

## News snaps

### Construction work suspended

**SYLHET, Dec 1:** Construction of the 56-km Sylhet-Tamabil-Jalrong 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 Monico 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 Monico Limited the rest 34 km of Haripur-Jaintapur and Jaintapur-Jalrong 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 BWTA 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 Lilekhali 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, Tayeul Islam, Abdul Khaleque, Bikash Patwari, Siddiqueur 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 Mahpara-Banagati road, Tk one crore for Rajapur-Kullia road and 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

**PANCHAGARH, 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 Road 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 phensidyl 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, Khorshed and Khushu. The court also acquitted four people. According to prosecution, some activists of two student organisations attacked JCD leader Shamim 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.

### Phensidyl recovered

**BENAPOLE, Dec 1:** Sharsha thana police, acting on a tip-off recovered 800 bottles of phensidyl syrup from village Samile of Sharsha thana on November 25, reports BSS.

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

### Man killed by miscreants

**KUSHTIA, 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 Cheoria 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 Lahini para 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 mahfil were also held at different religious institutions.

### Eye camp concludes

**BANDARBAN, 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, reports BSS.

The workshop was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner of Khulna, Azhar Ali Talukder. Mostofa Ahmed Babu, Executive Director of IMCT and Coordinator, National Road Safety Awareness read the main paper. Besides, Zahurul Haque and Jebunessa Khan Pol 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 Kotalipara thana, 130 hectares in Tungipara thana, 771 hectares in Kasiani thana and 2,860 hectares in Muksudpur thana.

AED sources, however, said the target to bring land under the cultivation was not achieved as farmers showed reluctance because of poor prices of jute in the last couple of years.

Farid Mollah, a farmer of village Basbaria under Tungipara thana, told this correspondent that he had sold his crop below the production cost.

Our Faridpur correspondent adds: Jute growers in the district are losing interest in

cultivating the crop as they are selling their product below production cost.

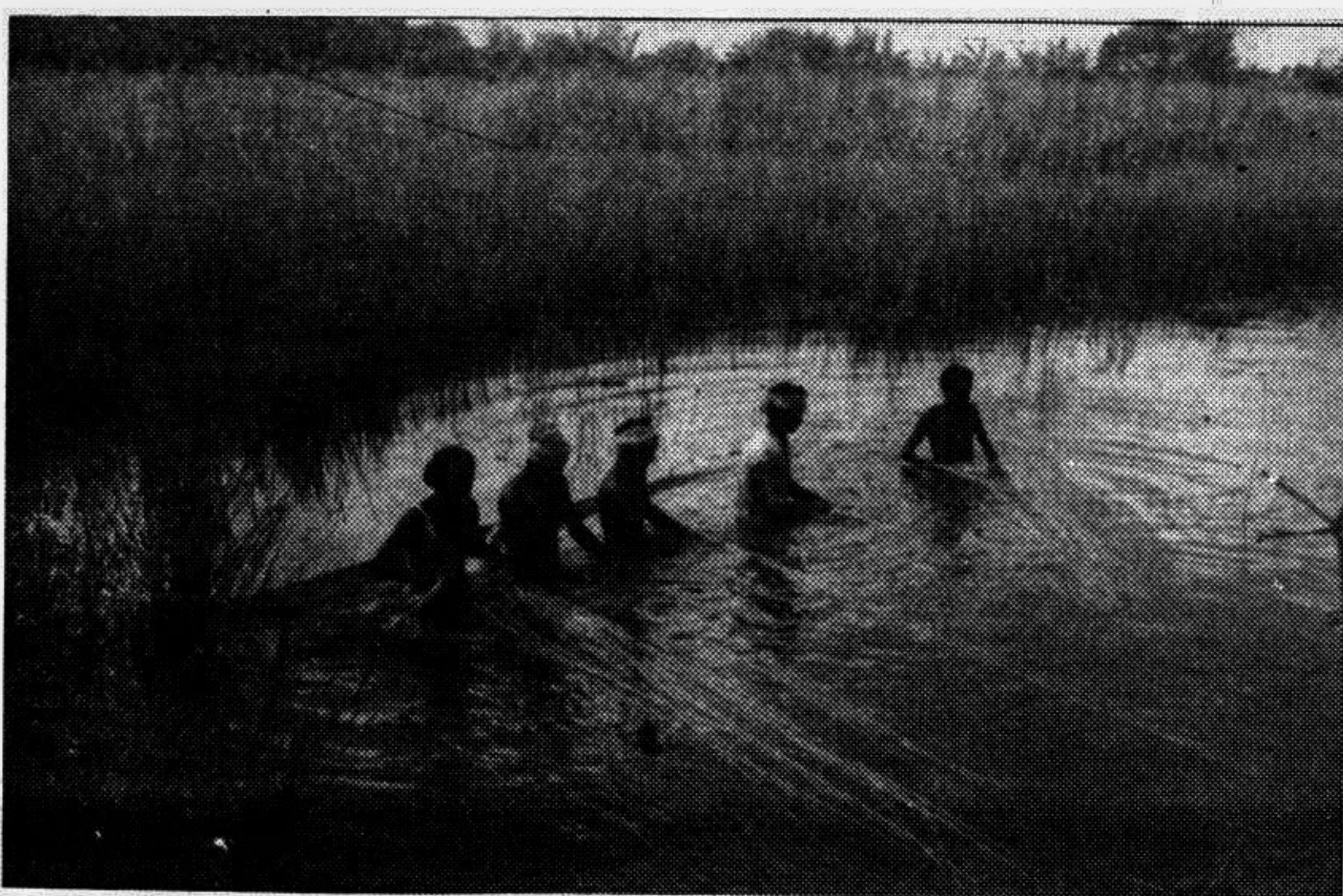
Farmers said they are not getting fair prices due to absence of competitive buyers.

