

Erosion plays havoc in 2 Rajshahi thanas

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Feb 4: Abdul Hakim was seen sitting beside the eroding bank of the River Padma which was about to engulf his house completely.

Greater part of his homestead has been eroded away by the Padma in last one week. The main room built of mud walls with tin-shade roof and the kitchen made of straw fences have been lost into the river. "The only other room is now awaiting erosion," said Abdul Hakim in a choked voice.

Many other people of Shahapur village of Yusufpur union in Charghat thana have faced the same fate. A vast area on about four kilometers in length and one kilometer in breadth has so far been eroded away by the River Padma in last two years. In addition to croplands, hundreds of homesteads and houses, mango-gardens, bamboo-chumps, mosques and graveyards have been destroyed. The brick-built building of Shahapur Border Outpost (BOP) of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) has also been eroded

away. The main stream of the Padma has been flowing through the Bangladesh side along the bank of the river for last three years.

"About 20 bighas of lands of our family have been vanished into the vast riverbed in last two years," said Asadullah, a young farmer of Shahapur. Shahidul has lost his family graveyard along with a big mango-garden. In addition to five bighas of croplands, "Our house has escaped erosion as we have shifted it is time," he said. "But our original homestead and the family graveyard, where our parents, grand parents and other relatives have been laid to eternal rest, could not escape devastation."

Anzul Huque expressed his grievances to say that many families of Shahapur village had become landless and homeless and some have turned beggar, but no government and non-government agency had come forward to help them. "Only Red Crescent Society has

given some relief materials this year," he said.

"Erosion is, more or less, a very natural phenomenon in the riverside areas, but this time it has become very serious in Shahapur," said Yusufpur Union Parishad chairman Nazrul Islam Mintu. He said that the mainstream of the Padma had started to directly hit Shahapur area when the head of Panchabati I-Groyne of Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment had been eroded away by strong currents of floods in 1998. The Groyne got further damaged in 1999 letting the mainstream of the river to severely hit Shahapur village, he said. The I-Groyne is yet to be repaired.

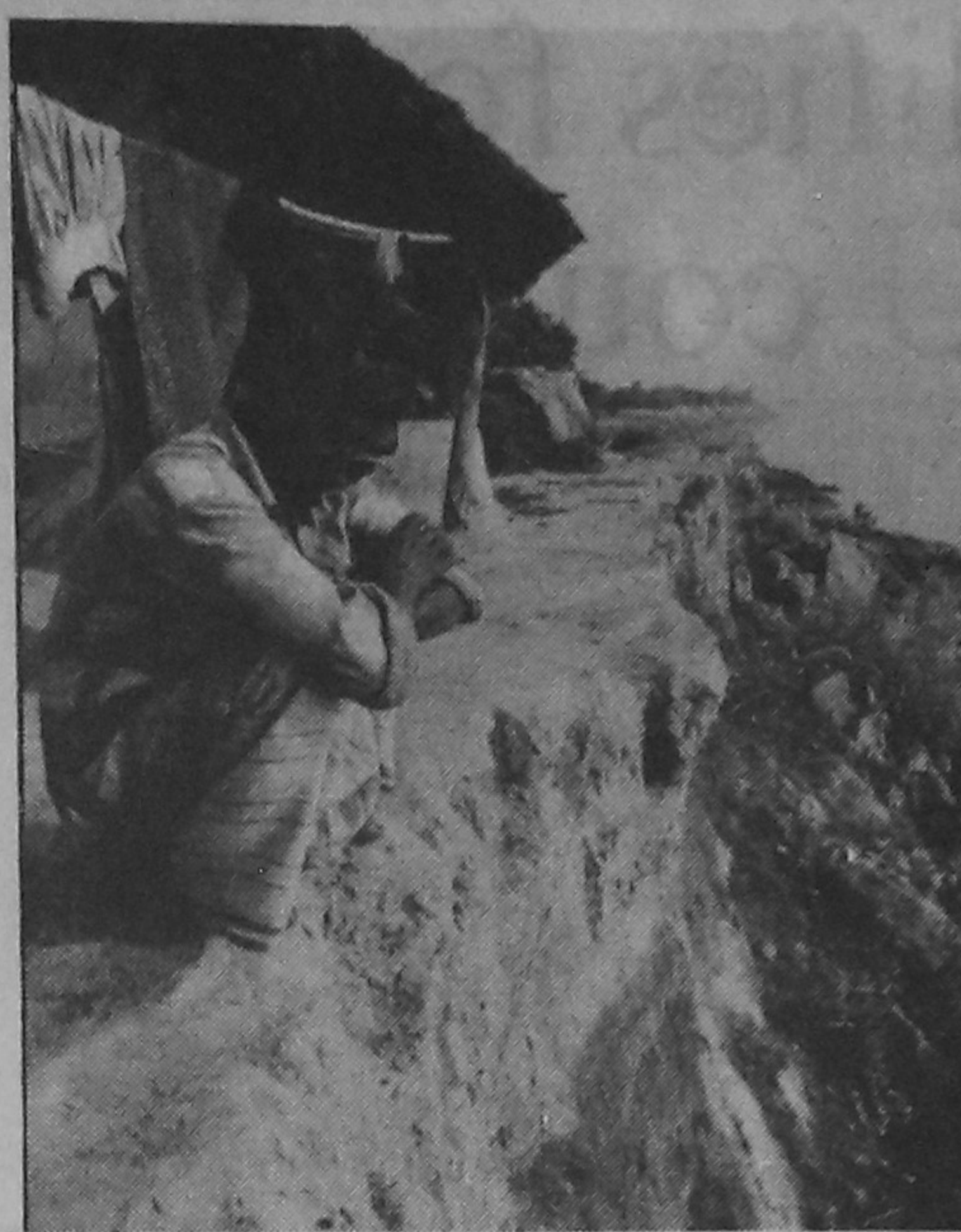
"We have knocked at everybody's door for taking measures to combat the erosion, but none has come forward," the chairman said. The minister and the state minister for water resources and high officials of Water Development Board have visited the area and gave assurance which are yet to be re-

