

News snaps



A precious coin ? The coin is claimed to have been recovered during an excavation of an old pond belonging to the zamindar of Teota village under Shibabari thana of Manikganj. The collector of the coin is M R Mahfuz Chowdhury of Parnaduali village of Magura Sadar Thana. The picture shows both sides. —Star photo.

Rains wash away soil of road

RANGAMATI, Oct 24: Five days of incessant rain has washed away soil in different places of Rangamati-Khagrachhari road threatening traffic movement, reports UNB.

Locals said Mahalchhari area of the road has become vulnerable to landslide, which is a common phenomenon in the hill districts. Carrying on the road, particularly in Kutubchhari, Bogachhari and Betchhari areas, had been washed away by rainwater in last few days. Soils on the returning wall of the road at Badanala in Mahalchhari area have been displaced due to low quality work, locals alleged. Transport workers apprehended that road communication between the hill district and the port city of Chittagong might be snapped if the authorities fail to repair the road immediately.

Anti-smuggling steps tightened

CHUADANGA, Oct 24: Anti-smuggling measures have been tightened along the border following secret reports of a plan for smuggling into Bangladesh explosives and drugs, reports UNB. Besides regular patrol by BDR, plain clothed intelligence officials are roaming in border villages of Rajapur, Sultampur, Phulbari, Charulia amidst tension among the people. Bomb panic also gripped Darshana following secret information which leaked that bombs from across the border have been planted at certain places.

IRRI-Boro procurement drive fails

RANGPUR, Oct 24: The IRRI-Boro procurement drive here fell far short of target this season due to low government price, reports UNB.

Officials said some 4,290 mts of paddy and 23,811 mts of rice were procured through nine purchasing centres here till Sept 30 as against the target of 5,000 mts of paddy and 24,000 mts of rice respectively. Officials said they procured rice at Tk 13 per kg while paddy at Tk 8.25, lower than the market price. The wheat procurement drive here also failed to achieve the target this season. Officials said some 14,614 mts of wheat were procured through nine procurement centres till July 30 against the target of 16,350 mts.

Chinese yarn seized

BENAPOLE (Jessore), Oct 24: The 32 battalion of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in a raid recently seized Chinese yarn worth Taka 3.75 lakh from Laojani under Jhikargachha upazila, reports BSS.

A BDR source said, the BDR seized the yarn from a Benapole bound private car on Jessore-Benapole road. The yarn was to be smuggled to India through Putkhali border. One person named Mofizur Rahman of village Tengra under Sharsha Upazila was arrested in this connection.

Ashmina UZ AL council meet

PATUAKHALI, Oct 24: A council meeting of Ashmina Upazila Awami Jubo League was held recently at Dashmina Government Primary School premises, reports BSS.

State Minister for Textile AKM Jahangir Hossain attended the conference as the chief guest. The conference was inaugurated by convenor of Patuakhali District Awami League Milan Miah. Advocate Sikdar Golam Mostafa, convenor of Dashmina Upazila Awami Jubo League presided over the conference. A 36-member new committee of Dashmina Upazila Jubo League was formed in the conference.

Uplift schemes progressing

RAJBARI, Oct 24: A total of 671 small development schemes have been taken up under the rural infrastructure development programme of the government in the four upazilas here in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 186 schemes are being executed in Goalundo, Pangsa, Balakandi and Rajbari Sadar upazila under the Food for Work Programme (FWP) at an allocation of 2,790 tons of wheat. A total of 488 small schemes have been taken up under the Test Relief programme in four upazilas. 1,128 tons of wheat was sanctioned for implementation of the schemes. Besides, seven schemes are being executed at an allocation of seven tons of wheat in Pangsa Pourasabha and six schemes in Rajbari Pourasabha at an allocation of 13 tons of wheat.

Loan for cooperators

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 24: Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Kishoreganj, disbursed a total of Taka 75,70,000 as loan among 1,514 members of different co-operatives in August 99, reports BSS.

According to an official source, the loan was disbursed under BRDB's programme to alleviate poverty of the rural landless people. BRDB, Kishoreganj also recovered Taka 80,05,000 arrear loan during the period. The percentage of recovery is 98.

