

News snaps

Housewife beaten to death

MANIKGANJ, Nov 8: A young housewife was allegedly beaten to death by her husband at Hatheor village in Gheor thana on Thursday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Jamila 30, wife of Siddique of the village. Police said Siddique often used to torture his wife demanding Tk 20,000 as dowry from her parents. On the day of the incident, he allegedly struck Jamila with a bamboo stick, said her maternal uncle who filed a case with the local police. Siddique went into hiding after the incident.

Body recovered

MANIKGANJ, Nov 8: The body of an unidentified youth was recovered from Aricha ghat area early Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said they recovered the body from in front of Khandaker Flour Mill and sent it to Manikganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police said the body bore several injury marks. They apprehend that somebody left away the body there after killing him.

12 hurt as AL factions clash

BARISAL, Nov 8: A clash between supporters of two factions of local Awami League at Padarhat in Muladi thana left 12 people injured on Thursday, reports UNB.

Supporters of Abdur Razzak Bhui, President of thana Awami League, attacked the house of another leader Arif Mahmood at about 11 pm. Some seven rounds of gunshot were fired and several crackers blasted during the half an hour clash. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The clash ensued when news was spread that rival supporters abducted Bhui and confined him at Arif's house. Earlier, there was a hot exchange of words between Arif and Bhui at a meeting arranged to resolve a long-standing dispute over a shrimp enclosure. The meeting over, Arif took Bhui to his house. Later, Bhui was sent to his house by police escort.

Two killed in separate accidents

JHENIDAH, Nov 8: Two unidentified men were killed in separate accidents near the town on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said the bodies of 45-year-old and 35-year-old men were sent to local unit of Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam for burial after the postmortem at sadar hospital. The first man died on the spot when a bus hit him at Madhupur, 7km off the town on Dhaka-Khulna highway and another one was run over by a speeding truck at Chandpur, 9km off the town, on Jhenidah-Kushtia road. Two cases were filed with police.

Cooperative Day observed

BAGERHAT, Nov 8: National Cooperative Day was observed on Saturday through holding meeting and rally, reports UNB.

District cooperative office organised the meeting at the auditorium of Shilpakala Academy in the morning. State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain attended it as chief guest. Presided over by district cooperative officer Khairul Aman, the meeting was addressed, among others, by district Awami League general secretary Fakir Monsur Ali. Following the meeting, a procession led by State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain, paraded different roads in the town.

Foodgrains for poor people

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 8: The government sanctioned 1,258 tons of rice to distribute among poor people in seven thanas under the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme recently, reports BSS.

According to official sources, the Relief and Rehabilitation Department has issued 41,600 VGF cards for three months in 67 unions. Each card holder will be getting monthly 10 kilograms of rice, official sources added.

Construction of REB bldg begins

CHUADANGA, Nov 8: The construction of Chuadanga zonal office building of Rural Electrification Board (REB) has begun at Alodkia, three miles from here, recently, reports BSS.

The work is progressing satisfactorily. According to Chuadanga zonal office of REB sources, at the first phase, the construction of staff quarters has just been completed at its new site and the construction of structures of other offices, staff quarters and store will be done gradually. The total cost of construction is estimated to be over Taka one crore.

Development schemes progressing

RANGPUR, Nov 8: Works on various development projects, undertaken at a cost of Tk 6.74 crore under Nine Town Water Supply and Sanitation programme in the current fiscal, are progressing fairly well, reports UNB.

Rangpur Pourasabha is implementing the projects with financial assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB), officials said. The projects included setting up of 62-km water pipeline, three overhead tanks, one water treatment plant and six pump houses at various parts of the town, including Ganeshpur, Grand Hotel Crossing and Dhap Shaymoli Lane, Rabartsonganj and Radhaballav. Meanwhile, 60 per cent works of the projects have been completed while the rest is expected to be completed by June next.

Absconding convict arrested

MUNSHIGANJ, Nov 8: Police, acting on a tip-off, arrested an absconding convict from Nayagaon in Panchesar union recently, reports BSS.

