

## News snaps

### Debate competition concludes

**NARSINGDI, Oct 26:** A ten-day debate competition on adoption of unfair means in the examinations and the present education system concluded at Satirpara K K Institute here recently, reports BSS.

Students of 10 schools participated in the debate competition organised by the Narsingdi Rotary Club. Md Forkan Uddin Ahmed, president of Narsingdi Rotary Club presided over the concluding day's function. Additional Deputy Commissioner (Development), Narsingdi Ashraf Hossain attended the function as the chief guest. District Education Officer Azizul Huq and Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nurul Islam spoke on the occasion as the special guests.

### Safe home inaugurated

**RAJBARI, Oct 26:** Construction of two buildings under a project aiming at rehabilitating the children of sex workers have been completed at Goalanda thana at a cost of Tk 40 lakh, reports UNB.

Karmajibi Kalyan Sangshata (KKS), a local NGO, built one storied and another two storied buildings under its Safe Home programme with financial assistance from Save the Children of Australia. KKS President Moazzem Hossain Badal inaugurated the "Safe Home" at a simple ceremony on October 8. "We don't want to see the daughters of sex workers following their mothers' footsteps... we want to ensure them a normal life," he told the opening programme. The organiser said initially there are arrangements for rehabilitation of 25 girls in the home and the accommodations will gradually be increased. KKS Executive Director Fakir Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Noman and Mohammad Nuruzzaman also addressed the inaugural function.

### No physician in health centres

**THAKURGAON, Oct 26:** Thirty-eight union parishads of the district out of 51 have no health centre, forcing the people either to go to the thana headquarters or sadar hospital for treatment, reports UNB.

Locals said only 13 unions here have health centres, but 11 of them have no doctors. Health workers have long been working in the centres in absence of physicians.

### Fake factory unearthed

**PABNA, Oct 26:** Police unearthed a fake pharmaceutical factory at Kutipara in the town on Sunday, reports UNB.

They also recovered some 7 lakh various types of tablets, raw materials and equipment worth over Tk 20 lakh. Acting on a tip-off, a special squad of police led by Additional SP Mortaz Ahmed raided the residence of Jalal Ahmed at Kutipara and discovered the factory inside his house. The house inmates fled the scene sensing police presence. Police said Jalal had long been engaged in producing and marketing fake medicines in the area, posing a threat to public health.

### 17,934 certificate cases filed

**NETRAKONA, Oct 26:** A total of 17,934 certificate cases have been filed against farm loan defaulters of the district, owing over Tk 24 crore, reports UNB.

Officials said five commercial banks, including Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), filed the cases to realise their outstanding loans. BKB alone filed 14,831 cases for realising Tk 21.28 crore while Agrani Bank filed 1772 cases for Tk 1.88 crore, Janata Bank 1032 cases for Tk 1.31 crore, Sonali Bank 284 cases for Tk 33.50 lakh and Rupali Bank 15 cases for Tk 6.54 lakh.

### Eye camp at Shivalaya

**MANIKGANJ, Oct 26:** An eye camp organised by the Bangladesh National Society for the Blinds (BNSB), Manikganj branch was held at Boalia Government Primary School in Shivalaya upazila last week, reports BSS.

More than 200 eye patients were treated by qualified ophthalmologists. Many cataract patients were operated upon. The poor patients were given medicines and glasses free of cost.

### Politics of hartal condemned

**CHITTAGONG, Oct 26:** Mayor of Chittagong ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Sunday said that destruction of public property and beating of sewerage workers could not be political programmes of any party, reports BSS.

He said, being jealous of success of the government in various fields, which has already been praised by the people, BNP and its allies have resorted to destructive politics. Mayor Mohiuddin said this while workers of Chittagong City Corporation met with him and demanded exemplary punishment to those who were responsible for attacking them during hartal called by opposition parties on October 21. The workers said that BNP and its allies declared the garbage truck out of the preview of hartal, but they damaged garbage truck during all hartals. They said it is impossible on the part of corporation workers to continue conservancy works if opposition political parties continue their destructive activities.