According to official and unofficial sources this year 1.5 lakh bales of jute, each weighing five maunds, were produced in the district as against 2.75 bales last year.

The government controlled BJMC jute purchase centres at Kanaipur, Ambikapur, Kamar-khali 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 fund shortage, lowering the prices of the crop.

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



Extraction of jute from sticks: Some farmers of Dhanaitaha area in Natore district extracting jute from sticks in a pond near their land recently. — Star photo

## Murders up in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

**RAJSHAHI, Dec 1:** Incidents of killing have increased in recent days here.

About 35 people were murdered in the district in the period from January to November 15 this year, police sources said.

The most sensational murder was committed on May 16. Electronics goods trader Sirajul Islam Selim was murdered at his house at Saheb Bazaar in the city. On the day, assailants stormed into the bedroom of Selim and killed him. Two people were arrested in this connection.

Another sensational killing was committed on March 26 in court area in the city. Golam Murshid Golam, ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh

Chhatra League leader, was murdered. Police sources said party rivals killed the BCL leader.

A young man was killed by miscreants in Utsav Cinema area on Jan 27 in the city. He was identified as Raju.

Fish trader was killed at Meerpur under Charchat thana on March 7. Name of the dead could not be known.

A young boy, Amirul Islam Madhu, was killed on April 21 night in Rajshahi College premises. Another youth, Tuhin, came under attack of some armed people near Rajshahi Metropolitan Police headquarters on May 3 in broad daylight. He succumbed to his injuries late in Rajshahi

Medical College Hospital the same day.

An official of CCDB, an NGO, was hacked to death on May 11 by robbers in Mohanpur. Name of the dead could not be known.

Body of the Boss Tailors in the city Sharagat Ali, 50, was recovered in the city on November 12. Police suspected that he was killed and abandoned. No one was arrested in this connection.

A group of armed miscreants stabbed Chhatra Dal leader Imran Hossain Masum, 26, to death in front of Dolphin Clinic near Rajshahi Metropolitan Police headquarters on November 15. The killers are yet to be arrested.