alised, he said.

The chairman suggested that "the Panchabati I-Groyne should be repaired and two more I-Groyne should be built at places in between Panchabati and Shahapur to divert the stream of the river away from the bank side to save the areas from erosion."

Former member of the parliament Azizur Rahman said that a project had been taken to prevent erosion in Charghat thana area in early '90s. "But the project was pushed aside only for political reason," he alleged.

Mohammad Alauddin, who had been elected MP on BNP ticket from Charghat and Bagha thana areas in 1996 election who later joined the Awami League government was the State Minister for Water Resources up to December in 1999. He did nothing for them, the villagers alleged. They drew the attention of the Prime Minister and sought her personal intervention in this regard.



The man squats recently beside his house at a village under Rajshahi district, which is about to be devoured by river erosion. River erosion has rendered a large number of people homeless in the district in recent days.

— Star photo

Rabi, Boro cultivation programme in dists

Massive Rabi, Boro and IRRi cultivation programmes have been taken up in different districts during 1999-2000, report agencies.

A total of 65,010 hectares has been brought under Rabi crops cultivation in Satkhira district with the production target fixed at 3,82,007 metric tons of different varieties of Rabi crops during the year 1999-2000.

According to the Agriculture Extension Office source, of the total, 38,060 hectares have been brought under high yielding variety Boro cultivation, 2,300 hectares under wheat cultivation, 2,600 hectares under sweet potato, 6,500 hectares under mustard, 5,100 hectares under winter vegetables, 2,500 hectares under pulses, 500 hectares under phasolus mungo, 1,500 hectares under gram, 200 hectares under maize, 500 hectares under garlic, 600 hectares under onion,

class farmer families 60,418 marginal farmer families and 47,459 landless farmer families in the district.

Expecting a fair weather this season, farmers of Madaripur district have brought some 30,000 hectares of land under Boro cultivation fixing the output target at 75,020 mts.

Agriculture officials said high variety of paddy will be cultivated on 25,870 hectares while local variety on 3,680 hectares.

Thana-wise breakup of the targeted land is: Sadar-9,120 hectares, Kalkini-9,580, Rajoir-5,120 and Shibchar-2,050 hectares.

The Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Chandpur office has undertaken a comprehensive programme to bring about 80 thousand hectares under IRRi-Boro and other crops in the current season with a production target of 2 lakh 80 thousand metric tons of food production.

cultivation of Irri-Boro crops has been taken in 10 thanas of Netrakona district during the current Rabi season.