Workshop on modern farming

CHANDPUR, Oct 24: A two-day workshop organised by Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the farmers was held on October 11 in the auditorium of Matlab ICDDR, reports BSS.

The workshop was inaugurated by the Chairman of BWDB, AKM Shamsul Huq. The workshop was presided over by Khondkar Helaluddin Alam, Executive Engineer, BWDB. Chief Engineer of BWDB Abu Taher Chowdhury, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chandpur, and other officials were also present. The workshop was held at the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, Chandpur. The farmers of Tk 100-crore Matlab-Dhobadga Irrigation Project area had been imparted training on modern method of cultivation in the workshop.

73,957 bales of jute produced

NETRAKONA, Oct 24: Over 73,957 bales of jute was produced in 10 upazilas this year, according to the agriculture department sources, reports BSS.

Of the total jute produced in the district, 71,033 bales jute was of olitorious variety and 2,924 bales of jute was of capsularious variety. A total of 10,330 hectares were brought under jute cultivation in 10 upazilas this year. 10,000 hectares were brought under olitorious variety while 330 hectares under capsularious variety.

Loan for poor villagers

NETRAKONA, Oct 24: Social Welfare Department under its poverty alleviation programme has disbursed interest free loan totaling Tk 2.7 lakh among the poor villagers in Sadar thana, reports UNB.

Unemployed people from five villages of the thana have taken the loan to undertake small but income generating programmes like cattle rearing and dairy farming. The villages are Chandrakona, Bashati, Kangsha, Faridpur and Polashhati.

Housewife commits suicide

BARGUNA, Oct 24: A young housewife allegedly committed suicide by taking pesticide in Betagi thana on Monday, reports UNB.

Police said Ranu, 25, wife of Malek Molik of village South Karuna, took poison following a feud with her husband. She was rushed to Bamana Health Complex where the attending doctors pronounced her dead.

Slum development programme

RANGAMATI, Oct 24: Development works of 20 slums under Slum Development programme, involving Tk 93 lakh, are likely to begin by the current fiscal, reports UNB.

The project works, including development of sanitation and drainage systems and setting up of primary schools, are expected to be completed by 2001. Officials said several thousand people would be benefited upon completion of the scheme.

Poor price of jute frustrates Mymensingh farmers

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Oct 24: Jute growers are not getting fair prices of their products throughout the district.

Mymensingh region was once famous for growing a huge quantity of jute. But now the scene is totally different. This is because of poor price of jute than the production cost.

This situation is prevailing for the last couple of years. Farmers lost their interest in cultivating this crop which was once the main cash crop of the country.

Now jute is being sold between Taka 250 to 320 per maund which is not reasonable, said some farmers at Shambhuganj Bazaar in the Sadar thana. They also informed that due to price hike of fertilizers and other agricultural materials the production cost of different crops including jute have increased in the recent years in comparison to the market prices.

Abul Hossain, a farmer of village Rashidpur told this correspondent that due to continuous low price of jute in the last few years, jute cultivation has gone down sharply in the district.

The present market price is not honourable to continue jute cultivation. Due to long draught this year, the production has also affected in many areas here, said Abed Ali, another farmer.

Some farmers of village Char Horipur told The Daily Star that following closing down of Shambhuganj Jute Mills, the local demand of jute has decreased here. They also said that due to lack of sufficient jute purchasing centres, the middlemen are taking full advantage by depriving the farmers of fair prices. "If the situation goes on in such way, we can not survive," said some farmers of village Gabinatpur in Phulpur thana.

Following the poor price,

the jute cultivation target had not been achieved in the last few years.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, 28,600 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation in 1997, but 16,057 hectares were cultivated. In 1998, a total of 30,716 hectares were brought under jute cultivation, but 13,720 hectares were brought under cultivation.

Out of total 30,716 hectares of targeted land, 10,000 hectares were brought under jute cultivation in 1999.

If such trend continues, following the poor price, people will forget jute cultivation which has already lost its past glory as golden fibre of Bangladesh, said an official.

Farmers are now continuing jute cultivation to meet up their household demands including fuel and fencing material in many cases, it is also observed.