### Headmistress dismissed

**MANIKGANJ, Oct 26:** The Assistant Headmistress of Utholi High School in Shivalaya has been dismissed from service by the school managing committee for submission of fake certificates, reports UNB.

The action was taken against the headmistress, Hosne Ara Begum, following a report that she had taken the job about 20 years ago submitting fake educational certificates. The school authority said that an inquiry found the report true and she was terminated from service.

### Reception to minister

**RAJAPUR (Jhalakathi), Oct 26:** Communications Minister Anwar Hossain urged the teachers community to play a stronger role to check erosion of morality at all fields including social and political arena, reports BSS.

Speaking at a reception organised by Rajapur Thana Government Primary Teachers' Association at Rajapur Pilot High School here, Hossain regretted that moral erosion gripped the political leadership due to lack of moral education. Describing education as a pre-condition for development, the minister said the guardians also require to become more careful about their children along with the teachers to groom their wards as worthy citizens of the country.

### Agri-loan not recovered

**NATORE, Oct 26:** Agricultural loan about Tk 25.16 lakh disbursed by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) nearly a decade back could not yet be recovered for lack of proper initiatives, reports UNB.

Official sources said BADC had distributed agricultural equipment, including 336 shallow tube-wells, worth about Tk 50.88 lakh to local farmers as loan on condition that the loan be paid in installments. Of the tube-wells, Natore BADC distributed 295 tube-wells, including 53 in sadar, 26 in Baraigram, four in Lalpur, 204 in Shingra and eight in Gurudaspur thanas, before closing its office in 1992. During the period 1981-82, it distributed 41 tube-wells worth about Tk 10.08 lakh through Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) among farmers in Natore Sadar, Lalpur and Singra thanas.

### Alleged criminals arrested

**TANGAIL, Oct 26:** Tangail police in a drive against anti-social activities arrested 948 persons and recovered 25 weapons from different places during the last two months, official sources said, reports BSS.

Among the arrested persons 108 were alleged terrorists and extortionists and the rest 840 arrested on charges of different anti-social activities. The arms included revolvers, daggers, Chinese axes and 'chapatu'. Seventy-three persons were arrested on October 21 from different places of Tangail Sadar Upazila on various charges, police said.