According to police, the convict, identified as Manir Hussain, was tried in absentia in a case under Women Repression Act in the district and Sessions Court at Sathkira and sentenced to suffer life term on October 3 this year.

30 hurt in road accident

MANIKGANJ, Nov 8: A head-on collision between two trucks on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Dhamrai thana left 30 people injured on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police said the mishap took place at about 12:30 pm when a truck carrying 30 people veered off the road and rolled down a ditch after a collision with another truck. The passengers, mostly from Rupganj, were going to Garpara Imam Bari, known as Peer Bari. Seven of the injured were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Body of housewife recovered

JHENIDAH, Nov 8: Police recovered the body of a housewife from a pond at village Sujadia in Moheshpur thana on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said the body of Sakina Khatun, 18, wife of Umedur Rahman, was found floating in the pond adjacent to their house. Family sources said Sakina went to bed on the previous night as usual and they did not know how she died. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Vaccination Day observed

BRAHMANBARIA, Nov 8: The 6th National Vaccination Day was observed here on November 2, reports BSS.

More than four lakh children, under five years, have been fed two drops of polio vaccine on that day. Deputy commissioner Latifur Rahman, civil surgeon Syeda Badrun Nahar and Brahmanbaria Pourasabha chairman M Helal Uddin inspected different vaccination centres. They also gave vaccine drops to children at different centres. The rest of the children who were not given polio vaccine will be fed from November 7-10. Later the civil surgeon with the medical officer Dr Shoukat Hossain went to Akhaura upazilla to visit different centres.

100 bottles of phensidyl seized

MAGURA, Nov 8: Police seized 100 bottles of Indian phensidyl from a bus here on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said they recovered the drugs from a Barisal-bound bus. None was arrested.

'Step to contain terrorism'

KISHOREGANJ, Nov 8: LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman said BNP, knowing that it would not be able to return to power through ballot, has chosen the path of conspiracy, reports BSS.

But its move to unseat the government through movement, hartal and conspiracies would not succeed, he added. The minister was addressing a huge rally organised by Bajitpur thana Awami League here on Thursday. The LGRD and Cooperatives Minister said Begum Khaleda Zia is desperate to grab state power through undemocratic means and for that the party engaged itself in a deep rooted conspiracy with the autocrat and Razakars. Expressing firmness of the government to contain terrorism, chaos and anarchy, he said, stringent measures would be taken against those engaged in terrorism or subversive activities.

Student killed in road mishap

SATHKIRA, Nov 8: A madrasa student was killed in a road accident near Tala Muktijoddha College on Sathkira-Tala Road near here recently, reports BSS.

Police said the accident occurred when a brick-loaded truck hit Abdullah, 12, of village Shahapur in Tala thana. The victim died on his way to hospital. The driver managed to escape with the vehicle.

A success story of Mymensingh Horticulture Centre

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, Nov 8: The Horticulture Centre at Kewatkhali in Mymensingh is playing a vital role in increasing fruit production through development of local variety by grafting.

The centre has so far developed five mango varieties in the recent years. The newly developed varieties are - Amrapali, Ratna, Sindhu, Misra Special and HYV-10.

Zakia Begum, assistant Horticulturist of the centre told The Daily Star that they developed Amrapali by breeding Dashedhuti and Nilash, Ratna by breeding Nilash and Alfansho, HYV-10 by breeding Alfansho, Sindhu by breeding Ratna and Alfansho and Misra Special by breeding good local varieties.

Zakia Begum also said that for developing the local varieties they collected branchlet of mother plant of the above mentioned varieties from India and grafted with local varieties. Various research institutes of India developed these varieties for high yielding of fruits.

The specialty of these mangoes are - they are juicy, succulent, tasty, very sweet with grand flavour said Zakia

Begum. Besides, these varieties produce more fruits in comparison with our local varieties. Following the good production, the demand of these kinds of saplings are increasing rapidly. Farmers from the nearby areas are collecting saplings from the centre. "We are also trying our best to meet up the great demand for such developed varieties", she informed. She also added, the centre has been selling saplings at reasonable prices to the farmers.

