

News snaps

Construction work suspended

SYLHET, Dec 1: Construction of the 56-km Sylhet-Tamabil-Jafong road remained suspended following a clash between local people and employees of a construction firm responsible for implementing the project, reports UNB.

The clash that took place at the office of Monica Limited on November 16 claimed two lives. Construction works on the first ever gigantic project here since the country's independence began in June this year. It involves Tk 116 crore with help from the Kuwait government. Two construction firms have been assigned to construct the road, dividing it into three projects after floating international tenders. As per the tender schedules, an Indian construction firm is supposed to construct a 22-km road from Sylhet Central Post Office to Haripur while Monica Limited the rest 34 km of Haripur-Jaintapur and Jaintapur-Jafong road.

Navigability of river reduced

RAJBARI, Dec 1: Navigability of the River Padma in Aricha-Daulatdia ferry route has been reduced drastically threatening the movement of ferries, reports UNB.

Although two dredgers were employed to maintain the navigability of the ferry channel, but those failed to keep up the pace as the water level is falling fast. Officials at the jetty said another dredger is immediately required to gear up the dredging activity. Due to reduction of water level a large number of shoals have already been surfaced in the route. The channels have shrunk into a narrow stream through which two vessels are unable to run side by side. The Ro-Ro ferries frequently run aground in the submerged shoals. Due to lowering of water level, loading and unloading of vehicles through pontoons are also being hampered. Ferry ghat sources said BIWTA started construction of two low-water approach roads at Daulatdia aimed at unhindered movement of vehicles. But the work on the roads is also going on at a snail's pace.

Boat seized

BAGERHAT, Dec 1: Forest guards seized a mechanised boat along with huge goods looted from a stranded foreign ship and held 10 pirates from Litekhali area in the Sundarbans on Wednesday, reports UNB.

On information, police brought the boat carrying the looted goods to Sharankhola thana on Thursday and arrested the pirates. They were identified as Abul Kasem, Masud, Tayejul Islam, Abdul Khaleque, Bikash Patwari, Siddiqur Rahman, Selim Hawlader, Jahangir, Altaf Kazi and Abu Jafar. The recovered items included furniture, equipment and wooden door and window frames of the ship, MV Ocean Wave, that remained stranded near Hiron Point of the Bay. Mongla Port sources said the Chinese flag-carrier ship with 14,500 mts of cement from Indonesia ran aground hitting an emerging shoal on Oct 8. As the captain and crew members abandoned the ship on Oct 18, an organised gang of pirates swooped on it on several occasions and looted its valuable goods and equipment.

Tk 11cr road dev project

BANDARBAN, Dec 1: In an effort to develop the communication network, the government has taken up a Tk 11 crore road development project for the three hill districts, reports UNB.

Officials said a total of Tk 5 crore has already been sanctioned for development of 12 roads in Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts in the current fiscal. Roads and Highways Department will implement the projects. Meanwhile, the work on thana-connecting road project undertaken earlier was progressing well. Another road development project will be taken up soon, they said. Sources at the R&H Department said renovation works on different dilapidated roads of the hill districts could not be carried out properly due to lack of funds. The R&H department urged the authorities concerned to allocate necessary funds on an emergency basis to repair these shabby roads.

Sanction for 3 projects

MAGURA, Dec 1: Local Government Engineering Department under its rural development programme has sanctioned over Tk 1.78 crore for implementation of three projects in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Of the amount, Tk 54 lakh has been earmarked for construction of Majhipara-Bunagati road, Tk one crore for Rajapur-Kullia road while Tk 24.35 lakh for Gangarampur Union Parishad complex, said an LGED official. Meanwhile, works on the projects have begun and are expected to be completed by June next.

Children deprived of pry edn

PANCHGARH, Dec 1: Over five lakh children in 16 northern districts are being deprived of primary education, clouding the prospect of the government-sponsored programme 'Education for All by 2000', reports UNB.

According to a survey, there is no primary school in 8,000 villages out of 25,415 in the 16 districts of Rajshahi division. Sources at the Panchagarh DC office said two lakh children in three greater Dinajpur districts are not getting primary education as 1,234 villages in 23 thanas have no primary school. They said there is no primary school in 321 villages of Panchagarh district while 685 villages of Thakurgaon and 228 villages of Dinajpur districts.