### Touch stone statue recovered

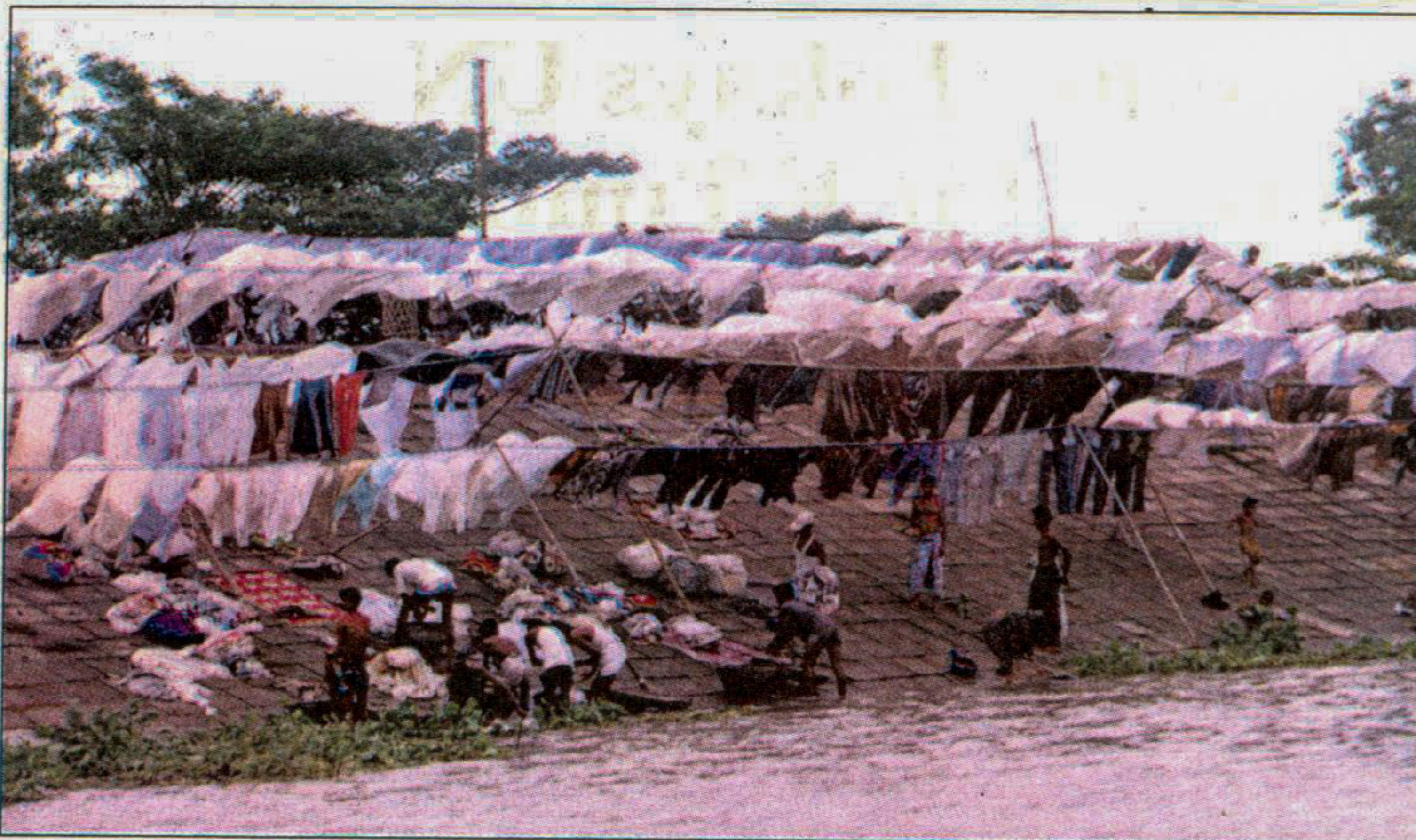
**THAKURGAON, Oct 26:** A 36.4-kg statue of touch stone worth Taka three crore was recovered by the BDR personnel on October 17 from village Chameshwari in the sadar upazila, an official source said, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off, a special task force of 3-Rifles Battalion of Bangladesh Rifles accompanied by a Magistrate recovered the statue from a pond of village Chameshwari in Baragoan union of sadar upazila. The officials think that the smugglers had brought the statue there for smuggling to India. The height and breadth of the statue are 33.5 inches and 14 inches respectively. The statue was deposited to the district customs authorities.

### Revenue collection hampered

**NAOAGAN, Oct 26:** Revenue collection in various thanas are seriously being hampered as a good number of posts have been lying vacant, reports UNB.

Official sources said 46 posts of officers and employees, including four of Assistant Commissioners (land), were lying vacant.



**Unsafe washing:** Traditional laundry services were once monopolised by a community known as *dhopa*, who were mainly Hindus. Time has changed now. Most of the *dhopas* have either left the country or shifted to other professions over the years. The sector has been taken over by newcomers comprising thousands of unemployed youths. Lacking modern washing machines and devoid of ponds or proper washing spots, hundreds of modern day *dhopas* wash their clothes in the highly polluted Buriganga, Sitalakha or in other rivers by the big cities. According to doctors the clothes washed in the polluted water may carry germs causing various diseases and skin disorders. The germs may still be there after use of hot iron, they said.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin. Text by Morshed Ali Khan

## Acute onion scarcity in Kushtia markets

From Our Correspondent

**KUSHTIA, Oct 26:** Acute scarcity of onion has been prevailing in various markets in the district, triggering price hike.

At present onion is being sold between Tk 50 and Tk 60 per kg in local markets, traders said.

Local agriculture officials have attributed the crisis to production fall.

Total demand for onion in the country is 4 lakh 15 thousand metric tons. But the annual production is about 2 lakh metric tons. The deficit is generally met through import.

Demand for onion has been increasing every year, but the annual rate of increase in production of onion has not been satisfactory.

