

News snaps

VGF cards allocated

RANGPUR, Oct 11: Distribution of rice to the special VGF cardholders has begun, reports UNB. Government has allocated a total of 42,400 special VGF cards for the destitute people. Official sources said each cardholder would get 10 kgs of rice free of cost during the months of September, October and November. Government has sanctioned 1,272 metric tons of rice for the special Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme during the three months.

Two commit suicide

PATUAKHALI, Oct 11: Two people, including a housewife, allegedly committed suicide in sadar thanas on Tuesday, reports UNB. Police said Hasina Begum, 18, wife of Bellal Hossain of Aouli-village, killed herself by hanging from a mango tree. Family sources said she was mentally ill. In another incident, Shukpal, 40, of south Muradia village fell sick after taking poison. He was rushed to Patuakhali General Hospital where he succumbed at about 10 pm. The cause behind the suicide could not be known immediately. Separate UD cases were filed with police.

Two dacoits caught

NARSINGDI, Oct 11: People caught two dacoits red-handed at Morjal in Raipura thana on Dhaka-Sylhet highway while fleeing after looting passengers of a coach on Friday night, reports UNB.

Police said about eight armed men, in guise of passengers, took control of the Dhaka-bound bus coming from Habiganj and looted the belongings of the passengers. When the bus reached at Morjal the robbers got down from the vehicle. But local people rushed to the spot after the passengers raised hue and cry and caught two of the gang. They were handed over to the patrol police who were crossing the spot. The arrested were identified as Babul, 30, and Nayon, 35. Police said other members of the gang left the place with the booties valued at Tk 30,000.

Int'l workshop on fish culture

GAZIPUR, Oct 11: A four-day international workshop on fish culture sponsored by the fisheries department concluded here on Friday, reports BSS. Besides delegates of the host Bangladesh, the workshop was participated by the representatives of the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines and Japan. On the concluding day, the delegates of the workshop visited 'Sonal Samannita Motshya Khamar', a private pisciculture farm on an area of 15 acres of land at Niler Per. A total of 17 species of fish are being cultivated in this farm.

2,700 VGF cards for destitutes

CHUADANGA, Oct 11: Government has allotted a total of 2,700 VGF special cards for the destitute people of three pourasahas of the district for three months from August 16 to November 14 next, reports BSS. According to official sources, the government has sanctioned 81 tonnes of foodgrains for the special VGF cardholders for three months. Each cardholder will get 10 kgs of food grains in each of these months. There are 27 wards in all the three pourasahas and 100 cards are distributed in every ward of the pourasahas. The distribution work of the foodgrains in the special VGF cards in all these pourasahas has just begun.

Acute crisis of fodder

MADARIPUR, Oct 11: An acute crisis of fodder has been prevailing creating a serious problem in rearing cattle, reports UNB. Local farmers said like previous years they preserved fodder for the cattle during the rainy season, but those were destroyed by flooding and torrential rain. Besides, it was not possible for them to collect the stalks of Aus paddy due to flooding. Now the poor farmers are being compelled to sell their cattle at throw-away price, as they were not in a position to buy fodder at high price. The cultivation of rabi crop may also suffer a setback as the farmers are selling their draft animals.

Two alleged terrorists arrested

JOYPURHAT, Oct 11: Two alleged notorious terrorists were arrested from Kachabazaar and Antola areas in the town last week, reports UNB. They were identified as Ferdous, 26, and Aman, 29, of Pachuchak of the town. They were wanted in various cases like snatching, hijacking, dacoity and extortion.

Rat killing campaign

CHANDPUR, Oct 11: National Rat killing campaign began at Hajiganj thana on September 29, reports BSS. Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Chandpur organised the campaign. The campaign was inaugurated by Minister Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam, Bir Ullam, in a function, presided over by Md Zahirul Islam, Deputy Director of AED. The function was addressed, among others, by Md Rezaul Karim, Deputy Commissioner, Md Amiruddin, Police Super, Advocate Fazlul Hoque Sarkar, Md Khondaker Atiar Rahman, TNO Hajiganj, Ajay Kar (Khakoum), General Secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League, Tofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, Chairman, Hajiganj Pourasabha and Md Habibur Rahman of AED. A large number of farmers, ansars and VDPs, union parishad chairmen and members attended the meeting.