The centre has also developed local varieties of fruits by breeding method. They are - HYV-Olive, HYV-Kamranga and HYV-Star apple.

The centre developed these varieties by collecting good local varieties and grafting them, official sources said. Within two years these plants produce fruit. Now there are many plants in the centre full of fruits.

Other characteristic of these trees are - those are short in size, but produce more fruits at early stage. Such trees can be transplanted in the yard as it needs small space.

The horticulture centre also developed some items of vegeta-

bles like Early Snowball, a variety of cauliflower, atlas-70, a variety of cabbage, BARI-Tomato, Roma-BF Tomato and Broccoli, other vegetables.

Md Rafiqul Islam, another horticulturist of AED office told they have been producing developed seeds and saplings of vegetables and selling to the farmers, to produce vegetables according to demands.

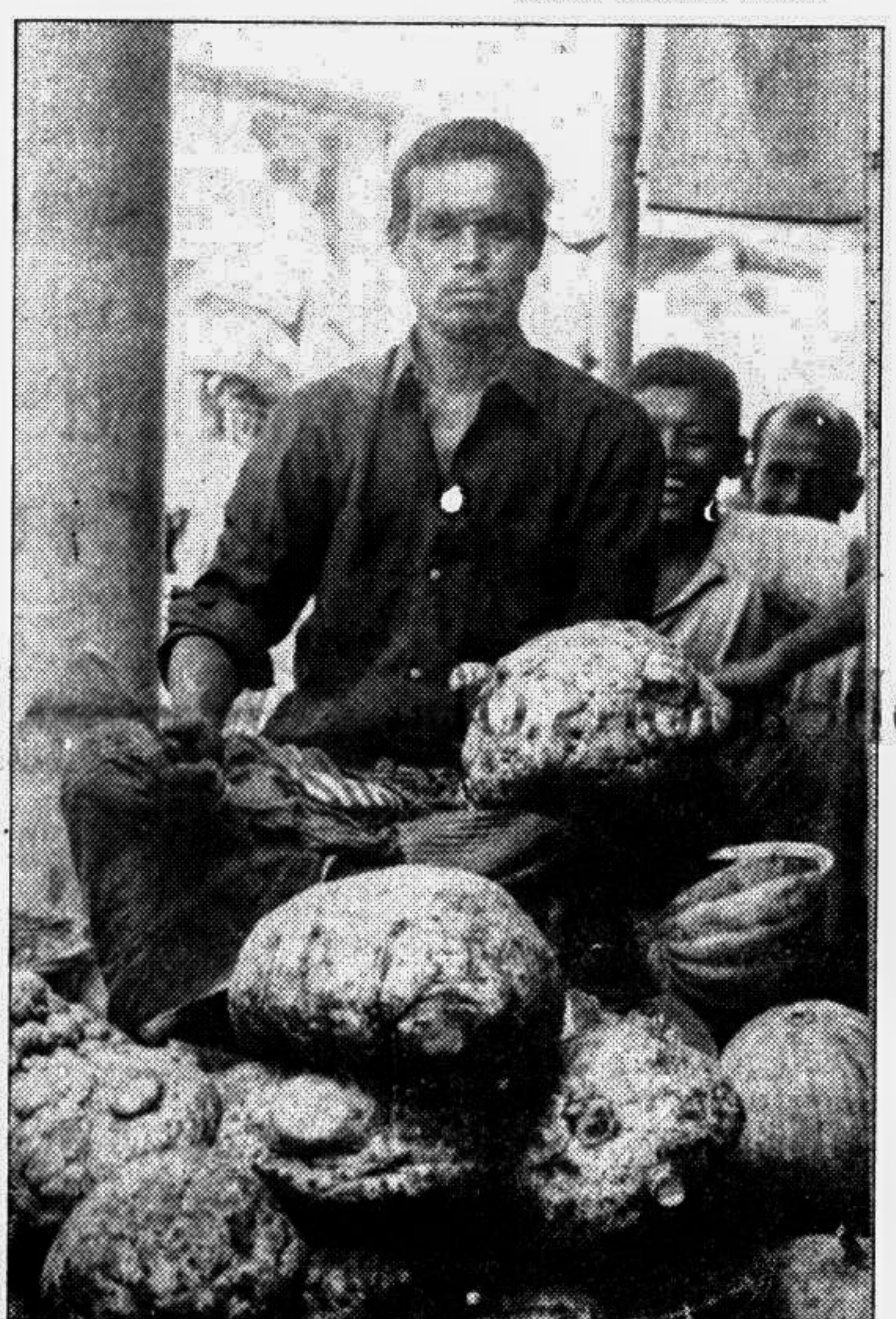
This centre has given training to 5,000 farmers on "Fruit and Vegetables" in the last five years.