Official sources said in 1981-82 total production of onion in

the country was one lakh 30 thousand mt; one lakh 38 thousand mt in 1982-1983; one lakh 34 thousand mt in 1983-1984; one lakh 39 thousand mt in 1984-1985; one lakh 34 mt in 1985-1986; one lakh 28 thousand mt 1986-1987; one lakh 38 thousand mt 1987-1988; one lakh 43 thousand mt in 1990-1991; one lakh 44 thousand mt in 1991-1992; and in 1992-1993 the production was one lakh 40 thousand mt.

Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Magura, Rajbari, Pabna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, and Mymensingh are important onion producing districts.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take steps to increase onion production.

Another report adds: Local

people have also been suffering from acute shortage of garlic for several years.

Total production of garlic in the country cannot meet the demand, agriculture official sources said.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said in 1991-92, 12 thousand hectares of land had been brought under garlic production and total production of the spice had been 38 thousand metric tons.

The sources added in the year 1998-1999, a target to bring 4 lakh and 3 lakh hectares of land under onion and garlic farming respectively was set. Onion and garlic production targets were 4 lakh mt and one lakh 73 thousand mt respectively. Actual figures of production were not available.

## Pests invade T-Aman in 2 dists

Transplanted Aman crops on a vast tract of land were attacked by pests in different areas of Naogaon and Chandpur districts in the current season, report agencies.

Production of Aman paddy faces a serious setback as vast tracts of transplanted Aman field in Sapahar thana of Naogaon district has been attacked by insect and rat.

Local farmers said thousands of acres of Aman field in various areas, including Shi-

ranti, Goala, Aihai and Patari, have been attacked by a kind of tiny insect locally called "current Poka."

The paddy plant attacked by the pest first turns yellowish and later dries up, they added.

In a bid to protect their paddy, many farmers are spraying insecticide in their fields but not getting any results.

Transplanted Aman crop on about 12,000 hectares were attacked by pests in Chandpur district.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Chandpur office sources, 1,55,000 hectares have been brought under transplanted Aman cultivation.

Different types of insects like Pamri and Mazra, have attacked the crops.

The insect-affected areas are: Chandpur Irrigation Project, Matlab Dhonegoda Irrigation Project, Haimchar, Hajiganj, Shaharasti and Faridganj thanas.

## Drought affects guava plantations across southern region

From Staff Correspondent



Guava traders are waiting at a ghat. They carry guavas by boats for the wholesalers in different places of the country.

— Star photo

**BARISAL, Oct 26:** Prolonged drought has taken toll on the famous guava of Jhalokati and Pirojpur infecting the protein

rich fruit with a fungal disease known as 'anthracnos'. The disease has alarmingly gripped guava plantations in

more than 12,000 acres of land. And production is estimated to be falling much below than the output of about one lakh maunds a year seven to ten years ago.

Earlier, nearly one lakh maunds of guava had been produced on at least 12 hundred acres of land in Swarupkathi of Pirojpur and Banaripara of Barisal districts every year.

Moreover, the drought like weather has attributed to fall in production. Such weather continued at least for five months during November 98 to May 99. As a result guava production fell nearly by 40 per cent at the primary stage.

A fungal infected guava usually becomes smaller in size, normally tasteless with more or less black dots on its body.

According to experts, the black dots are developed due to fungus infection.

Besides, guava plantations turned thinner and dried up due

to 'wilt disease' caused by 'Fusarium' fungus infection.

Guava production is also being hampered due to these reasons this year.

On September 9 last a 12-member team of experts from crop preservation wing of Dhaka Farm House and Garden Research Centre of Dhaka visited the affected guava gardens.

The team included gardening experts, entomologists and other researchers. They visited three villages of Swarupkathi thana in Pirojpur district during the visit.

Earlier, the agriculture department took up 'package programmes' to control this type of fungal diseases on different occasions.

Meanwhile, a group of experts from Barisal Regional Agriculture Office and the Agriculture Centre of Rahamatpur jointly conducted research works in this regard after visiting the affected gardens.

Comparatively, 'Swarupkathi variety' of guavas are considered to be the best of all varieties available in the southern region. In size, taste and production such guavas are the best of all.