World Habitat Day observed

MADARIPUR, Oct 11: Hundreds of urban poor and slum dwellers including women, children and students and a number of NGO activists joined a colourful procession in the town on October 4 on the occasion of World Habitat Day '99, reports BSS. The main slogan of the programme this year was 'Cities for All'. The procession, starting from in front of the Proshika office in the morning paraded main roads of the new town and puran bazaar, ended at the swadhinata angan premises. A rally, presided over by Proshika chairperson Altibar Rahman was held. Later, a discussion meeting was held at the Proshika Auditorium. The speakers at the discussion emphasized the need for building planned, suitable and safe houses.

Training for destitute women

CHUADANGA, Oct 11: A total of 106 destitute women of Sadar, Damurhuda and Jibannagar thanas were imparted training on sewing by the Chuadanga district office of Women Affairs Department during the last financial year, reports BSS. According to an official source, of the total destitute women 47 were from Sadar thana, 30 from Damurhuda thana and 29 from Jibannagar thana. They were imparted training on sewing to make salwar karmi, blouse and garments for women and children. The trainees were also given 30 of wheat every day. The training was organised to help destitute women become self-reliant. The trainees will get loan for purchasing sewing machines.

Tk 2.72 cr savings certificates sold

PIROJPUR, Oct 11: District Savings Office sold savings certificates of different terms worth Tk 2.72 crore in six thanas in last fiscal year, reports UNB. Of the amount, Tk 98.25 lakh came from five-year-term Bangladesh Savings Certificates, Tk 34 lakh from six-month-term profit based Savings Certificates, Tk 98.25 lakh from Defence Savings Certificates, Tk 1.02 crore from three-month profit based Savings Certificates and Tk 22.90 lakh from Family Savings Certificates. However, the target of selling of savings certificates was fixed at Tk 4 crore for the year.

Cattle trader robbed, killed

NARSINGDI, Oct 11: Armed dacoits robbed a cattle trader after killing him at Nalabata in Sadar thana on Thursday night, reports UNB. Police said the gang waylaid Lokman Miah of Gasridia village of Shubpur thana when he was returning home from Monipur Bazaar in Raipura thana after selling cows. They looted an amount of Tk 25,000 from him, stabbed him mercilessly and left the spot, witnesses said. Lokman succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital. Lokman's brother, Hossain Ali filed a case in this connection.

BKB loans realised

BARISAL, Oct 11: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) realised outstanding loan amounting to Taka 19.13 crore from its borrowers in 11 southern districts under Barisal Agriculture zone between July 1 and September 15, reports BSS. The district are Barisal, Jhalakathi, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Fariapur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Rajbari and Shariatpur. A BKB source said the target of realisation of outstanding loan in these districts has been fixed at Taka 165 crore in the current fiscal year. The district-wise break-up of arrears are: Barisal Taka 18 crore, Jhalakathi Taka 6.40 crore, Pirojpur Taka 10.40 crore, Bhola Taka 1.8 crore, Patuakhali Taka 20 crore, Barguna Taka 15.40 crore, Fariapur Taka 20.70 crore, Madaripur Taka 17.50 crore, Rajbari Taka 13.00 crore, Gopalganj Taka 13.50 crore and Shariatpur Taka 12 crore.



Bill Gates Sr (centre), Chairman and Chief Executive of "Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation" visiting a BRAC school at village Mobarakdi under Matlab thana in Chandpur district on Friday. The foundation supports philanthropic institutions in the areas of global health and learning. He is seen flanked by teachers and some students of the school. — BRAC photo

Fund shortage hampers Tk 17.57 cr BBDP

NATORE, Oct 11: Works on the Baral Basin Development Project (BBDP), involving Tk 17.57 crore, are progressing at snail's pace due to fund shortage, reports UNB. Official sources said the government approval of the project released Tk 1.75 crore against the total amount of Tk 17.57 crore as its first installment.

Since then the government made no fresh allocation for the gigantic project, leaving it to reel under constant fund crisis. Water Development Board, Natore is implementing the project to protect 1.10 lakh hectares of croplands from recurring floods and bring another 20,000 hectares of extreme drought-prone farmlands in seven thanas of Natore and Rajshahi districts under a direct irrigation network.