Outbreak of Hepatitis-B virus disease in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 24: A large number of people are suffering from Hepatitis-B virus disease here and the number of victims are constantly on the increase, according to the local health department.

When contacted some physicians of here told this correspondent that the number of victims of Hepatitis-B virus have increased now compared to those in the previous years in this region.

If steps to stop further spread of the disease is not taken immediately things may go out of control, they said.

They also said the pain from the liver becomes extreme. There are five types of viruses which are responsible for this disease. These are ABCD and E types of virus. Of these, B is the most serious. If at any moment a B-virus infects the body, they immediately attack the liver crippling the entire system of body's metabolism.

If the virus is detected in the preliminary stage, treatment of

the disease becomes possible.

However, if the patient cannot understand that he has been attacked with the Hepatitis-B virus, the condition of the patient may get worse and it may be very difficult to save life.

Local doctors said that, this virus enters into human body through polluted water, air or food and the disease spreads very rapidly. The disease may be infected by decomposed, stale, rotten and adulterated food. The people who have less immunity or resistance capacity in their bodies are more vulnerable to this disease.

If B-virus attacks a man who has less resistance in his body liver cancer may be developed. A medical officer of Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital said that one cannot easily realise that he/she has been attacked by the virus. Excess water, accumulation in the patients' stomach and limbs.

The virus normally spreads from the body of another victim. It may spread from useable

materials of the patient, such as cloth, glass, shirt. If any mother is attacked with B virus and feeds her baby breast milk, the baby too may be attacked with the same virus.

On the other hand, viral fever has also been spreading.

A large number of viral fever patients have been pouring in the hospitals and health complexes of different thanas every day for treatment.

Some viral fever patients informed that they have been experiencing high temperature, spasmodic pain, severe headache, caught and pain all over their bodies.

Some on-duty doctors of the hospital said the viral fever patients suffer for one week to three weeks in severe cases. No effective medicine has been found for this type of viral fever.

Only anti-biotics, antipyretics and anti-allergic drugs are generally prescribed for the treatment of the viral fever patients.



Jiban joyanti: Local artistes of Mymensingh rendering songs at a function arranged recently at the Muslim Institute auditorium in Mymensingh town to mark the birth centenary of poet Jibananda Das. —Star photo



Dipu Begum with her baby

Unmarried mother seeks justice

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Oct 24: With a newborn baby in her lap an unmarried mother at village Jawia under Madan thana is moving door to door to seek justice.

The mother, Dipu Begum, hopes court will legitimise her child.

Family sources said the woman was impregnated allegedly by Lokman, son of one Hafizuddin. She used to work as maid in the house of Hafizuddin.

As Dipu Begum, daughter of late Raisuddin, did not get justice from the village elders, her mother recently filed a case with magistrate court.

Lokman, however, denied fatherhood of the child.

Body recovered

From A Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 24: Police recovered a body of about 35-year-old man from the river Fuljore near Dadpur village under Ullapara thana on Monday.

Police suspected the man was murdered and thrown in the river.

Identity of the deceased could not be known.

Puja Udjapan Parishad thanks people

RANGAMATI, Oct 24: Rangamati Puja Udjapan Parishad has thanked all concerned for extending cooperation in the celebration of their greatest religious festival, Durga Puja, in a completely peaceful atmosphere, reports BSS.

President of Rangamati Hill District Puja Udjapan Parishad, Bijoy Ratan Dey, in a press statement issued here, conveyed thanks on behalf of the parishad to the members of the law-enforcing agency, security forces, media and other concerned authorities for their proper role to enable them to celebrate the Durga Puja peacefully.



Five college students of Sylhet have set out on world tour recently. Prior to the tour they arranged a press conference at Sylhet Press Club. —Star photo

Rapist gets life term

From Our Correspondent

GOPLGANJ, Oct 24: A man was sentenced to life imprisonment by a court here recently for raping a girl.