2 alleged extortionists arrested

BARISAL, Dec 1: Police arrested two alleged extortionists from Line Raod in the town on Sunday night and recovered 10 bullets from their possession, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a video shop and nabbed Masum Hossain, 28, and Zafar, 26, along with the bullets. Meanwhile, plainclothes police arrested two drug addicts while they were taking Indian phenisidyl at Kashipur on the day.

8 killers get life term

GAIBANDHA, Dec 1: A court here on Monday convicted eight people and sentenced them to life imprisonment for killing a student leader, reports UNB.

The convicts are Khaled, Bhutto, Babu, Pavel, Sukumar, Rubel, Khorsheed and Khusu. The court also acquitted four people. According to prosecution, some activists of two student organisations attacked JCD leader Sharmin Ahmed Tuku of Gaibandha Government College and killed him on the campus on April 29, 1994. The elder brother of Tuku filed a case against 12 people. After examining the records and witnesses the district and sessions judge Sirajuddin Ahmed gave the verdict.

Phenisidyl recovered

BENAPOL, Dec 1: Sharsha thana police, acting on a tip-off recovered 800 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from village Satmuri of Sharsha thana on November 25, reports BSS.

Police recovered the bottles hidden under the earth at the house of one person named Rafique of the village. Earlier, police also recovered 700 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from the same village on November 10 and 330 bottles of phenisidyl syrup from Benapole on November 2.

Man killed by miscreants

KUSHITIA, Dec 1: One person was killed by miscreants at Lahini para in Kumarkhali thana recently, reports BSS.

The victim was identified as Panna, 25, of village Cheria in Kumarkhali thana. The miscreants abducted him on November 20 from his village. Police recovered the body on the next day from a bush at Lahinipara under Kumarkhali thana and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Kumarkhali thana in this connection.

Qirat competition held

MYMENSINGH, Dec 1: A day-long qirat competition was held here on November 23. Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Mymensingh organised the competition, reports BSS.

The competition was arranged on the occasion of Holy Shab-e-Barat. A large number of students participated in the competition. Muslim devotees offered night-long prayer on the holy occasion. Quran Khawani and milad mabul were also held at different religious institutions.

Eye camp concludes

BANDARHAN, Dec 1: An eye camp set up here on November 26 treated more than 100 patients, including operation of cataract eyes of 51 persons, reports UNB.

The camp concluded on Tuesday with distribution of spectacles among the patients. The civil surgeon said similar eye camp will be held at Naikhangchhari December 1-5 and at Ruma December 6-10.

Workshop on road safety

KHULNA, Dec 1: A workshop on 'Road Safety Awareness and Education' was arranged here by 'Bridge', an NGO of Khulna city at the conference room of the deputy commissioner, recently.

The workshop was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner of Khulna, Azahar Ali Talukder. Mostofa Ahmed Babu, Executive Director of IMCT and Coordinator, National Road Safety Awareness read the main paper. Besides, Zahur Haque and Jebunessa Khan Poli of Bridge, Lokman Hossain Molla of BRTA and Abdur Sattar, Additional Commissioner (General), Khulna spoke on the subject.

Growers sell jute below production cost

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Dec 1: Jute growers here are not getting fair prices of their products due to absence of competitive buyers.

Besides, middlemen are influencing the prices, farmers said.

Some growers at Tangra Khola Bazar under Muksudpur thana said they are now selling their products below production cost. At present, jute sells between Tk 220 and Tk 300 a maund in local markets.

This situation has been prevailing for the last couple of years, frustrating jute growers. Farmers have lost their interest in cultivating this crop, which was once considered the main cash crop of the country, an official of local Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said.

Farmers also said due to price hike of fertilisers and other agricultural inputs, production cost of the crops has increased in recent years, but the price of jute has not increased

accordingly.