Netrakona district Agriculture Extension Department (AED) office sources said, under the programme, a total of 1,26,940 hectares of land will be brought under the Irri-Boro crops cultivation programme. Of the total land, 97,360 hectares of land will be brought under high yielding variety of the crops and 29,580 hectares of land under local variety of the crops.

The production target of the crops has been fixed at 3,17,340 metric tons during the season.

Different government agencies including BADC and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Co-operation (BCIC) will supply seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and other agricultural equipment to the farmers.

Besides, different state-run banks including Bangladesh

Pro-BNP panel sweeps Sirajganj Bar Assoc polls

From Our Correspondent



SIRAJGANJ, Feb 4: Pro-BNP panel swept Sirajganj District Bar Association polls held on Saturday as the panel bagged all the posts except three.

Amanullah Mandal and MSH Rafiq Sarkar, both from the pro-BNP panel, were elected president and general secretary respectively of the association. Others office-bearers are Zahangir Alam and Moulavi Raihan Ali Sarker—Vice Presidents; Golam Mostofa—Assistant General Secretary; Abdul Hamid Lavlu—Treasurer; Alimul Haq—Library Secretary; Anwar Parvez Lemmon—Assistant Library Secretary; Mir Ruhul Amin Babu—Secretary for Cultural Activities; Abul Kalam Azad Bhulu—Accounts Auditor; Abdul Aziz—Assistant Accounts Auditor; and Lutfur Rahman, Mobarak Ali, Razob Ali Sarker and Shamsul Haq—members.

Abdul Hamid Lavlu, Anwar Parvez Lemmon and Razob Ali Sarker represented pro-ruling Awami League panel.

21 injured as rivals clash in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 4: At least 21 people were injured in a series of clashes between two rival groups in Bakerganj thana on Monday.

According to police and local people, the clashes erupted when a group of armed people led by Tofazzal Mia of Broolia swooped on Matin Mollah and his associates in Bakerganj bus stand area at about 6 in the morning, leaving six people, including Matin Mollah, injured.

After three hours Matin Mollah's associates launched an attack on the supporters of Tofazzal Mia in the area and ransacked five shops. At least 15 people were attacked in the attack that continued for two hours.

Traffic movement on Barisal-Patuakhali highway remained suspended for four hours following the attack as supporters of Matin put up barricades on the road.

Poultry farm gutted

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 4: A fire gutted a poultry farm in the town recently.

According to fire brigade office, the fire originated from a short circuit gutted the structures of the farm.

Pulse cultivation scheme in dists

MAGURA, Feb 4: A scheme has been taken up to bring 13,300 hectares of land under different pulses farming in the district during the current winter season, reports UNB.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said of the land, 1500 hectares will be brought under chhola cultivation, 8,000 hectares under mashur, 3,000 hectares under khesari and 800 hectares under motorsuti.

Meanwhile, AED has set up 115 demonstration plots in the district to acquaint the farmers with the modern methods of cultivation.

The owners of the demonstration plots have been provided with fertiliser, seeds and

pesticides free of cost.

Another report from Rangpur says: Some 14,400 hectares of land in eight districts of greater Rangpur-Dinajpur zone of Agriculture Extension Department have been brought under pulse farming this season.

Of the land, 6,000 hectares are in Rangpur, 3,000 in Gaibandha, 8,00 in Kurigram, 3,00 each in Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari, 2,500 in Dinajpur, 1,000 in Thakurgaon and 5,00 hectares in Panchagarh districts, officials said.

They hope that some 2,70,000 metric tons of pulse would be produced in the districts if things go well.

3,000 certificate cases filed in Feni

FENI, Feb 4: In a desperate move to realise overdue farm loans, various banks in the district have filed 3,000 certificate cases against farmers, reports UNB.

A large number of farmers were learnt to have gone into hiding as 2,000 arrest warrants have been issued against them.

Of the cases, 254 were filed with sadar thana, 239 in Chhagalnaiya, 468 in Daganbhuiyan, 103 in Fulgazi, 114 in Parshuram and 750 in Sonagazi thanas.

Official sources said the overdue farm credit of the banks in the district now stands at Tk five crore.

With police hunting for loan defaulters, many growers could not yet prepare their lands for IRRi-Boro cultivation.