Besides this, training programme, this centre has involved 5,040 male and female farmers of nine villages in sadar thana under "Shaymol Gram (Green village) Programme. The villages are - Boyra, Sutiakhali, Rashidpur, Vabakhali, Kewatkhali, Digarkanda, Shabajpur, Raghurampur and Ragupur.

When asked why such kind of programme has been taken up and what is the impact on the farmers, Zakia Begum told this correspondent that in this way the farmers will be involved directly with the programme and learn modern method of agriculture practically. She also said that the impact is positive.

Arum cultivation gains popularity in Jhenidah

From Delwar Kabir



Arum on hot sale at a local bazaar in Jhenidah district. —Star photo

JHENIDAH, Nov 8: Arum farming has been gaining popularity in Jhenidah, Magura and the surrounding districts. This has become a profitable cash crop now-a-days.

Previously arum was found in Jessore, Sarsa and some other markets of Jessore districts. A few quantity of arum was supplied in Jhenidah markets from Barobazar market in Kaliganj thana of Jhenidah district. But now arum has become very popular in the markets. In each and every weekly hots and bazaars now arum is available abundantly as the farmers have started its farming on commercial basis.

Talking to Mannan Seikh, 40, a farmer at Madandanga hat, in Saikupa hat, he said that he produced at least 20 maunds of arum on his three decimals of land. Of the total he sold 15 maunds in the market at the rate of Taka 240 per maund. According to him, he will be able to sale his product for Taka 5,000. He had spent about Taka 1,000 for purchasing seeds, preparing lands and other expenses. He said that a farmer can earn at least Taka 30,000 from one bigha of land excluding all expenses while he can earn Taka 4,000 from the same piece of land by cultivating paddy.

Abdul Latif, 31, a retailer of arum at Seikhpura hat said that the size of arum in this season was between five kg and 15 kg. But it was out of imagination in the markets of the district about five years back.

Another farmer Gani Seikh, 72, of village Fazilpur in Saikupa thana informed that arum grows better on high land and the soil of Jhenidah district is very suitable for arum cultivation.

Musclemen active as harvesting nearing

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Nov 8: With the advent of harvesting season in char (shoal) areas hired goons, commonly known as lathials, are preparing themselves, looming large bloodshed and violence.

Farmers, who expect bumper Aman production, in the southern region are set to start harvesting from next month.

Growers cultivate crops on char lands but they can hardly reap the crops as musclemen hired by influential people attack them to loot harvest. Every year many people are killed in clashes in char lands, especially in newly emerged chars, over harvesting.

Police sources said at least one thousand chars out of

nearly four thousands in six districts under Barisal division are very much prone to violence.

Higher authorities have directed the 38 thana administrations to make lists of lathials.

According to an estimate, there are nearly 90 lathial bosses under whom about three thousands lathials work in this region.

