

55 unnatural deaths last month in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Feb 13: At least 55 unnatural deaths were reported last month in the district.

Sources in police stations said eight were murdered, eight were killed in road mishaps and the rest 39 committed suicide in January.

Harunur Rashid Sheikh, 28, of village Dignagar in Shailakupa thana was chopped to death by some unidentified assailants on January 9.

On January 8 body of an unidentified young man was recovered from village Natima in Moheshpur thana.

A woman was raped and killed at village Ishwarba in Kaliganj thana on January 12.

The most gruesome murders took place in the evening of January 15 at Kanaigata in Jhenidah town when a group armed men gunned down Mir Ilia Hossain Dillip, central committee secretary of Samajibi Mukti Andolan and Al-fazuddin, district unit secretary of the party.

Abdur Rahman of village Gopinathpur in Kaliganj thana was killed in a filed at village Bateadanga in same thana on January 27.

According to police, a village doctor was beaten to death at village Mallikpur in Kaliganj thana. Villagers beat the doctor,

Fratricide

HABIGANJ, Feb 13: A man was beaten to death allegedly by his younger brother in Azmiriganj thana here Tuesday, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Anai Mia, 50, of Shilpasha village of the thana.

Police said Mokku Mia hit his elder brother Anai Mia with a bamboo stick over a quarrel with his brother's wife.

Anai was rushed to the local health complex where he succumbed to his injuries.

A case was filed with the police in this regard.

Shoals make riverine journey risky

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Feb 13: Plying of riverine vessels in this winter has become very risky due to emergence of numerous shoals along different river routes to and from Barisal, Dhaka, Patuakhali, Bhola, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Barguna, Madaripur and many other destinations in the southern region.

Now nearly 100 passenger launches, both small and double-deckers including cargo vessels of different capacities are regularly plying along the region for years together.

It is to be mentioned, riverine routes are the main routes for thousands of people moving to and from different destinations in the districts.

Launch and cargo vessel owners and the sareng (drivers) said to 'The Daily Star' that especially in the winter season many river routes had no necessary depth of water for smooth plying of vessels.

At different points in the Meghna and the Padma near Chandpur, Dera point of the Areal Khan, the Kirtankhola of Barisal, the rivers Ilsha and Tetulia of Bhola many shoal

lands have been emerged, but still remained under water. These shoals have been hampering smooth and regular plying of marine vessels, particularly at night time. Every year the routes are becoming gradually narrower as the river beds are not dredged out regularly.

In such cases journey of passenger launches are being delayed. As a result the passengers are facing immense sufferings. Especially women and children on board have to suffer a lot due to shortage of food and drinking water.

According to a source of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) here, for smooth plying of big marine vessels it needs at least eight feet deep water along the river routes. The depth has become only five feet at Hizla, Badartuni, Shoula, Patti, Haturia, near Laharhat and near Sreepur points along the river routes.

Meantime, a passenger steamer 'Ostrich' remained grounded in a paddy field after being stranded due to shortage of water near Hizla for one week recently.

A Barisal port official informed, it is the responsibility of the Hydrography Department of Water Development Board (WDB) to mark and find out the shoals hidden under water and the depth of water in the river routes. 'It's office is in Dhaka. As a result, it is becoming difficult to work for their alleged negligence', the official added. He further informed, dredging is done time to time in the Kirtankhola or other rivers, but it helps very little. Because when the dredging remains stopped then again siltation starts. Besides, the silts are left at other places along the river beds nearby creating further siltation there.

Barisal Port Authority supervises more than 50 stations in this area, but strange enough dredging, hydrography, marine security and some other sectors go to different authorities. The port authority faces various problems in different sectors almost always. Now, it is feared that some of the riverine routes might be abandoned or stopped forever if dredging is not conducted regularly, especially in the winter season.

Reception to Chief Justice in Jessore

JESSORE, Feb 13: Chief Justice Latifur Rahman on Thursday laid emphasis on accountability and neutrality of judges in a democratic system of government, reports BSS.

Speaking at a reception accorded to him in the auditorium of the district lawyers association, the chief justice urged the jurists to uphold the norms of justice to retain the confidence of people in judiciary of the country.