Many farmers alleged that the banks were filing cases against poor farmers for a small amount of loan, but they hardly take steps against big defaulters.

Meanwhile, Revenue Department has filed over 1,000

cases to realise Tk one crore unpaid land development tax. According to competent sources, land development tax amounting to Tk four crore remained unpaid by different government, semi-government and autonomous organisations of the district.

BSS from Panchagarh says: Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) has fixed its loan recovery target at Taka 18.22 crore for current fiscal in the district.

The bank, however, has taken up Taka 1.10 crore credit programme in the district for the current fiscal.

Official sources said Taka 2.30 crore out of the total target has already been disbursed among farmers of the district.

Of the total amount, Taka 1.65 crore has been earmarked for Aman cultivation while Taka 1.20 crore for Boro, Taka 60 lakh for wheat, Taka 1.20 crore for potato cultivation, Taka 1 crore for cattle rearing and 29 lakh for purchasing agricultural inputs.

Construction of 2 Ashrayan projects inaugurated

SATKHIRA, Feb 4: Construction of two Ashrayan projects was inaugurated here at a function held at village Bovera under Kaliganj thana of the district recently, reports BSS.

Kaliganj Thana Nirbahi Officer Munshi Shabbabuddin inaugurated the construction of the Ashrayan projects as the chief guest in the function while District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Ajit Kumar Pramanik was the special guest.

The inaugural function was presided over by the Tarali Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Gafur. Among others, Thana Project Implementation Officer Kazi Moniruddin, Thana Muktiyoddha Comman-

der Sheikh Akbar Hossain, UP Chairman Shahalan Shiraj and Assadur Rahman Selim addressed the meeting.

According to official sources, the new two Ashrayan projects are being constructed on 12 acres of land.

Another report from Comilla says: The government has taken up 306 Ashrayan projects to rehabilitate destitute family in Comilla region.

According to official sources, the implementation work of the projects is in full swing.

Of the total projects, 236 has already been completed and the rest will be completed soon.

News snaps

Tubewells installed

BRAHMANBARIA, Feb 4: A total of 19,976 hand pump tubewells have, so far, been installed in seven upazilas by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), reports BSS.

The tubewells have been installed to ensure supply of pure drinking water for the rural people. According to an official source, of the total, 5,730 tubewells have been installed in Brahmanbaria Sadar Upazila, 2,621 in Sarial Upazila, 2,574 in Kasba Upazila, 1,193 in Akhaura Upazila, 3,157 in Nabinagar Upazila, 2,114 in Nasirnagar Upazila, 2,587 in Banchharampur Upazila. Over three lakh poor people are now getting drinking water every day through these hand-pump tubewells.

Bridges reconstructed

LALMONIRHAT, Feb 4: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) reconstructed bridges and culverts on nine different roads in Hatubandha thana last month, reports BSS.

The construction cost of Taka 36 lakh 18 thousand was provided from ADB assisted Flood Rehabilitation Project. Local Government Engineering Department implemented the work. LGED official sources said, the flood in 1998 damaged some bridges and culverts of nine different roads. Due to the damage, the roads became unsuitable for transportation. After reconstruction of the bridges and culverts, about two lakh people are getting better communication facilities.

Musshidpur AL meeting

NAOGAON, Feb 4: A meeting organised by Musshidpur Thana Awami League was held here recently, reports BSS.

It was presided over by Dr Mohammad Farhad Hossain, General Secretary of the District Awami League Sadar Chandra Moulunder attended the meeting as the chief guest. It was addressed, among others, by Jakaria Mamon, Khatun, Khairul Alam and Moahmuddin.

Road construction progressing

LALMONIRHAT, Feb 4: Construction of over two kilometre Trilochan Khatunagar Bazar Road under Lalmonirhat Sadar Thana is progressing, reports BSS.

The construction, costs Taka 90 lakh, is being implemented by LGED, Lalmonirhat. Under ADB assisted Flood Rehabilitation Project. According to LGED official sources, 80 per cent work has already been completed. Rest work will be completed soon. At least 10 thousand people will get better communication facilities after completion of the construction.

Box culverts being built

TANGAIL, Feb 4: Roads and Highway Department, Tangail, is constructing two box culverts in two roads in this fiscal year, reports BSS.