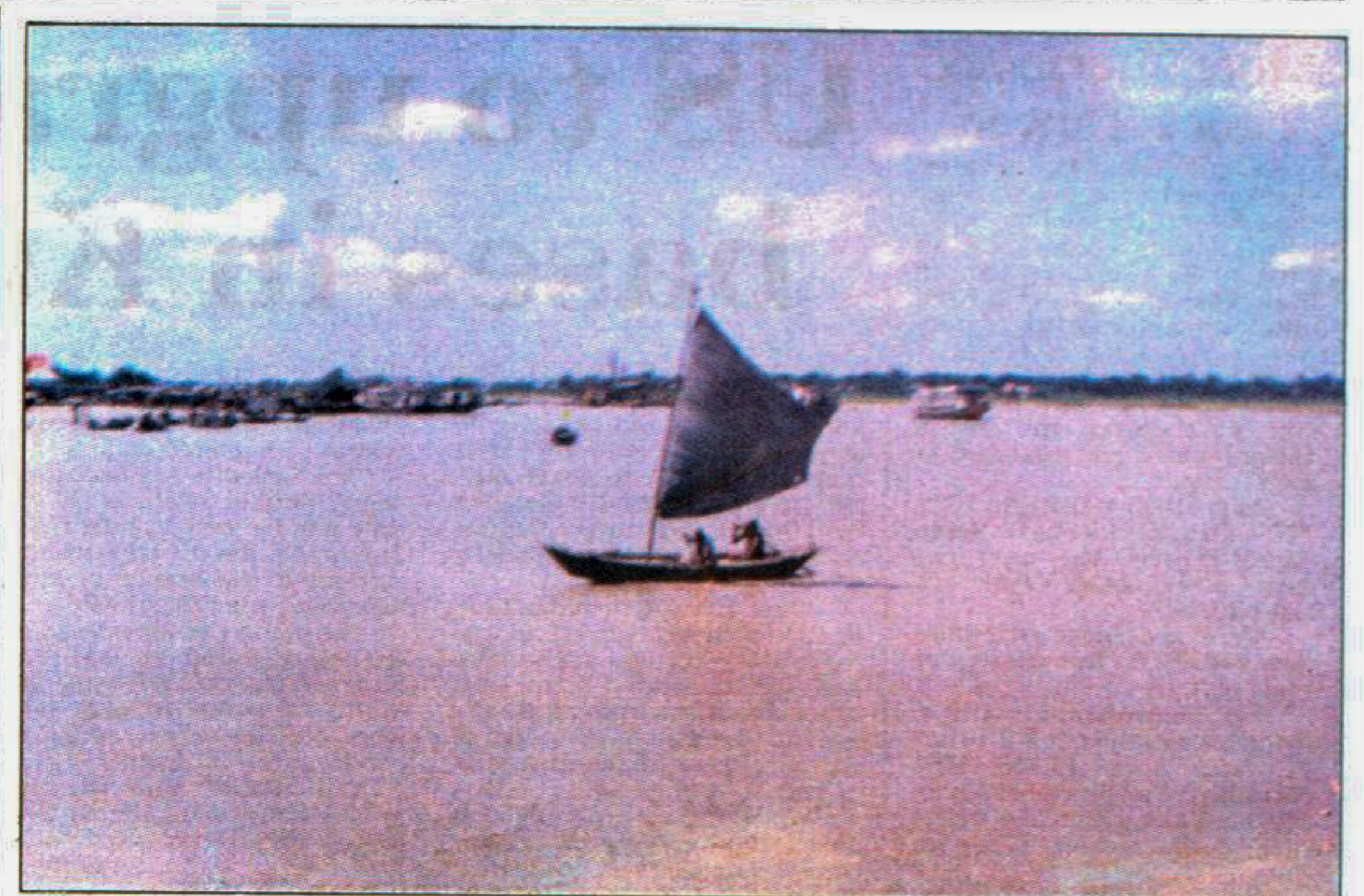
District and Sessions Judge Sudhendu Kumar Biswas found Zahangir Mia, 33, son of Abdul Aziz Mia of village Bahara under Muktasudpur thana, guilty of raping a 11-year-old girl of the same village in 1996.

Mansur Ali auditorium work progressing

From A Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 24: The construction work of Shaheed M Mansur Ali auditorium is going on in full swing.