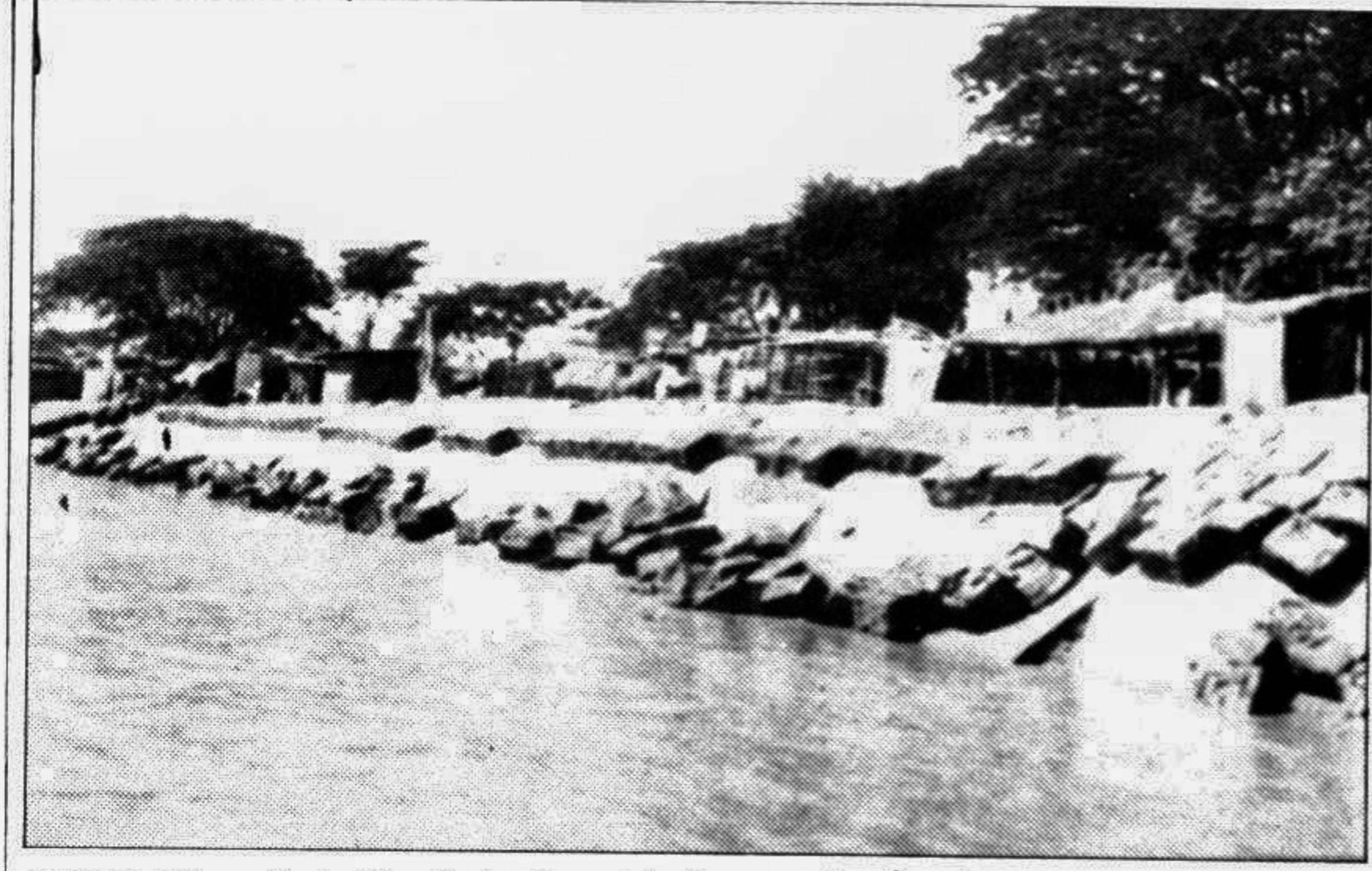
Local AED took up the scheme to bring 4,457 hectares of land under jute cultivation with the production target of 31,823 bales this season.

The thana-wise break-up of land under jute cultivation was 660 hectares in Sadar thana, 36 hectares in Kotalpara thana, 130 hectares in Tungipara thana, 771 hectares in Kasianni thana and 2,860 hectares in Muksudpur thana.

The government controlled BJMC jute purchase centres at Kanapuri, Ambikapur, Kamarkhali and Kaderdi under the district owed a huge amount of money to suppliers, both middlemen and farmers. Last year the centres purchased jute on credit.

However, BJMC cannot afford to purchase jute this year due to sharp fall in the water level of the mighty river. The embankment was renovated during the last rainy season. This photograph was taken from the Dargahpara area in the city last week.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take steps to make payment as early as possible to the suppliers.



Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment is threatened again due to fresh erosion by the River Padma. This is due to sharp fall in the water level of the mighty river. The embankment was renovated during the last rainy season. This photograph was taken from the Dargahpara area in the city last week.

— Star photo

Sufia Kamal's death condoled

THAKURGAON, Dec 1: A condolence meeting at the sad demise of noted Poet Begum Sufia Kamal was held on November 26 at Thakurgaon municipal auditoriums, reports BSS.

The meeting, organised by Sammilati Natya Parishad, was presided over by its President Prof Monotosh Kumar Dey.

Political leaders, cultural workers, government officials including the deputy commissioner and police super, teachers, students and people from different strata of life were present in the meeting.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Deputy Commissioner Md Abdul Baki, Police Super Fatema Begum, Advocate F A Mohamad Hossain, Advocate Nurul Haque, Advocate Indra Nath Roy and Principal Seyed Meraul Hossain.

The speakers, while paying glowing tribute to the memory of the poet, said Begum Sufia Kamal was not only a poet but also a conscious and active social worker. During many social and political crisis of the country she raised her voice and fought for the genuine cause. The speakers urged the audience to follow the ideals of Begum Sufia Kamal.

Kidnapped young man rescued: One held in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 1: Police rescued a kidnapped young man and arrested one of his abductors from an abandoned house near a brickfield at Bangla Bazar area under Panchalish thana in the city in the early hour today.

The rescued man was identified as Shohag, 18, and the kidnapper Md Harun alias Mona, 20.

Shohag was kidnapped from Chanda Nagar Bazar under the same thana by some local miscreants for a ransom of Tk 50 thousand at around 7.30 pm yesterday after Shohag's brother-in-law Shahidul Islam, a contractor, refused to pay them toll.

Meanwhile, police recovered a stolen car from Andorkilla crossing under Kotwali thana at around 2.30 am today. The car was stolen from in front of Bodna Shah's Mazir at Probari crossing under Panchalish thana on the night of Shab-e-Barat.

Police-JCD clash at B'Baria: 14 injured

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Dec 1: At least 14 people were injured in a clash between police and JCD activists here today.

JCD brought out a procession in the town at 4-30 pm protesting arrest of its district unit general secretary Assuduzzaman Shahin.

Assad was arrested today in connection with some cases filed against him with Brahmanbaria thana.

According to police and witnesses, the trouble began when police intercepted the procession marching towards Brahmanbaria thana.

The JCD activists exploded crackers, hurled brickbats at police and damaged two private cars.

Police fired 50 rounds of rubber bullets and tear gas shells to disperse the JCD activists.

Police also arrested one Kazal, 23, from the spot.

8 ex-Shantiabahini men receive loan

BANDARBAN, Dec 1: Eight members of former Shantiabahini, who earlier surrendered availing of the government amnesty, have received interest-free loan totaling Tk 40,000, reports UNB.

CHT Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma distributed the loan, provided by the Department of Social Welfare, at Bandarban Circuit House on Nov 25.

Official sources said the government has also allocated 2 metric tons of wheat for them.

BSS reports: The Government has undertaken fifty projects to construct 955 kilometre roads with a view to developing communications in three hill districts, official sources said here.

Representatives of various donor agencies recently visited the hill districts and they had shown their keen interests for the development of hill tracts, particularly communication networks.

