medical Centre very soon.

## 12-Yr RI for Shibpur UP chairman

From Our Correspondent KISHOREGANJ Aug 25: A chairman of a union parishad was convicted for possessing illegal arms.

Sufia Begum, Special Tribunal Judge of court no 6 of Kishoreganj in a judgement delivered on August 16 sentenced Mujibur Rahman, chairman, Shibpur union in Bhairab thana to suffer rigorous imprisonment for 12 years.

According to the prosecution, on the basis of confessional statement of Mujibur Rahman who was earlier taken into the custody of DB police, one cut rifle, one gun and 10 rounds of ammunition were recovered from the bath room of his residence at Shamvapur (Raghunathpur) in Bhairab town on February 5, 1996.

Police after conducting necessary investigation submitted charge-sheet against the accused.

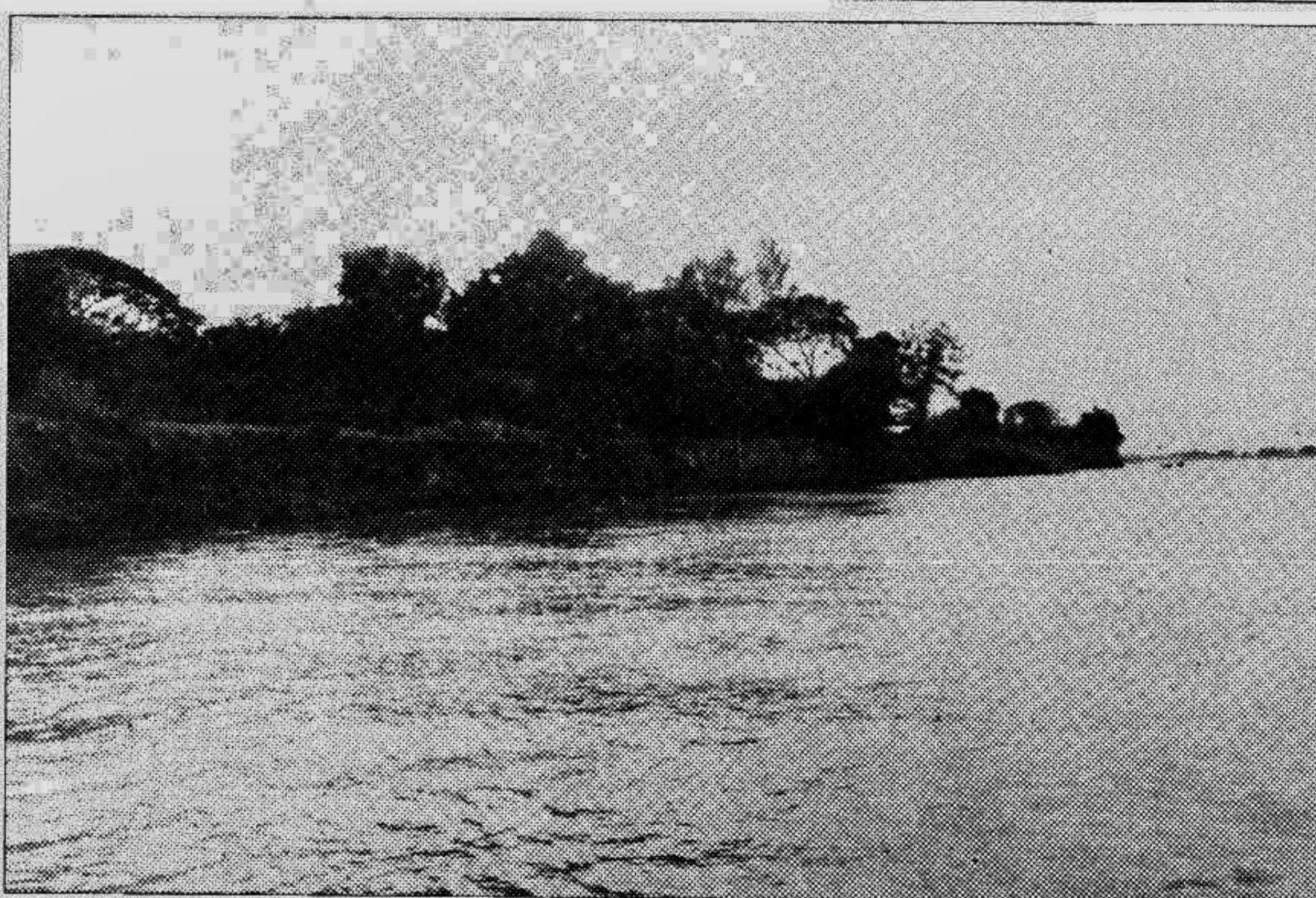
## Arsenic panic in Kasba thana of Brahmanbaria