Police sources said 33 police camps have already been set up. Of them, 19 were set up in Barisal, three in Bhola, four in Jhalakathi and seven in Pirojpur and Patuakhali. But more police camps will be set up in the southern region, the sources added.

Problems grip Siriganj General Hospital

From Our Correspondent

SIRIGANJ, Nov 8: Various problems, including lack of medicines and equipment and unhygienic condition, have gripped Siriganj General Hospital, depriving people of proper medicare facility.

Patients said they have to buy most of the necessary medicines from outside. Besides, the hospital lacks medical equipment. Most of medical tests are not done in the hospital.

The hospital compound is littered with waste and garbage, much to the sufferings of patients and visitors. Local people said hospital floors are not cleaned properly.

The hospital has no blood bank, hampering treatment facilities to patients.

Patients alleged doctors in the hospital do not pay much attention to patients. Doctors are more interested in private practice, they added.

Local people said presence of middlemen in the hospital compound is one of the major problems. Middlemen always influence poor patients to have treatment in private clinics. People have urged the authorities concerned to stop the activities of middlemen.

Allegation also has it that many medicines meant for patients in the hospital sell in black markets.

Another massgrave unearthed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 8: One more massgrave was unearthed at village Harinagopal in Bagmati union of sadar thana here.

The massgrave was unearthed recently by villagers based on information disclosed by an old man to locals. The old man claimed that he had witnessed the massacre in 1971.

A 70-year-old village security personnel (Chowkidar) named Balam Das, who witnessed the massacre, first informed the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of sadar thana that the Pakistani occupation forces on May 31 in 1971 had surrounded the village and massacred over 100 people, mostly youths.

TNO Bipulananda Ghosal along with local people on Monday dug the spot and recovered some human bones. However, the bones were not examined for carbon testing as yet.

The TNO informed the higher authorities in Dhaka for taking necessary steps for detail investigation and taking statement from the local people.

Balam said that his younger brother - Kanaila Das was one of the victims, who had been killed by the occupation Pakistani force.