Guava is being sold at the rate of Tk 100 per maund in the wholesale market while at the rate of Tk 300 in the retail markets this year. So far, an amount of half a crore taka was collected by the growers by selling guava during this season. The amount is much more less than the previous years.

Guava growers have alleged that they could not market their produce directly due to various reasons. As a result, they are being deprived of fair price of their products continuously.

Recently, Agriculture Extension Department (AED) conducted one workshop involving Bangladesh-Canada Agriculture Development Fund, farmers, agri-goods traders, NGO representatives, agriculture department workers at Swarupkathi.

## No killing on RU campus in 3 yrs

From RU Correspondent

**RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Oct 26:** No one was killed in clashes between rival students on the campus in the last three years, although the lone varsity in the northern region experienced several number of clashes and violence during the period, said proctor of the university.

In a statement issued recently the proctor, Prof Mokhesur Rahman, said the situation here is almost peaceful and activists of different student organisations are staying together in their dormitories.

The statement also said there was no 'unscheduled leave' during the period.

Regarding September 5 clashes between students of two departments that left about 50 students injured the proctor said, "Teachers of the two departments could have easily settled the matter".

Despite 'clam' on the campus, some departments have been suffering from session jams, lingering duration of courses, students said. The departments are English, Psychology, Geology and Mining, Sociology, Social Work, and Bengali. Students have attributed the

jams to 'extra-academic' activities and administrative responsibilities of teachers, which hamper academic activities.

## Rivals' clash leaves 2 dead in Pabna

From Our Correspondent

**PABNA, Oct 26:** Two persons were killed and 20 others injured in a clash between two rival groups of villagers of Khotobari in Mulgram union under Chatmohor thana here on Sunday night.

According to witnesses, the incident took place when the rival groups all on a sudden attacked each others.

The victims were identified as: Rabbai, 28 and Anwar Hossain.

It may be mentioned, both of the deceaseds were accused persons in connection with the sensational 12-Murder Case committed on August 28 in 1988.

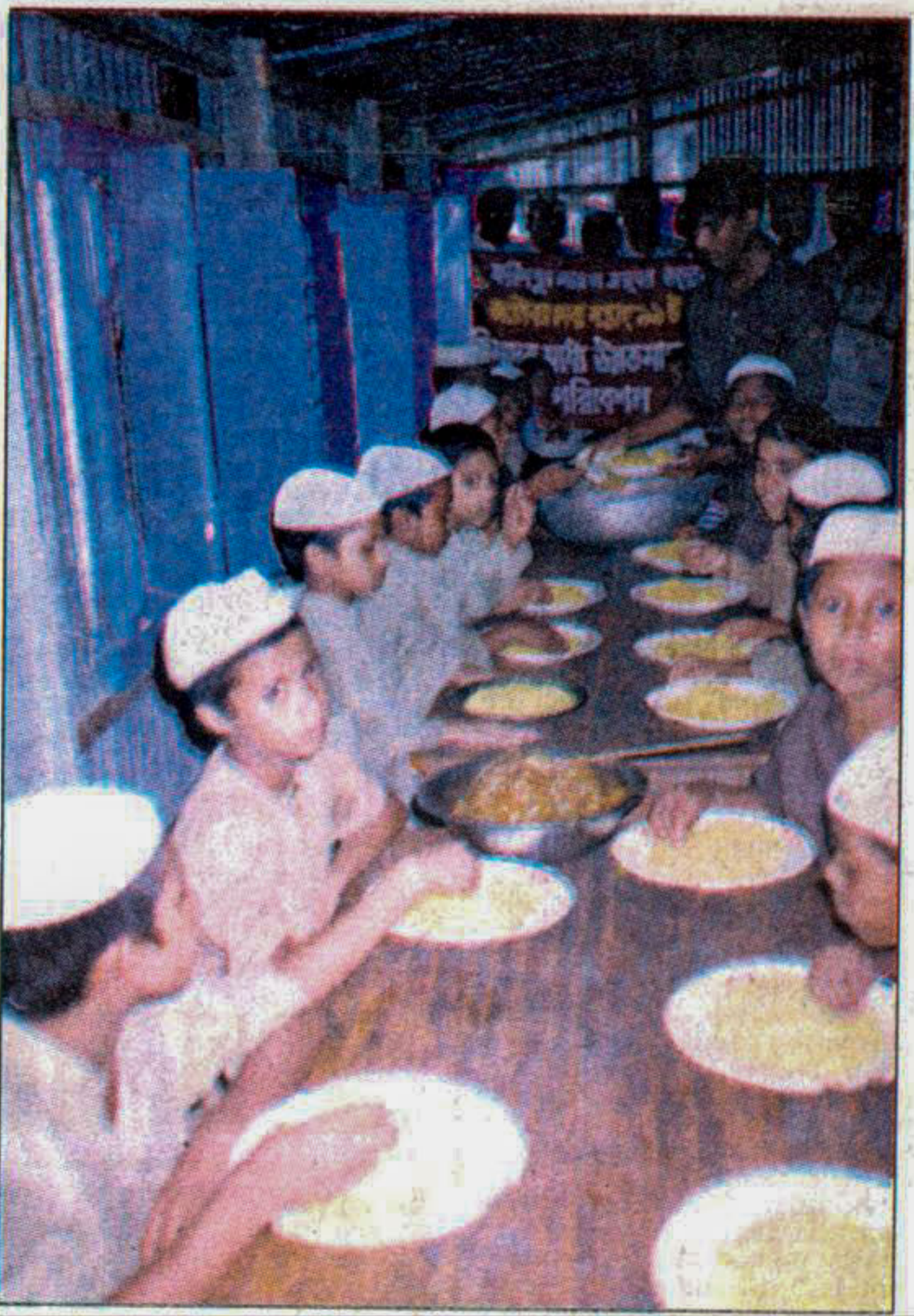
Police arrested three persons in this connection. The arrested are identified as: Aminul Hossain Mokshed, Mozammel Huq and Nazim Uddin.