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 25: Arsenic contamination is causing panic in Kasba thana here, reports BSS.

According to Kasba Thana Health Engineering Department, water of 129 tubewells of 10 unions under Kasba thana was found arsenic contaminated. DPHE identified two arsenic contaminated persons. They are Md Shah Alam, Assistant Professor of T Ali College and Tabarak Hossain of village Shival Para under Kasba thana.

DPHE of Kasba examined 1303 tubewells out of 2,981, found 129 excessively arsenic contaminated and sealed 100 tubewells.

Public health engineer Md Razaul Karim said, identification of actual quantity of arsenic is not possible due to the non-availability of field test instruments used for the examination of water.



Unabated river erosion at Char Madhukhali in Trishal thana of Mymensingh district.

— Star photo

## Jute output may fall short of target by 70 pc in N-region

NATORE, Aug 25: Looming behind the unwillingness of farmers to cultivate jute is the downturn in jute price, which may prove more agonising in the years to come, reports UNB.

According to local Agriculture office, some 17.51 lakh bales of jute were projected to be produced from 1.81.968 hectares of land in 16 northern districts this season.

But the target is unlikely to be achieved as growers largely refrained from jute cultivation in the backdrop of their last year's bitter experience when they failed to make up their production cost.

A jute grower in Gurudaspur thana said he has cultivated jute on five bighas of land this year only to meet his household requirements. "I used to cultivate jute on at least 30 bighas now I cannot because jute farming is no longer profitable," he said.

Another grower in sadar thana alleged that he could not yet realise the prices of the jute he sold to BJMC last year.

Meanwhile, the BJMC's purchasing centres in the district headquarters have been closed due to fund crisis and purchasing agents started fleeing to escape public wrath.

A senior agriculture official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said jute production in the northern region would fall far short of the target this year. "It may fall by 70 per cent."

Market sources said jute was sold at Tk 180 to Tk 220 per maund in the last season against the production cost of Tk 260-Tk 300.

"It's the declining price of jute that discourages the growers to refrain from jute cultivation and it may hit the country's economy if appropriate steps are not taken soon," said M Aminul Huq, President of Nature Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

He said jute-based handloom industries could be set up in the region to help salvage 'the sinking jute sector'.

A report from Kishoreganj says: In more bad news for the beleaguered growers, jute production in 13 thanas of the district appears to suffer a serious setback.

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) had set a target to bring 15,545 acres of land under jute cultivation this year, projecting over 1.49.150 bales of jute output.

But only 6,642 hectares of land could be brought under jute farming this season due to unfavourable weather, seed crisis and lack of necessary support from the government.

Besides, price of jute in local markets continues to fall dampening the enthusiasm of the growers.

Market sources said jute is now selling at Tk 180-250 per maund, which falls far below the production cost.

Meanwhile, an organised gang of middlemen has taken control over jute market and are buying jute from growers at throwaway prices by spreading rumours.

BSS from Manikganj reports: More than 3,700 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation in the seven thanas here this year.

According to the Agriculture Extension department, of the total land 2,230 hectares were brought under local variety while 1,475 hectares under yielding Tosha variety.

The thana-wise break up is: Manikganj sadar 810 hectares, Singair 936 hectares, Sattaria 1,124 hectares, Ghior 173 hectares, Daulatpur 505 hectares, Shibabaya 98 hectares and Hariampur 59 hectares.