Official sources said, construction of a 20 x 20 feet RCC box culvert with necessary road repairing on Kalihati-Bara Chaura Road, at a cost of Taka 33,16,082 and a 15 feet span RCC box culvert on Dhuburia-Salimabad Road, at a cost of Taka 10,15,561, is being implemented under the programme. With completion of the work, the road communication of the area will be improved.

Old-age allowances distributed

CHANDPUR, Feb 4: State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya distributed allowances among 180 elderly people in Mohonpur and Ekalspur unions here, reports BSS.

He handed over Taka 600 to each of them for six months at the rate of Taka 100 a month. He inquired about the condition of the elderly people. He said the allowances is small in amount, but very important for a distressed man. Later, the minister distributed 1,000 sweaters among 1,000 students of 14 unions of North Motlob and Sagarchar.

Workshop on women's health

MUNSHIGANJ, Feb 4: A three-day workshop on "Women's Health and Safe Motherhood" jointly organised by Health Directorate and Asian Development Bank (ADB) was held here at the civil surgeon's office premises recently, reports BSS.

It was reported that 25 participants including medical professionals from Munshiganj and Narayanganj districts attended the workshop.



A procession was brought out in Tangail recently to mark the World Leprosy Day.

Development schemes progressing

MADARIPUR, Feb 4: A total of 30 development schemes have been taken by Madaripur Municipality in the current fiscal year, reports BSS.

A total of Taka 60 lakh has been allocated for these schemes. The schemes include development of roads, construction of new roads, bridges, culverts and rural infrastructure development and maintenance.

Drug addicts increasing

BRAHMANBARIA, Feb 4: The number of drug addicts is increasing alarmingly in Brahmanbaria Zilla Sadar and adjoining areas and it is causing concern among the peace loving people and the guardians, reports BSS.

The addicts, mostly youths, are often engaged in toll collection and snatching to collect money for buying phenisidyl, sedative tablets, opium, morphine and wine. Of the drugs phenisidyl is very popular for the addicted youths. Phenisidyl is sold at Taka 120 per bottle. A section of people are earning a lot of money by selling drugs to the addicted persons. According to a survey a large section of drug addicted youths have been suffering from various chronic diseases.

Arms, ammunition seized

NARSINGDI, Feb 4: Police seized 32 pieces of different types of fire arms and 66 rounds of bullets and 14 cartridges from different places of six thana during the last 12 months, reports BSS.

According to police sources, the arms included single and double barrel guns, revolvers, pistols, pipe guns and shot guns. The ammunition included 66 rounds of bullets and 14 cartridges. Police said, a total of 1595 different types of cases were filed with police stations during the period.

Education week observed

BARISAL, Feb 4: The Education Week-2000 was observed at the conference room of the deputy commissioner of the district recently in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Chaired by the District Education Officer Bankim Chandra Shaha, the function was attended by the Deputy Commissioner M Alauddin as the chief guest. A key note paper on "Education for noble life" was presented by Prof Abdul Halim Khan at a meeting which was discussed, among others, by Principal of BM College Prof Abdul Razzak and Deputy Commissioner M Alauddin. Later, the chief guest distributed prizes among the best teachers, best head of the institutions and the best educational institution.

Good harvest expected

MADARIPUR, Feb 4: A good harvest of wheat and mustard is expected during the current Rabi season, reports BSS.

District Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources said, due to favourable climatic condition lands extending the target have been brought under cultivation for the two crops. According to AED sources, 6,764 and 15,400 hectares have been brought under wheat and mustard cultivation respectively. If the favourable climatic condition continues, production of wheat may reach at 15,118 tons and mustard at 13,860 tons.

Wheat for uplift schemes

JHENIDAH, Feb 4: Works on 15 projects under rural infrastructure development programme are progressing fast in Kaliganj thana, reports UNB.

Officials said some 242 metric tons of wheat worth about Tk 40 lakh has been allocated for implementing the schemes. The projects included construction and reconstruction of kutchra roads and culverts, which are expected to be completed by May next.



IRRi-Boro cultivation in progress in Jamalpur district.

— Star photo

100 hectares under chili, 550 hectares under turmeric and 3000 hectares under sugarcane.