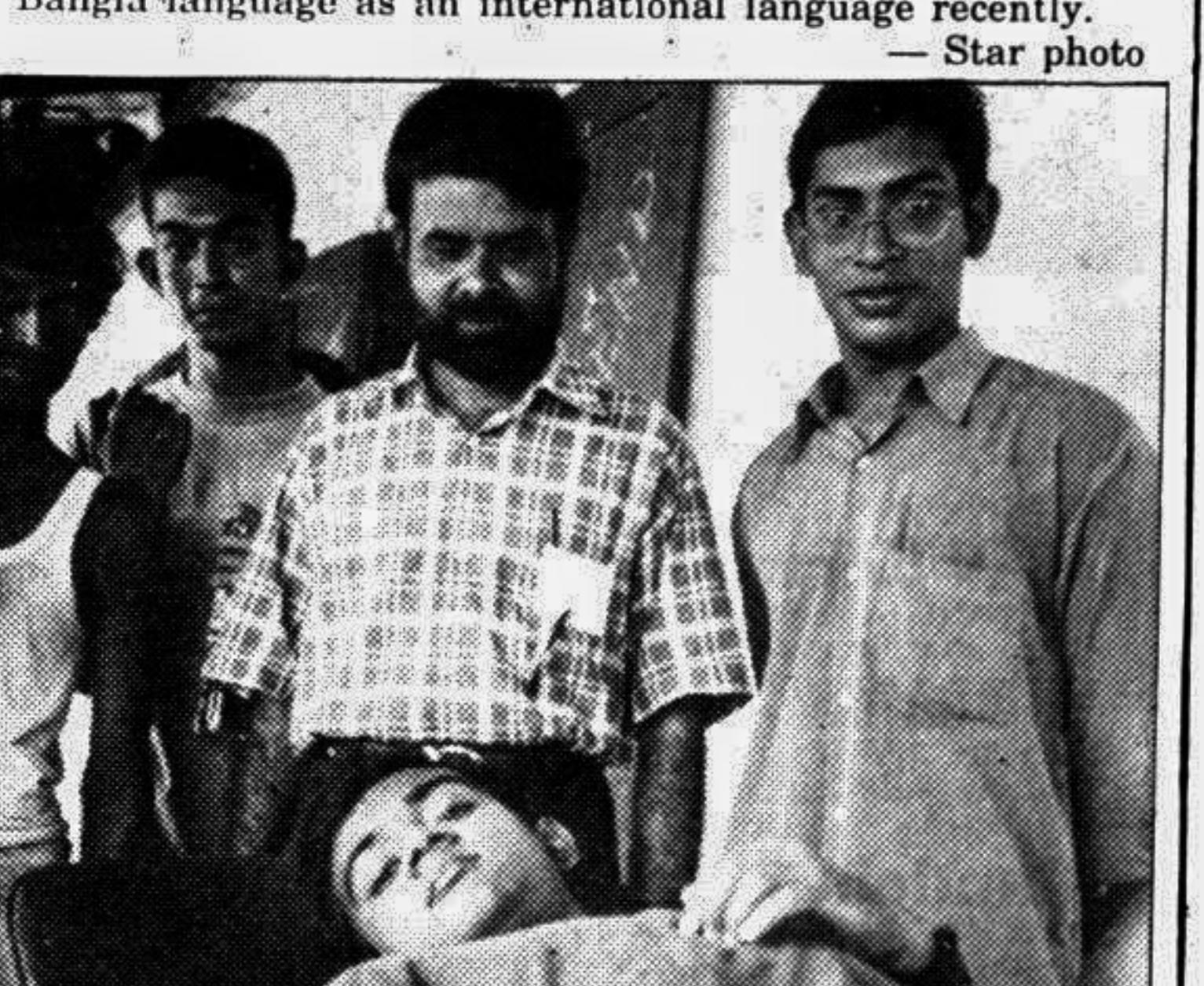
Communications will be eased between three hill district headquarters and 25 thanas after completion of the projects.

Events of districts in picture



Syeda Zebunnissa Haque MP, speaking at a discussion meeting arranged on the occasion of the recognition of Bangla language as an international language recently.

— Star photo



Reception to Rangpur Cadet College talents

RANGPUR Dec 1: The cadets of Rangpur Cadet College who secured good results in the last HSC examination were accorded a reception at Rangpur Cadet College here on Tuesday afternoon, reports BSS.

Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, Bir Bikram, was present on the occasion as the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief of Army Staff said that the outstanding performances of the cadets would remain as imitable examples for the youth of the country. They must maintain their endeavour so that they could grow as worthy citizens of the country in future, he added.

General Mustafiz said that the cadets would acquire practical knowledge and broaden their outlook so that they could contribute in the scientific and technical advancement of the

The Rangpur Area Commander, Major General Ahsan Nazmul Amin, high civil and military officials were, among others, present at the reception.



Now hectic preparation has been going on for Boro farming in Jhenidah district. Photo shows (L-R) a farmer ploughing his land, another one preparing the land following its ploughing and the third one cleaning seedbeds from dew drops.

— Star photo