## 'Save guava orchards from attack of diseases'

PIROJUPUR, Aug 25: Guava output here fell far short of projection this year due to outbreak of 'enthrack nose' disease, prompting pessimism among the growers about the farming of the tropical fruit, reports UNB.

Guava is cultivated on 2,000 acres of land in Akhair, Kuri-ana, Jalkathi, Kalaskathi and adjacent areas of the district, famous for the delicious fruit.

But the outbreak of the disease in orchards on 1,500 acres of land severely affected the guava production. Guava becomes smaller in size and gets black when the disease affects it.

They said the disease first broke out in 1974 and has gradually assumed an alarming proportion forcing many growers to give up the farming.

Agriculture Research Institute and Agriculture Department jointly formed a four-member committee last year to ascertain the reasons behind the outbreak of the disease. But the committee has virtually failed to detect any reasons.

Alongside enthrack nose, other diseases also have broken out in guava orchards, dampening the enthusiasm of the growers.

Experts apprehended that this year the district might produce guava 20 lakh maund less than the previous year.

The growers have alleged that they are not getting any supports from the government for guava farming and orchard development. They called for immediate steps to save their orchards from the attack of the disease.

## Obituary

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Aug 25: Shah Hossain Ahmed, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology of Ananda Mohan College here breathed his last at the early hours of August 20. He was 52.

He left behind his wife, three daughters and a host of students, friends, relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His namaj-e-zanjaja was held at the college campus after Jumma prayer on August 20. It was attended by a large number of teachers, students, employees of the college and elite of the town. Later on he was buried at his family graveyard at Hosainpur in Kishoreganj district.

A milad-mahfil was also held at the college mosque where the musallih prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

## Bar council office ransacked

PABNA, Aug 25: Armed terrorists ransacked the branch office of district bar council here Sunday as the lawyers refused to give them toll, its general secretary said, reports UNB.

In a statement, Advocate Abdul Matin said the known terrorists first hurled abuses on them and then ransacked the office before leaving the area chased by local people in the afternoon.

## Tree plantation programme

NETRAKONA, Aug 25: A week long tree plantation programme of Netrakona district unit of Service Civil International (SCI), a non-government organisation, concluded here recently, reports BSS.

According to a SCI source, the volunteers of the organisation planted over 1,500 saplings of different varieties of fruit bearing and timber yielding trees in the compounds of different government and non-government schools here. The inaugural function was held on Kunia High School premises. President of SCI Netrakona, district unit Mohammad Serajuddin presided over the function. Headmaster of Kunia High School Abdus Salam and general secretary of SCI Netrakona district unit Kamruzzaman Khan, among others, spoke on the occasion.

## 12 hurt during dacoity

FARIDPUR, Aug 25: At least 12 people were injured during a daring dacoity in a Khulna-bound night coach at Godaulo Bhatla area on Dahka-Khulna highway recently, reports UNB.

The armed hoodlums looted cash and valuables worth about Tk 2.5 lakh from the passengers of the night coach of Ananda Paribahan. Police said armed miscreants numbering about 8-10 in guise of passengers first took control over the steering and swooped upon the passengers when it reached in between Godaulo and Bahirdia at about 10 pm. The hoodlums later decamped safely with the booties at Bahirdia in Faridpur district. Aminul Huq, 50, an inspector of special team of Home Ministry and Shahidul Islam, 60, a businessman of Jessore were admitted to Faridpur General Hospital while the remaining were given first aid.

## 12 WDB schemes completed

RAJBARI, Aug 25: Water Development Board completed the work of 12 projects in the district under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in last fiscal year (1998-99), reports UNB.

A total of Tk 1.64 crore was spent to implement the projects, officials said. The projects included flood protection embankments in different areas of Rajbari and Faridpur districts, and repair and maintenance of 55 kms of embankment. Besides, the Board also completed another four projects under the Food for Work programme, with allocation of Tk 55 lakh in cash and 3,595 metric tons of wheat. These included Faridpur-Barisal FCD project, Faridpur Area One project, Madhukhali-Baliaandi sub-project and Gorai-Sirajpur haor project.