The PWD project has been undertaken at a cost of Taka 6 crore and 27 lakh. Home Minister Mohammad Nasim inaugurated the work on July 27



Hilsa fishing in the Padma: Most villagers living near major rivers depend on Hilsa fishing to eke out their living for five months starting from May to September every year. Villagers who live near the River Padma around Daulatdia ghat in Rajbari district are no exception. Photo shows they are fishing Hilsa in this mighty river on board an ordinary country boat risking their life. —Star photo by Delwar Kabir

Magura DIARY

Two youths get 7 yrs RI

From A Correspondent

MAGURA, Oct 24: A court here recently sentenced two young men to seven years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a toll collection case.

Assistant Sessions Judge Md Jalaluddin pronounced the verdict on September 30. According to prosecution story, Mahfuz, Nazrul and Tutul, the three young men, demanded Tk ten thousand as toll from a shopkeeper in the on June 15, 1998 and when the shopkeeper refused, they snatched money from cash box. The court, however, acquitted Tutul.

Phensidyl seized

A total of 150 bottles of Indian contraband syrup phensidyl were seized by an anti-drug squad recently.

Acting on a tip-off, the squad raided a house in the town and recovered the contraband. Four people, including two women, were also arrested during the raid. The arrested were identified as Rabiul, 32, Haran, 34, Jahanara, 35, and Sufia, 45. A case was lodged in this connection.

Girl killed in road mishap

A girl was crushed under the wheels of a truck recently on Sreepur-Radhanagar road near Nohato area.

The dead was identified as Shefali, 7, daughter of Sakhat Hossain of village Mohata under Sreepur thana of the district. Witnesses said the accident occurred when the girl was crossing the road. The driver managed to escape with the track. A case was lodged with Sreepur thana in this connection.

Loan for women

District Women's Affairs office recently disbursed Tk 85 thousand as loan among 17 distressed women.

Deputy Commissioner A K M Rafiqul Islam distributed the loan at a function. Officials said the loans were distributed under a rehabilitation programme. The function was also attended by district Women's Affairs Officer Kawsar Parveen and District Fisheries Officer Abdur Rab.

Siege to Jhenidah R&H office

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 24: At least 100 contractors laid a siege to the district office of executive engineer of Roads and Highways last week, demanding payment of Tk three crore bills.

Witnesses said the contractors laid siege to the office when the executive engineer was working in his office at 11 in the morning.

When contacted over telephone, the executive engineer acknowledged the fact and said higher authorities of R&H ordered him to pay only ten per cent of total bills.

Five youths on world tour

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Oct 24: Five young men started 'world tour' from Sylhet recently.

They already left Sylhet for India. With a view to acquiring knowledge and experience they planned the visit. Historical place and other places of interest will get preference during their visit, they informed while talking to a group of journalists at Sylhet Press Club recently.

They are the students of Dhaka Dakshin Degree College of Golapganj thana — Golam Ambia and Nanu Miah of village Raighah, Abdul Karim of Barokut, Makhani Miah of Noarai Dakshin bhag under Golapganj thana and Riazuddin of village Konagram under Beanibazar thana. Prior to the tour they said that they expressed their optimism in completing the tour in due time.

Low quality of Indian Rabi crop seeds flood N-dists

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 24: Local markets in the northern districts, including Sirajganj, have been flooded with low quality of Indian Rabi crop seeds threatening a good harvest in the current season, reports UNB.

A great enthusiasm has been created among the farmers of northern region for cultivation of vegetables after opening of the Bangabandhu Bridge.

Sensing the demand of seeds, a section of dishonest seed traders have been smuggling the low quality seeds of Rabi crops from across the border and selling those at various local markets at lower price than that of