Officials said some 195 km riverbeds of the Baral, Musa Khan and Narod would be re-excavated under the project in addition to excavating seven flashing inlets-cum-drainage in Kadribad, Mishipara, Barupara, Chak Harirampur, Jamnagar, Kutighoshpara and Godai. Under the project, WDB installed two power-driven regulators at Charghat, the connecting point of the Padma and Baral, and at Atgharia, 46 km downstream of Baral and 16 drainage-cum-flashing-slucelgates, costing Tk 35.45 crore. A WDB expert said on completion of the project some 1.10 lakh hectares of croplands in Bagha, Charghat and Puthia thanas of Rajshahi and Sadar,

Bagatpara, Gurudashpur and Baraigram thanas of Natore would be protected from flood, which causes damage to crops worth over Tk 10 crore every year.

Natore WDB Executive Engineer said an intensive pisciculture scheme would be launched in a 195 km regulated water reservoir if the project could be implemented successfully.

He said all the proposed 10 canals-cum-flashing-inlets and riverbeds would have to be excavated and re-excavated within a year or two, or else, the half excavated portions would be silted up during flooding in the years to come. Over 12 lakh people in seven thanas of Natore are expected to be largely benefited by the project.

Crimes up in Gopalganj

GOPALGANJ, Oct 11: Law and order situation in the district deteriorated in the last six months from April to September as incidents of murder, clash, mugging and rape increased alarmingly during the period.

At least nine people were murdered in separate incidents during the period, police sources said. Three persons were killed and over 100 injured in a clash between supporters of incumbent UP chairman and former UP chairman at Palashi village under Kasiani thana on April 5. The deceased were identified as Zafar Chowdhury, 25, Abdur Razak, 52, and Sharifuddin, 25.

Witnesses said two rival groups used sharp weapons in the clash. Injured persons were rushed to hospitals. Sunil Chowdhury, 50, a night guard of Gopalganj Girls' High School in the town, was killed by miscreants on May 24. The night guard was found dead in a classroom of the school in the morning. His hands and legs were tied with rope. Three persons were arrested in this connection. Police de-

clined to comment on the motive of the murder for the interest of investigation.

Morzina Begum, 35, was killed when a group of villagers locked in a clash over felling a tree on a disputed land at Char Tala village under Sadar thana on June 22. The woman received severe head injuries. She died on the spot.

Monirunessa, 60, was killed as villagers locked in clash over a petty issue at Borfa village under Sadar thana on June 23 morning. The old woman received stab injuries. She died on her way to hospital. A businessman was gunned down at Chapail village along the western bank of the River Madhumati on July 4 morning. Armed terrorists gunned down Shah Alam Biswas, 35, son of Abdus Satter Biswas of village Manikdha under Sadar thana. The businessman was going to Narail district headquarters from his residence on a motorbike. The motive behind the murder could not be known. Shahjahan, 60, son of Abdul Mazed of village of Boukua under Kotahpara thana, was killed as a group of villagers



Moazzem Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur inaugurating the new branch of National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited at the Rainbow plaza on G L Roy Road in Rangpur town. The branch was shifted here recently from its original place. — Star photo

Three-month afforestation drive ends

BARISAL, Oct 11: The three-month long tree plantation campaign sponsored by the Barisal Department in the Barisal region concluded last week, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the department planted 2,04,200 saplings of different trees in 24 upazilas of Barisal, Jhalakathi and Khulna districts during the period. The Forest Department covered 30 kilometres embankment, 30 kilometres feeder road and 10 kilometres roads and highways under the afforestation programme this year.

A total of 750 workers from 14 thanas of Barisal and Jhalakathi districts were imparted training by the department to make the tree plantation drive a success. A weeklong tree fair organised by the Forest Department was held here last week to mark the end of the three-month long tree plantation campaign.

Loan for farmers, poor villagers in 2 dists

MAGURA, Oct 11: Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and other commercial banks will disburse Tk 29.0 crore loan among the farmers this season, reports UNB. Of the total amount, BKB alone will disburse Tk 17.0 crore, Sonali Bank Tk 5.0 crore, Janata Bank Tk 5.00 crore and Agrani Bank Tk 2.0 crore. The banks have already started loan disbursement and it will continue till June 2000. Officials said the banks disbursed Tk 15.29 crore among the farmers last year.

Another report from Pirojpur says: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) embarked on a massive loan disbursement programme in Pirojpur district among the poor villagers. Officials said loan totaling Tk 1.20 crore has already been disbursed among the poor and marginal farmers as against BRDB's target of Tk 3.89 crore.