## District public library opens

NARSINGDI, Aug 25: The district public library built at a cost of Tk 1 crore was formally opened recently by Science and Technology Minister Noor Uddin Khan, reports UNB.

The magnificent and spacious library in the heart of the town has a capacity of 120 learners. Initially, it has about 6000 books and some computers. It will remain open for members of the public from 12 noon to 7 in the evening on all working days. Officials said Tk 12 lakh would be provided to the library soon to procure more books. Expressing satisfaction to see the library Noor Uddin said it would provide a good opportunity to the people, especially the young learners, to study and acquire knowledge. Teachers, lawyers, elite of the town, students and senior officials attended the function.

## Four thieves held

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug 25: Four persons were arrested on the spot by district DB police from Ashuganj Petro-Bangla jetty recently while they were stealing petrol by opening the mouth of petrol delivery pipe, reports BSS.

The arrested persons were Mostaq of village Charcartala under Ashuganj thana, Habibur Rahman, Musa Miah and Mujibur of Tarakhlaa under Sarail thana of the district. The DB police recovered from their possession six spears, one kiriz, one sharp knife and various instruments used for opening the pipe. DB police also recovered 80 litres petrol from the boat used by the thieves. A case has been filed with Ashuganj police station in this connection.

## Ten schemes progressing

CHUADANGA, Aug 25: Work on ten schemes taken up under the Bridge and Culvert Construction Programme of the Thana parishade is in full swing in two thanas of Chuadanga district, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the government sanctioned taka 40 lakh for implementation of the schemes in the current fiscal year. Six schemes are being implemented in Jibannagar thana and four schemes in Damurhuda thana. Construction of ten bridges and culverts under the programme will be completed by December.

## Loan disbursed among youths

JOYPUKHAT, Aug 25: Department of Youth Development under its self-employment programme has given loan totaling Tk 5.2 lakh to 99 unemployed youths of the district, reports BSS.

The loan was distributed at a function jointly organised by the District Administration and the Department of Youth Development marking the National Mourning Day. Deputy Commissioner Abu Nasir Ahmed attended the programme and distributed the loans.

## Fish now a rare item in Kushtia markets

KUSHTIA, Aug 25: While the government is carrying out a campaign to give a boost to fish production to meet the protein deficiency of the country's poor people, an acute scarcity of fish has been prevailing in the district for the last one month, reports UNB.

"Fish has become a rare item in local markets, we could not buy fish for the last one month," said a government official attributing the crisis to massive use of pesticides in croplands.

An expert said fish farming here has badly been affected due to massive siltation of the rivers Padma and Gorai and different beels and canals.

He said unplanned use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides in croplands are also severely affecting fish output.

There was a time when different varieties of fish were produced in abundance in ponds, beels and rivers, but the situation has gone vice versa with the expansion of human abodes and growing trend of using pesticides, he said.

Market sources said price of meat also has shot up due to scarcity of fish aggravating the sufferings of the low-income group people.

Meanwhile, professional fishermen here continued to change their professions for various reasons.

"They are really passing through a bad time for lack of funds and price hike of fishing materials," said Shariful Islam, a schoolteacher.

Another report from Magura says: As fish crisis continues to prevail, local Fisheries Department has undertaken a massive plan to boost fish production.

Officials said the department has produced three lakh different varieties of fish fries under the programme and those are being supplied to the farmers.

They said 30 government and 9,686 private ponds would be brought under fish farming this season.

Meanwhile, the department has given necessary training and financial assistance to unemployed youths and farmers here to make the programme a success.