## Events of districts in picture



Prerona, a voluntary organisation of Chandpur district awarded prizes to the talents of this year's HSC and SSC examinations at a function arranged recently in the town.

— Star photo



Faridpur Lions Club observed the International Lions Service Week '99 in a different manner recently. The club served improved diet to the inmates of Arambag Orphanage which is situated at the outskirts of Faridpur town.

— Star photo

## Six killed in 2 road accidents

Six persons were killed in two road accidents in Chittagong and Rajbari districts on Monday, reports UNB.

Two people were killed and 45 others injured in separate accidents in Satkania and Mirershorai thana of Chittagong district on Monday.

One of the deceased identified as Abdul Quddus, 45, died on the spot when a speeding truck bound for Cox's Bazar ran through Thakurdighi bazar in Satkania thana at 10 am after its driver lost control over the steering.

Five other people were also injured in the accident and admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. They were: Abul Kalam, 45, Abdul Gani, 25, Fiyaru, 25, Kabir Azam, 55 and Mojoyed, 25.

Meanwhile a Chittagong-bound bus fell into a ditch beside Dhaka-Chittagong Trunk Road at Hadi Fakirhat at 2 pm killing a 46 year old unidentified woman on the spot and injuring 40 others.

Of the injured 20 were admitted to CMCH and others at Mir-

ershorai Thana Health Complex.

After the accident, road communication on the highway remained snapped for two hours as a portion of the bus obstructed the road.

The body was sent to CMCH morgue.

A head-on collision between a tempo and a bus on Rajbari-Kushtia road killed four people and injured 10 others on Monday.

Two of the victims were identified as Haran Mondol, 45, and Ajmol, 25, of Surjanagar area and rest unidentified men were between 30 and 25 years of ages. All were tempo passengers.

Witnesses said the overloaded tempo bound for Dhawapara ghat rammed into the bus in front of the under construction district jail building at 7:30pm.

Of the injured, Firoza, Rafiqul, Nazma, Parvez and Parul were admitted to sadar hospital and Golap, Azim and Goni sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital. Police seized the truck but the driver fled.