

# 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 shocked voice.

Many other people of Shahapur village of Yusufpur union in Charchhat 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-chunks, 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 out 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

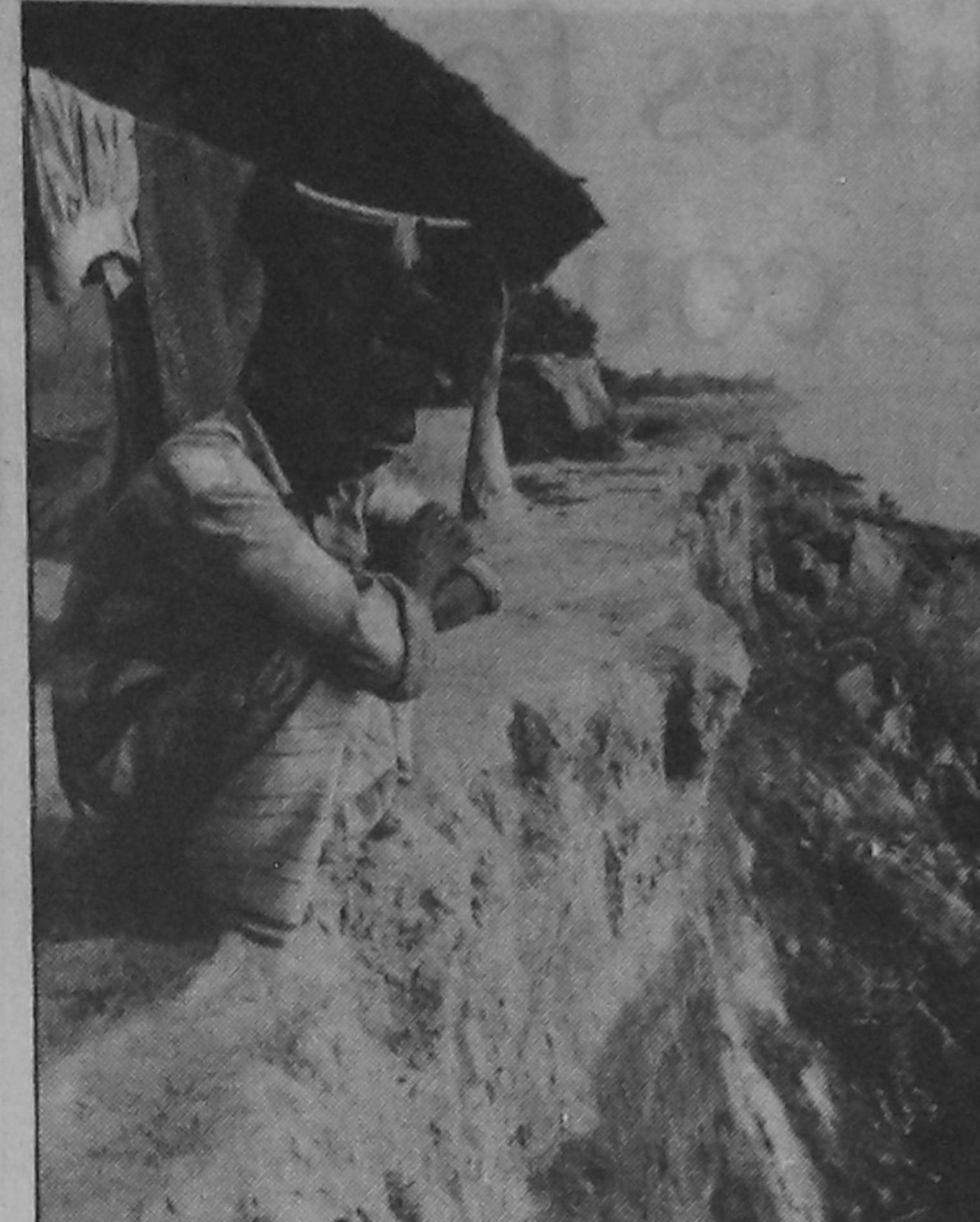
given some relief materials this year," he said.

"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 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 Charchhat 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 Charchhat and Bagha thana areas in 1996 election who later joined the Awami League government as 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.

"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-



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 potato, 100 hectares under sweet potato, 6,500 hectares under mustard, 5,100 hectares under winter vegetables, 2,500 hectares under pulses, 500 hectares under phaseolus mungo, 1,500 hectares under gram, 200 hectares under maize, 500 hectares under garlic, 600 hectares under onion.

According to 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.

Besides, different state-run banks including Bangladesh

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.

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### Pro-BNP panel sweeps Sirajganj Bar Assoc polls

From Our Correspondent



President Gen Secy

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

Amannullah Mandal and MSH Rafig 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 Lemon—Assistant Library Secretary; Mir Ruhul Amin Babu—Secretary for Cultural Activities; Abul Kalam Azad Bhulai—Accounts Auditor; Abdul Aziz—Assistant Accounts Auditor; and Lutfur Rahman, Mobarak Ali, Razob Ali Sarker and Shamsul Haq—members.

Abdul Hamid Lavlu, Anwar Parvez Lemon 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 Broalha 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.

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

IRRI-Boro cultivation in progress in Jamalpur district.

— Star photo

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

One lac 10 thousand 374 metric tons of rice, 5,258 metric tons of wheat, 31,200 metric tons of pulses, 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 phaseolus 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 13,350 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

A massive programme for

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 pulses 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.

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

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

Of the total, 18,742 hectare

Acres of land under 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 Shalakupur, 150 hectares with a production target of 1,500 mt in Harinakundu, 200 hectares with a production target of 2,500 metric tons in Kaliganj thana, 1,000 hectares with a production target of 1,000 mt in Kotchandpur, 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 Hazarmina, Jhara Biswas, 42, of village Dhaura, Basir Mia, 32, of village Jhaujha under Shalakupur 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.

Shalakupur bazaar said larmers 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 8/— and Tk nine.

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 of 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.

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Krishna 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 Krishna Bank among the farmers.

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

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