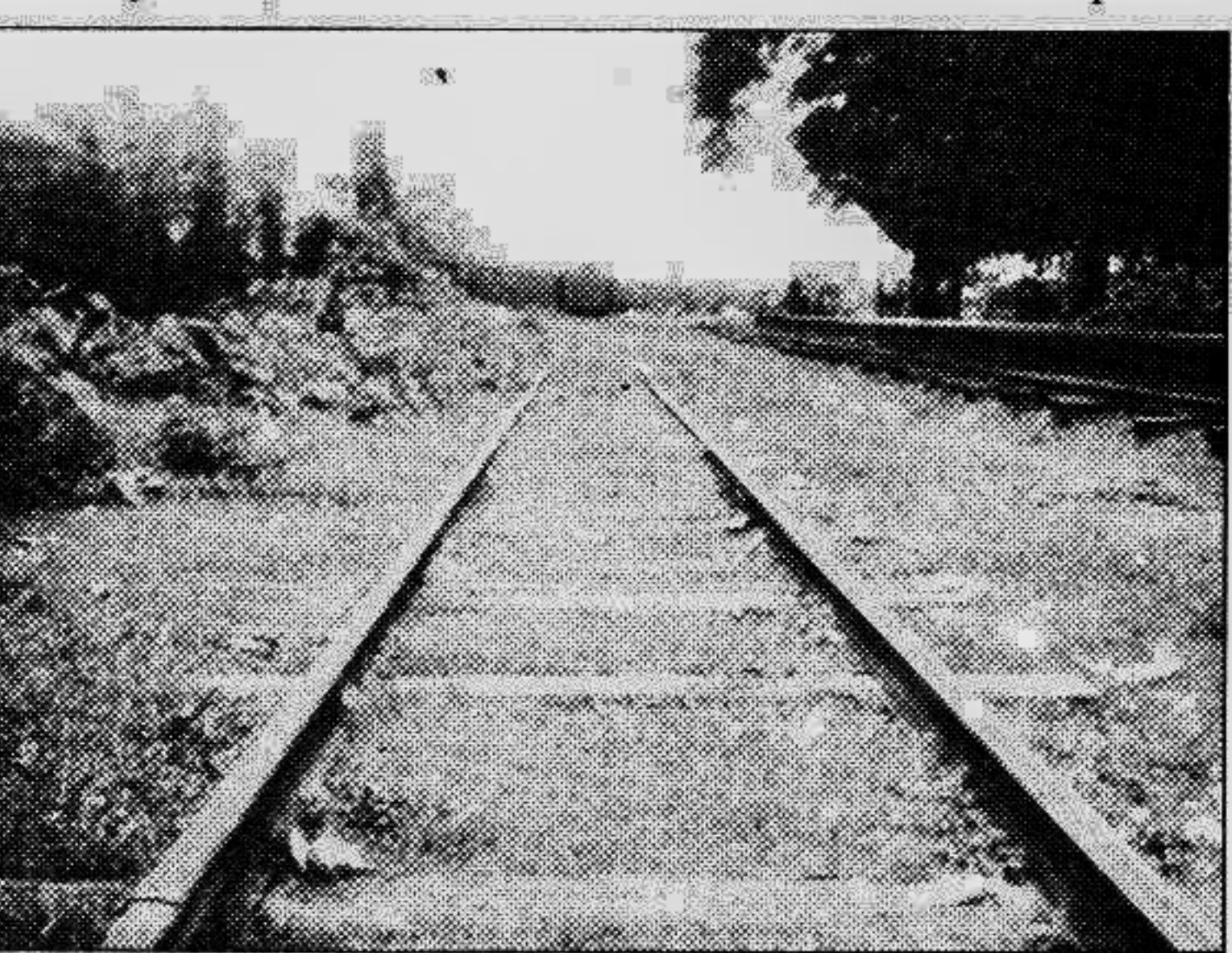
## Events of districts in picture



Tributes to National Poet: Mymensingh Press Club arranged a programme of poetry recitation and essay competition recently in observance of the birth centenary of Nazrul Islam. Dr M A Majid, Director General of BFRI distributing prizes among the winners at the club auditorium. — Star photo



Work on Taka 70 lakh bridge construction project on the River Nabaganga at Arappur in Jhenidah was completed recently. — Star photo



Poor maintenance: Three incidents of derailment occurred at Netrakona railway station recently. The railway track on Mymensingh-Mohonganj route needs proper maintenance regularly. — Star photo



Road or paddy field? Pitiable condition of Mymensingh railway station approach road. But the authorities concerned are indifferent to the sufferings of the railway passengers who use the road very frequently. — Star photo