## Acid throwing incidents increasing in Jhenidah

From Delwar Kabir

**JHENIDAH, Dec 1:** Incidents of acid throwing on women have increased alarmingly in recent days in the district.

According to family sources, in most cases victims came under attack after they refused to have illicit relations with the

attackers. The attackers, mainly local musclemen, usually force the victims to maintain illicit relation. According to police, miscreants usually collect acid from local jewellery shops.

Ambia Khatun recently received acid injuries in Moheshpur thana. She is now fighting her severe burn injuries in hospital bed.

Ambia is suffering in the hospital without necessary drugs for couples of months. Her family cannot afford to buy required medicines.

Two others acid victims—Khodeza and her husband Rezaul—are also undergoing treatment at the Moheshpur THC. They came under attack on September 23 at about 3 am when they were sleeping at the veranda of their house at Balibhadrapur.

Ratna, 13, a schoolgirl at village Bamonail received serious acid injuries recently. She was rushed to Shaillakupa health complex.

Another two victims—Jahanara Khatun and her mother of Barabamondi under Kotchandpur thana received

acid injuries on October 22. They were admitted to Kachandpur health complex.

Jahanara's cousin Sayeed allegedly threw acid on them. Sayeed proposed Jahanara, a widow. But the woman refused him.

One murdered in Narsingdi over land dispute

**NARSINGDI, Dec 1:** One person was killed and four of his family members were injured in an attack by his rivals at village Bilsaron in Shibpur thana in the district today, reports UNB.

Hospital sources said armed miscreants entered the house of Abdur Rashid, 40, at about 8:30 am and indiscriminately stabbed the house inmates, leaving Rashid dead on the spot.

Rashid's wife Monwara, 35, and their son Jasim, 16, Rashid's elder brother Nazimuddin, 45, and his son Baten, 25, were critically injured in the attack.



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 seedbed from dew drops. — Star photo



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 Sammilito 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 Mohammad Hossain, Advocate Nurul Haque, Advocate Indra Nath Roy and Principal Syed Merajul 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 Panchlaish 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 area 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 Mazar at Probar-tak crossing under Panchlaish 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 Assaduzzaman 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 bricks 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

From Our Correspondent

**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 Bandaban Circuit House on Nov 15.

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.

Chittagong Hill Tracts (Development) Board (CHTDB) with the assistance of donor agencies will implement the projects at an estimated cost of Tk 591.95 crore. The works of the projects will be started in the next month and be completed within three years.

Under the projects 11 roads of 315 km will be reconstructed in Bandarban district with a cost of Tk 191.05 crore. 307 km roads under 16 projects will be constructed in Rangamati district at a cost of Tk 207.40 crore and 333 kms road will be constructed under 20 projects at a cost of Tk 193.50 crore in Khagrachhari district.

Officials of the ministry of hill tract affairs said opportunities have been created to implement various development programmes in remote areas of the hill district after signing the peace accord in December 1997.