They said the loan recipients are being encouraged to undertake small but income-generating programmes like cattle fattening, vegetable gardening, bamboo cane works, cattle rearing, poultry farming and pisciculture. BRDB also has a plan to disburse crop loan to the tune of Tk 45 lakh among the farmers. A case was registered in this connection.

Housewife gangraped

CHITTAGONG, Oct 11: A young housewife was gang raped and strangled by some miscreants allegedly at the instigation of her husband at Napora union under Banshkhalia thana on Friday night. Villagers said some accomplices of the victim's husband Babul, 25, took the housewife, Senora, 18, to a nearby place. They raped and killed her. Family sources said the couple was not happy in conjugal life. The body was recovered in the morning and sent to hospital for autopsy. Babul went into hiding after the incident.

Rice, wheat allocated under VGF programme

The government has allocated rice and wheat under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme for distribute to the people of Narsingdi and Jhenaidha in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

About 1,090 tons of rice has been allocated against 36,350 cards under special Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme for the destitute people of 69 unions and two pourasahas as of Narsingdi district in the current season.

According to an official source, the special VGF card holders have been getting per capita monthly 10 milligrams of rice from August.

Among the poor cardholders 80 per cent are flood affected and others have become homeless by the erosion of the rivers. Meanwhile, 660 tons of rice has been distributed among the VGF card-holders of the district. In Jhenaidha, the government allocated 1,317 tons of wheat for distribution free of cost among the destitute people under the Vulnerable Group

Food crisis in eight dists

NATORE, Oct 11: A seasonal food crisis has been prevailing in the northern region, reports UNB. Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Joypurhat, Bogra, Naogaon, Natore and Chapainawabganj are among the districts where the food crisis affected the people severely.

According to a study conducted by an NGO, some 60 lakh people of the region are dependent on day-labour for their livelihoods and of them 50 lakh are farm labourers. These farm laborers, the survey showed, virtually remain unemployed for nearly three months when there is no agricultural works in the region.

The survey found that the farm labourers fall prey to seasonal unemployment during the Bangla months Ashwin and Kartik every year. Natural calamities like flood, draught and river erosion are the other things add fuel to their sufferings and this year flood swept the region twice.

When attention of Prof Kazi Golam Morshed MP from Natore-3 was drawn said the government has done little to assuage the sufferings of the people.

Rangpur DIARY

Electricity supply remains snapped

RANGPUR, Oct 11: Electricity supply in the industrially developed Kaunia thana remained snapped since September 30 following bursting of 33,000 KV capacity transformer.

A spokesman of the Palli Biddut Samity (PBS) said that the underground plastic cables of electricity supply line had been cut off by rats which caused short circuit and bursting of the transformer. An investigation team of PBS detected the reason after proper investigation. Due to such damage of a transformer, PBS incurred a loss of Taka 12 lakhs. At least five thousand consumers, both domestic and commercial are suffering now. However, PBS is trying hard to restore electricity supply within the next few days.

Life term for rapist

A rapist was sentenced to life term Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) by a Special Court here recently. The judge found the accused Joyal Abedin, 25, guilty for raping a five-year-old girl and sentenced him to suffer the imprisonment. The rape incident occurred on August 21 in 1998 at Kamarpura under the sadar thana. The court was chaired by judge Rafi Uddin.

Rapist arrested

Chairman and members of Naldanga union in Shadullapur thana chased a rapist and caught him. They handed him over to police. Accused Ranju Mia, 26, of Bhanga intersection raped the seven-year-old girl of Khamar Daslia village of the same union on September 29 at around noon in a sugarcane field. Hearing hue and cry of the victim, labourers from nearby rushed to spot. But the rapist escaped from the spot. Later on the union parishad chairman, members of the local people caught him from a hidden place by chasing him and handed him over to Shadullapur police. Police sent him to the jail *hajal*. Further enquiry is going on.

Absconding accused arrested

Nilphamari sadar thana police arrested an accused who was wanted for the last two years. The arrested accused, Afsar Ali alias Batu was convicted in a theft case and jailed for two years in absentia. He remained absconding since beginning of trial of the case.

Boat piracy up

Incidents of boat dacoities along the rivers across greater Rangpur zone rose alarmingly for the last few days. It is widely alleged that the pirates are committing dacoities unabated at various river routes due to indifference of police. The incidents have raised a great concern among the local people.

Farewell

Vice Principal of Government Begum Rokeya College Prof Ansar Ali has been accorded a farewell reception by the students of the college on the eve of his going to LPR leave. The function was largely attended by the teachers and the students of the college.