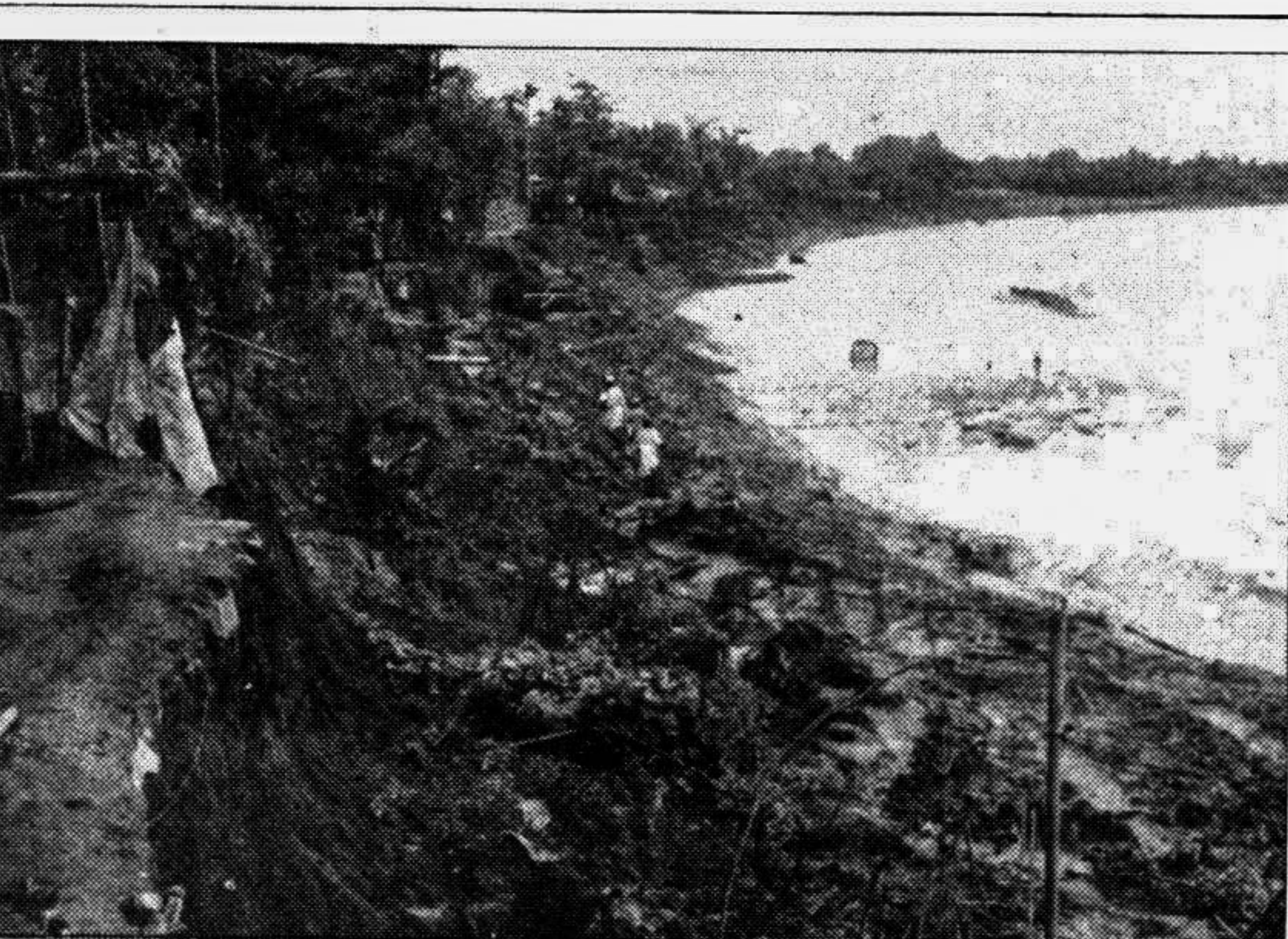
Aged villagers suspect that brutal Pakistani army had massacred 100 more youths almost simultaneously at a neighbouring village - Alokia under sadar thana.

They said a large number of people from Bogra, Sherpur, Chandaikona and Raiganj took shelter at Harinagopal and Bagmati to save them from the hands of the occupation Pakistani forces during the Independence War.

But local collaborators informed the Pakistani forces who had sieged the villages before sun rise and opened fire on the sleeping people. Besides, the Pakistani troops and their collaborators looted valuables, raped and set fire on many houses.

Over 100 people were killed during the three hours' massacre by the Pakistani troops.

Earlier, another massgrave was unearthed at village Narina in Shajadpur thana two months back.



Panic of erosion: A vast tract of lands including many homesteads have been devoured by the River Halda in Rauzan thana of Hathazari in Chittagong district. This photo has been taken recently from Ruhullahpur village.

—Courtesy Didarul Alam Didar

Jute becomes farmers' bane in northern districts

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, Nov 8: Farmers in the region have lost interest in jute cultivation due to its poor price which is below the production cost.

Available estimates put the production cost of one maund of Toshi variety of jute at nearly Tk 360 and that of local variety at Tk 270. But the market prices, on average, for the same Toshi jute is Tk 290 and for local jute Tk 230 this season.

Last year, the prices went below Tk 200.

Some established and semi-established landowners culti-

vate jute for jute sticks which are used as fuel for cooking and for fencing purpose.

In many cases, the demand of jute sticks is higher than that of jute fibre. The sticks are also used to make fences as a substitute to bamboo, which is costlier.

Crisis of High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds has also been prevailing in the region for many years. Now growers produce seeds by their own arrangement.

However, due to last year's prolonged flood and rain, production of seeds had been ham-

pered. On the other hand, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADCO) supply of HYV seeds is not enough. New varieties of seeds such as C-320 and C-322 of white jute, and O-632 and O-753 of Toshi jute ensure high yield.

Unfortunately, the supply is often not smooth. As a result, many jute growers are not even aware of the high-bred seeds.