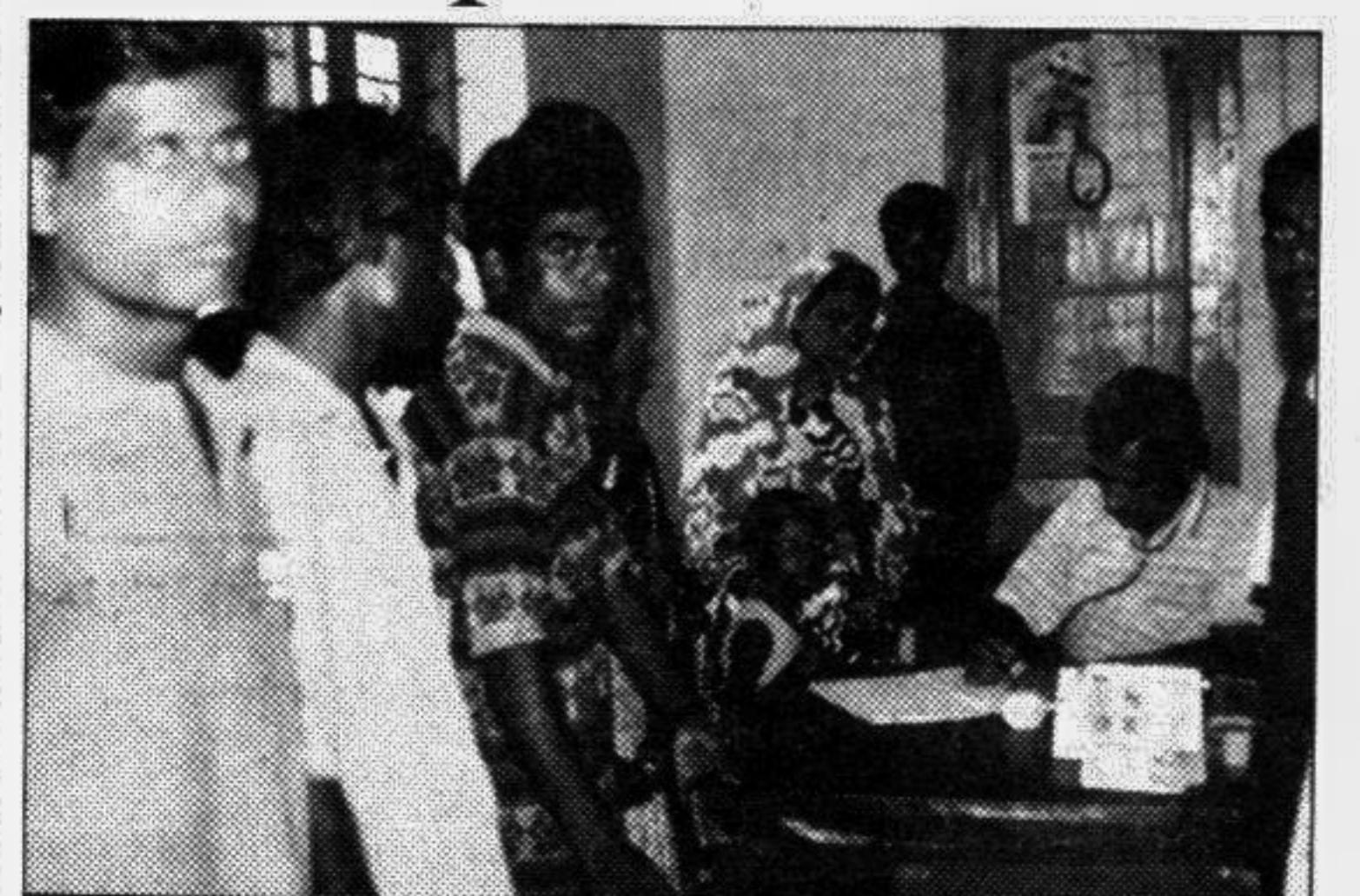
available varieties in the country.

Farmers alleged that low quality seeds of various vegetables like radish, lady's finger, cucumber, cauliflower, cabbage, papaya, chili are randomly being sold at various markets.

The farmers also alleged that they are incurring heavy loss as the germination rate of these seeds is very poor. The germination failure will lead to entire crop failure, said an agriculture expert.

The farmers have urged the law-enforcing agencies and concerned authorities to stop selling of these spurious seeds.