Health complex only in name

Patients of Aditmari Health Complex are experiencing immense sufferings due to indifferent attitude of the doctors and other staffers of the complex. Every day a large number of patients rush there for treatment. But doctors and other staffers do not attend them causing their great sufferings. The X-Ray machine of the complex is also out of order for a long time. Valuable drugs are also not available there. It is alleged.

Training course

A three-day training course for the teachers of Jubo Academy, Rangpur Project-1 at Gangachhara was held recently. The training course was arranged at Baro Beel Union Parishad hall room. The course was participated by the teachers of 75 Jubo centres in the thana. The training was based on improving the non-formal education system aimed at eradicating illiteracy. A colourful function was arranged on the concluding day of the course.

Housewife beaten to death in Magura

MAGURA, Oct 11: A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband on Wednesday at village Shatyapur under Sadar thana. The victim was identified as Hena Moti, 25, wife of Mohiur Rahman. Police sources said Rahman beat his wife mercilessly on the day following an altercation. The housewife was taken to hospital, where she died.

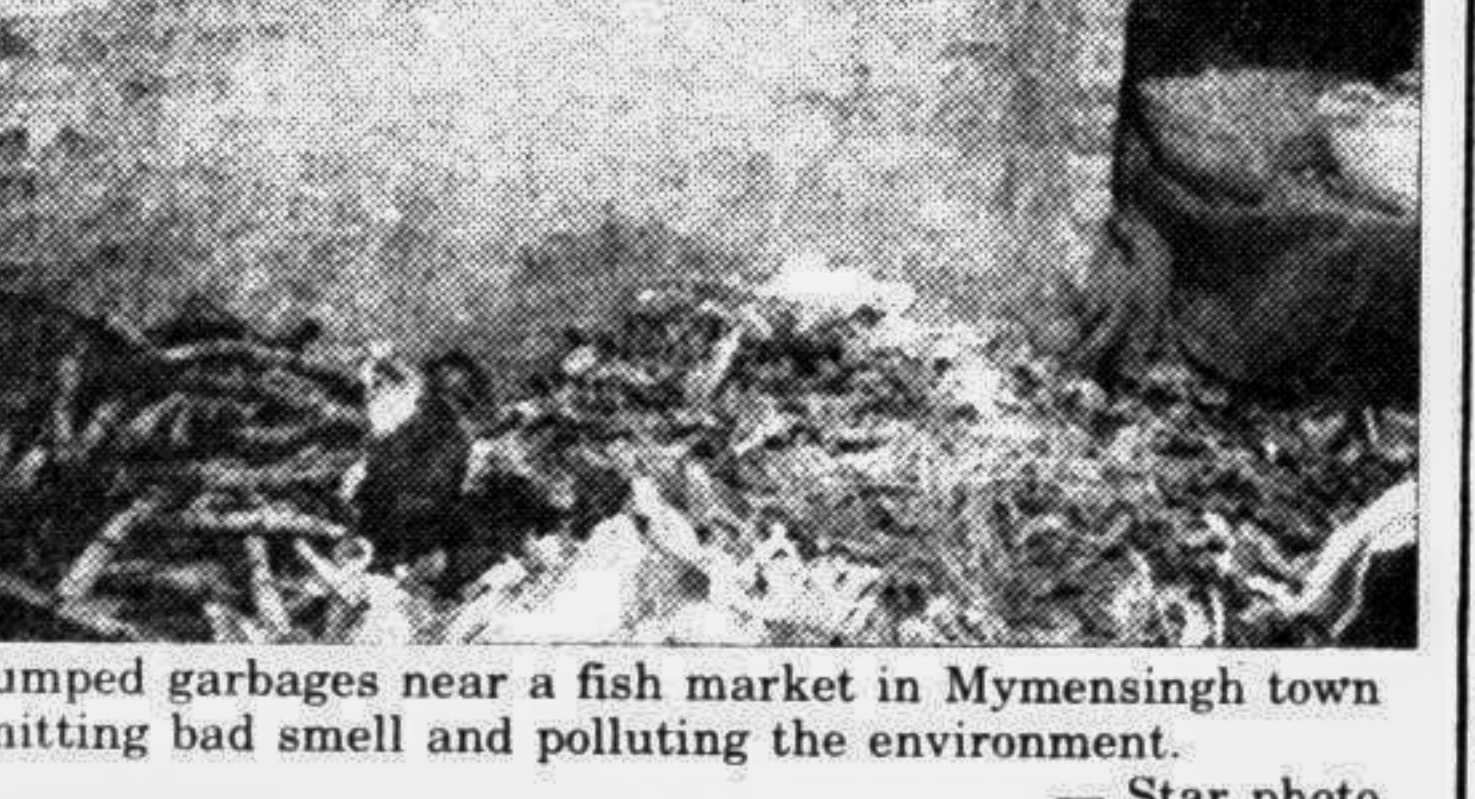
Events of districts in picture



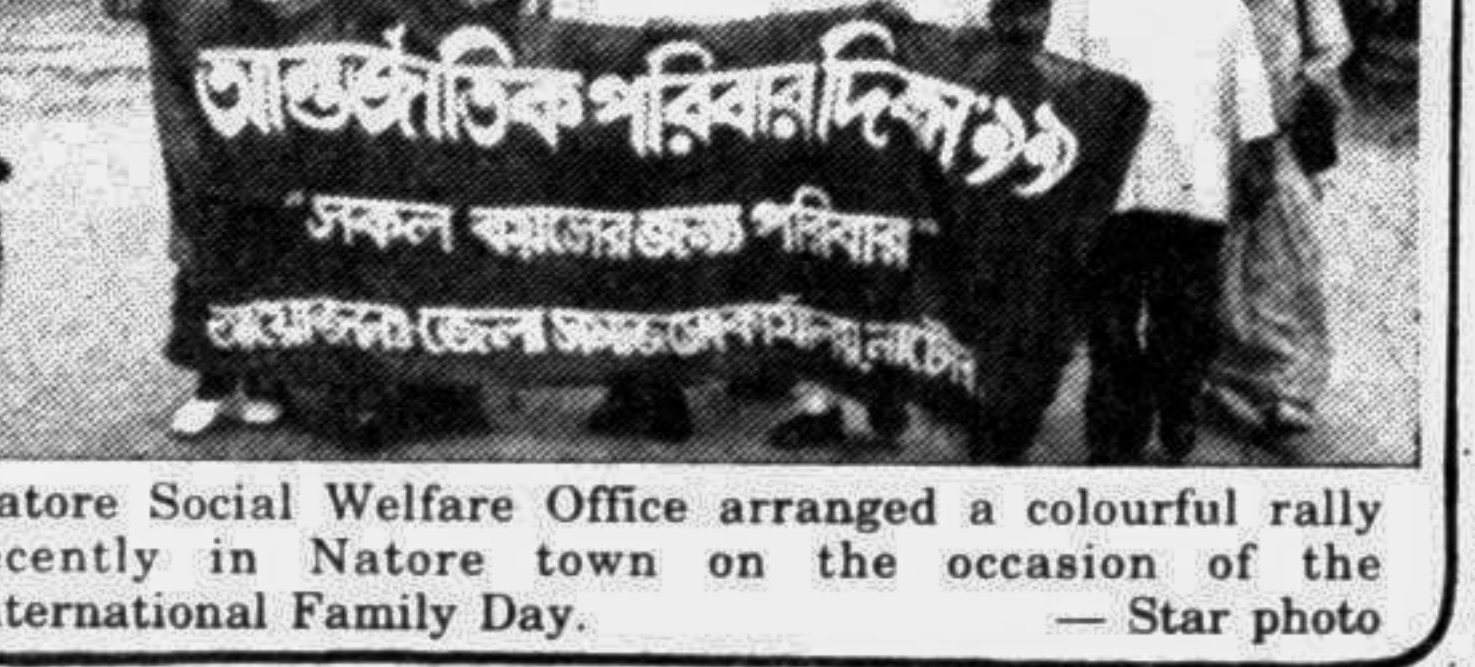
Bangladesh Debating Society arranged recently a debate competition at Sylhet Sirajuddin Academy. Photo shows a student taking part in the competition. — Star photo



Rezaul Karim, local MP of Jamalpur speaking recently as the chief guest at the conference of Bangladesh Krishi Bank staffers at its regional office in Jamalpur. — Star photo



Dumped garbage near a fish market in Mymensingh town emitting bad smell and polluting the environment. — Star photo



Natore Social Welfare Office arranged a colourful rally recently in Natore town on the occasion of the International Family Day. — Star photo