Many of the growers depend on smuggled Indian seeds, which are found a plenty in the local markets.

These Indian seeds are sold

well although yield is relatively poor.

Knowledgeable circles say, farmers are suffering a lot for the Agriculture Department's poor management of supplying HYV seeds. As a result, cultivation of jute is being hampered greatly.

Farmers in the region do not have adequate access to natural water bodies for jute processing, because most of them are now used for fish cultivation. After harvesting the jute plants are tied up in a bundle and kept under banana stalks, hyacinth and even mud in stagnant water

to rot it. Once decomposed, the fibre is separated from the sticks.

Moreover, absence of effective marketing facilities also contributes to heavy losses.

There are some jute markets at Bonpara and Dhanadaha in Natore, Jhalpalia and Baneswar in Rajshahi, Nandigram and Sherpur in Bogra and Swardi, Dasuria and Muladuli in Pabna districts of this region.

There have been allegations that the state owned mills do not buy jute directly from the farmers. The licence-holder

1,000 tubewells out of order in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent KUSHTIA, Nov 8: More than 1,000 tubewells went out of order in the district in recent days due to pilferage of spare parts of tubewells and lack of proper maintenance by the authorities concerned.

People in the rural areas are suffering from acute shortage of drinking water.

The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) is entrusted with the task of installing and repairing of tubewells.

Local people alleged officials concerned hardly visit rural areas to inspect the condition of tubewells. They have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to mitigate their problem.

Jaundice in epidemic form in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, Nov 8: Jaundice, a disease caused by excess of bile in the blood, has broken out in an epidemic form in the hill district, claiming five lives and affecting hundreds of people in last three months, reports UNB.

The worst affected areas are Billaichhari, Jurachhari, Langdu and Rajstoli.

Most of the jaundice-affected people were seen consulting traditional herbal practitioners only to worsen their condition.

Doctors attributed the outbreak of the infectious disease to consumption of contaminated waters and foods.

Killer husband gets life term

TANGAIL, Nov 8: A court here has awarded life term imprisonment to a young man for murdering his wife in 1996, reports UNB.

District and Sessions Judge Begum Jinat Ara also fined Molina Miah alias Molnal Tk 1,000 and in default to suffer imprisonment for another one year.

According to the prosecution case, Molnal of village Kanglichheo in Sakhipur thana strangled his wife, Jharna Begum, to death on their way home from his father-in-law's house on November 3, 1996.

The judge after examining the records pronounced the verdict on October 27.

Another court here has sentenced three people to five years' rigorous imprisonment each for smuggling contraband Indian Phensidyl in 1995.

The judge of the special tribunal number 7, Mohammad Shahidullah on October 28 also fined them Tk 500 each, in default to suffer six months more in jail.

Convicts Helal Uddin, Javed Hossain and Abu Kawsar of Fatullah thana in Narayanganj district were carrying 52 bottles of Indian phensidyl when police arrested them at Gobindasi bus stand in Bhupur thana on August 19, 1995.

Obituary

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Nov 8: Headmaster of Moezuddin High School here Md Imanuddin Ahmed died of massive heart attack recently at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). He was 55.

He was suffering from high blood pressure and other complications, family sources said. His body was brought to Faridpur where his namaj-e-janaza was held at Moezuddin High School playground. He was laid to rest at the local Alipur graveyard.

The deceased left behind his wife two sons, a large number of students and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent says: Tarun Kanti Deb, Headmaster of Portious Boys' High School at Rajnagar died of heart failure at his Gonespur village home in Rajnagar thana recently.

He was 51. Tarun Kanti Deb left behind his wife, three daughters a son and a host of students and friends to mourn his death.

15 shops gutted in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Nov 8: A devastating fire gutted 15 shops at Aminuddin Bazaar under Sonagazi thana recently.

According to fire brigade office sources, the fire originated from short circuit gutted goods worth about Taka 20 lakh.

The fire was brought under control after 30 minutes.