One lac 10 thousand 374 metric tons of rice, 5,258 metric tons of wheat, 31,200 metric tons potato 1,210 metric tons of sweet potato, 5,875 metric tons of mustard, 76,500 metric tons of winter vegetables, 1,900 metric tons of pulses, 340 metric tons of phasolus mungo, 1,305 metric tons of gram, 800 metric tons of maize, 2,875 metric tons of garlic, 6,000 metric tons of onion, 2,000 metric tons of chili, 1,375 metric tons of turmeric and 1,35,000 metric tons of sugarcane are expected to be produced.

A total of 3,78,984 hectares of agriculture land, of which net cultivable land is over 182,248 hectares.

There are 20,282 rich farmer families, 40,000 middle class farmer families, 86,698 lower

According to official sources, 40 thousand hectares were brought under IRRi-Boro cultivation with a production target of one lakh, 50 thousand MT of rice, 20 thousand hectares under wheat cultivation with a production target of 30 thousand MT, 10 thousand hectares under potato cultivation with a production target of 40 thousand metric tons, 5 thousand hectares for mustard oil with a production target of 12 thousand metric tons and 5 thousand hectares under pulse with a production target of 10 thousand metric tons.

Agriculture department has supplied necessary seeds, fertilisers and other inputs to reach the target. Agricultural experts opined that the food production will be a bumper one during the current season due to favourable weather.

A massive programme for

Krishi Bank will disburse agri-loan among the farmers for making the Irri-Boro crops cultivation a success.

A major amount of agri-loan has been disbursed the Krishi Bank among the farmers.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED), Madaripur has taken up a massive Boro crop cultivation programme in the current Rabi season.

According to official sources, a total of 22,869 hectares will be brought under the cultivation programme.

Of the total, 18,742 hectares will be brought under high yielding variety of Boro paddy and the rest will be brought under local variety of the paddy.

Meanwhile, AED has taken preparation to ensure quality seeds and to distribute quality equipment among the farmers to make the programme a success.

Onion farming target may be achieved in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Feb 4: Onion cultivation target in the district is likely to be achieved this season as farmers are showing interest in the farming, agriculture officials said.

Local Agriculture Extension Department (DAE) has fixed a target to bring 2,500 hectares of land under the cultivation to produce 25,000 metric tons onion.

According to thana-wise break-up, 250 hectares of land will be brought under the cultivation with a production target of 2,500 metric tons in Sadar thana, 1,500 hectares with a production target of 15,000 mt in Shaillakupa, 150 hectares with a production target of 1,500 mt in Harinakundu, 200 hectares with a production target of 2,000 mt in Kaliganj thana, 1,000 hectares with a production target of 1,000 mt in Kachandpur, and 300 hectares with a production target of 3,000 mt in Maheshpur thana.

AED sources said till mid

January at total of 1,100 hectares of land were brought under the cultivation. The target may be achieved by mid February, the sources added.

However, unofficial sources said about 4,000 hectares of land will be brought under onion farming in the district this season as growers are showing interest in the cultivation.

Abdul Bari, 35, of village Hazramina, Jharu Bheswas, 42, of village Dhaura, Basir Mia, 32, of village Jhaudra under Shaillakupa thana while purchasing onion seedlings at

Two killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 4: Two persons were killed in a road accident recently at Badarpur, three kilometres off the town.

The dead were identified as Uttam Saha, 30, and Rafiqul Islam, 34.

Shaillakupa bazaar said farmers are showing interest in the cultivation as prices of seeds and seedlings are comparatively cheap this year.

Last season onion seeds sold between Tk 900 and Tk 1,100 per kg, while the seedlings sold between Tk 10 and Tk 15 per kg. But this year the prices of onion seeds are below Tk 900 per kg. On the other hand, onion seedlings sell between Tk 500 and Tk 1,000.

However, pests have invaded many onion fields in the district, casting an adverse impact on the production. Moreover, the growth of the plants is not satisfactory so far.

When contacted AED sources admitted the fact and said zinc deficiencies and acidity in soil are affecting onion cultivation. They said indiscriminate use chemical fertiliser is also affecting the cultivation.

Last year 31,000 mt of onion were produced by cultivating 3,115 hectares of land in the district.



Fund shortage has hampered the work of underconstruction district bar library in Faridpur town.

— Star photo by Abdul Matin Fakir