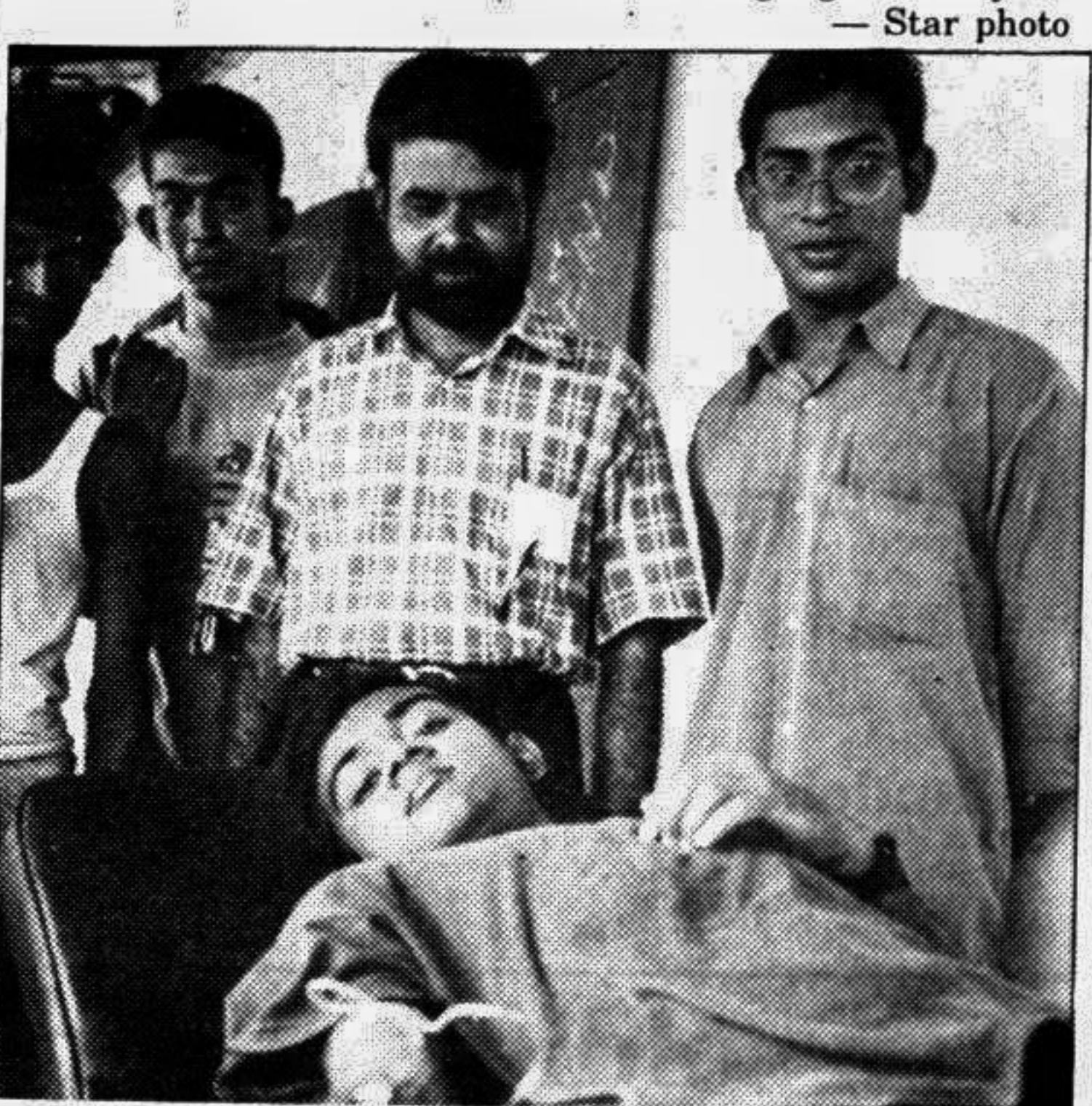
Representatives of various donor agencies recently visited the hill districts and they had shown their keen interests for the development of hill tracts, particularly communication network.

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

## Events of districts in picture



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



A blood donation campaign was arranged recently jointly by Mymensingh Medicine Club and Abahan, an organisation consisting of university students at Sherpur Town Hall. The civil surgeon of Sherpur inaugurated the campaign. Poor people will get the donated blood free of cost. — 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 performance of the cadets would remain as an 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

new millennium.

General Mustafiz handed over crests to 18 cadets of the college who had obtained 17 positions in the combined merit lists of the last HSC examination under the Rajshahi Board. He also donated two computer sets to Rangpur Cadet College on the occasion.

The Adjutant General and Chairman, Governing Bodies, Cadet Colleges, Major General Muhammad Musdur Rahman, Bir Protik and the Principal of the College Lieutenant Colonel Mokarram Ali Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Begum Rashida Mustafiz was present on the occasion as the special guest.

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