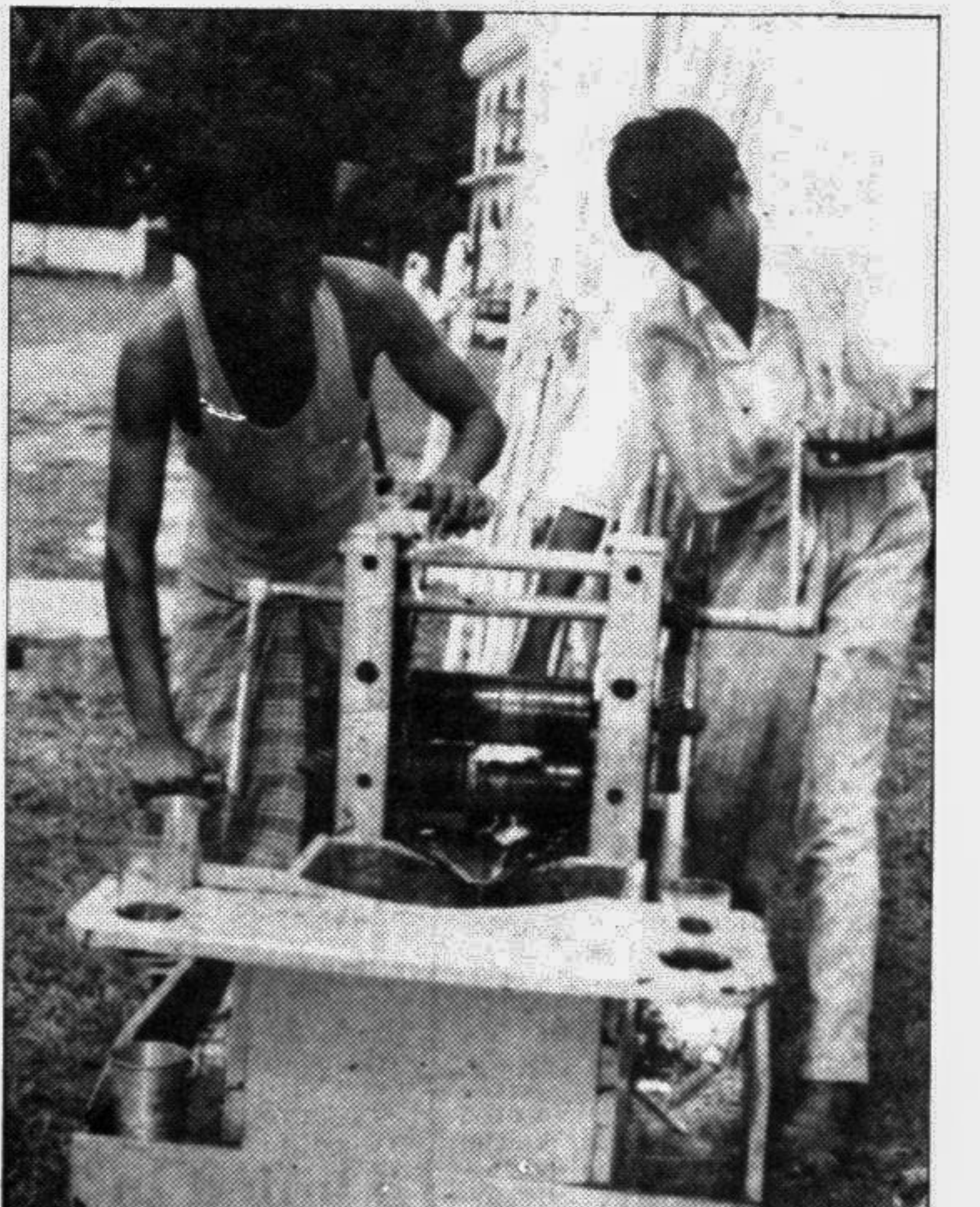
Events of districts in pictures



A large number of patients rush every day at Moheshpur Thana Health Complex in Jhenidah district. But the patients are being deprived of healthcare facilities due to shortage of doctors. —Star photo



Prof Muhammad Yusuf Ali, former Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University addressing a meeting organised recently by the Rajshahi unit of Fulkuri Asar at a community centre in Rajshahi city. Dr A K M Ajharul Islam, Professor of Physics of Rajshahi University presided over the meeting. Additional District Magistrate Humayun Kabir was the special guest. —Star photo



Many faces of child labour: Two boys namely Kalam, 13, and Aziz, 14, extracting sugarcane juice this way to help their father earn livelihood, when privileged boys of his age group go to school. This photo was taken from Nomani Maidan area in Magura town. —Star photo