The chief justice called upon lawyers of the country, especially the young lawyers, to be well aware of law for conducting cases and ensure fair justice.

Presided over by district lawyers association president Farazi Shahadat Hossain, the meeting was also addressed by district and sessions judge Abdul Hai, special judge of special tribunal of women and child repression Mirza Serajul Islam, advocates Nurul Islam, Kazi Abdus Shaid Lal and Sheikh Hasan Imam.

New kind of cattle disease

MANIKGANJ, Feb 13: A new kind of cattle disease has been identified by veterinary surgeon of Manikganj Sadar Thana Cattle Hospital, reports BSS.

Dr Dulali Rani Sarker informed the local journalists that she had detected the disease named warble fly infestation first in Bangladesh when she had been treating the cow of one Arshad Ali of village Kanta under Sauria thana of the district.

Feni DIARY

Birth anniversary of Zia celebrated

FENI, Feb 13: The 64th birth anniversary of former president and founder of BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) Ziaur Rahman was celebrated here in a befitting manner on January 19.

District BNP and its front organisations chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion. The programmes include discussion and *mitad mahfil*. A discussion was held at local Zia Parishad office. Presided over by Mizanur Rahman, it was addressed among others by Kamurul Hassan Masud, Ziauddin, Saheduddin Ferdous and Serjil Islam.

Office bearers of Bar Assoc

Election of district Bar Association was held here recently.

Nurul Huda Chowdhury, Abdur Rob, Belayet Hossain and Borhanuddin Jahangir have been elected president, vice presidents and general secretary respectively. Other office bearers are: joint secretary: Giassuddin and treasurer: Shafiqul Alam. Senior advocate Akramuzzaman conducted the election. 157 voters out of 177 cast votes.

Tk 3.71cr smuggled goods seized last year

BDR personnel seized smuggled goods worth Tk 3.71 crore in the district last year.

According to BDR sources, during the period at least 200 operations were conducted in Modhugram, Champaknager, Subapur, Chagolia, Chandgazi, Box Mahamud, Benier Mozumderhat, Subar-bazar, Fulgazi, Munsherhat, Mohammad Ali Bazar, Amtoli, Gatabara and Boriahara areas. The personnel seized the smuggled goods valued at Tk 3 crore 71 lakh 2 thousand and 800 hundred during the raids. 420 cases were also filed during the period.

Man drinks spurious liquor, dies

A man died after he drank poisonous liquor in Porshuram recently.

The dead was identified as Abdul Quddus, 55, of village Kolapara under Porshuram thana. He was night guard of Sadar TNO office. Family sources said Quddus fell sick after he took spurious liquor and was taken to Porshuram Health Complex where he died.

Road development works progressing

Development works of nine roads in the district at a cost of Tk 2 crore were have been progressing satisfactorily.

According to official sources, Feni-Boshurhat road, Feni-Sanagazi road, Feni-Sonimuri road, Feni-Beroli road, Chelonia-Sonimuri road, Daganbhuyian-Fazelargat road, Chhagalnaiya-Muhuriganj road, Lamua-Lazarhat road, and Purshuram-Mirta Nagar road will be repaired and renovated under the project. About 30 per cent works have already been completed, sources added.

Woman beaten to death

A housewife was allegedly killed by her husband at village Miranagar under Porshuram recently.

The victim was identified as Monjura Begum, 25, wife of Aman Hossain. Neighbours said the husband beat the wife to death following an altercation over dowry. Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital for postmortem. A case was filed in this connection.

News snaps

Govt official holding 7 posts!

THAKURGAON, Feb 13: Believe it or not, a government official has been holding seven posts concurrently, reports UNB.

Mostafa Kamal, TNO of Ranishankail thana, has been performing duties as Assistant Commissioner (Land) and Thana Election Officer of both Haripur and Ranishankail thanas. He has also been carrying out the responsibilities of Jailer in Ranishankail thana and TNO of Haripur thana. According to competent sources, Kamal has been entrusted with the responsibilities of seven offices, as the posts have long been lying vacant.

View exchange meeting

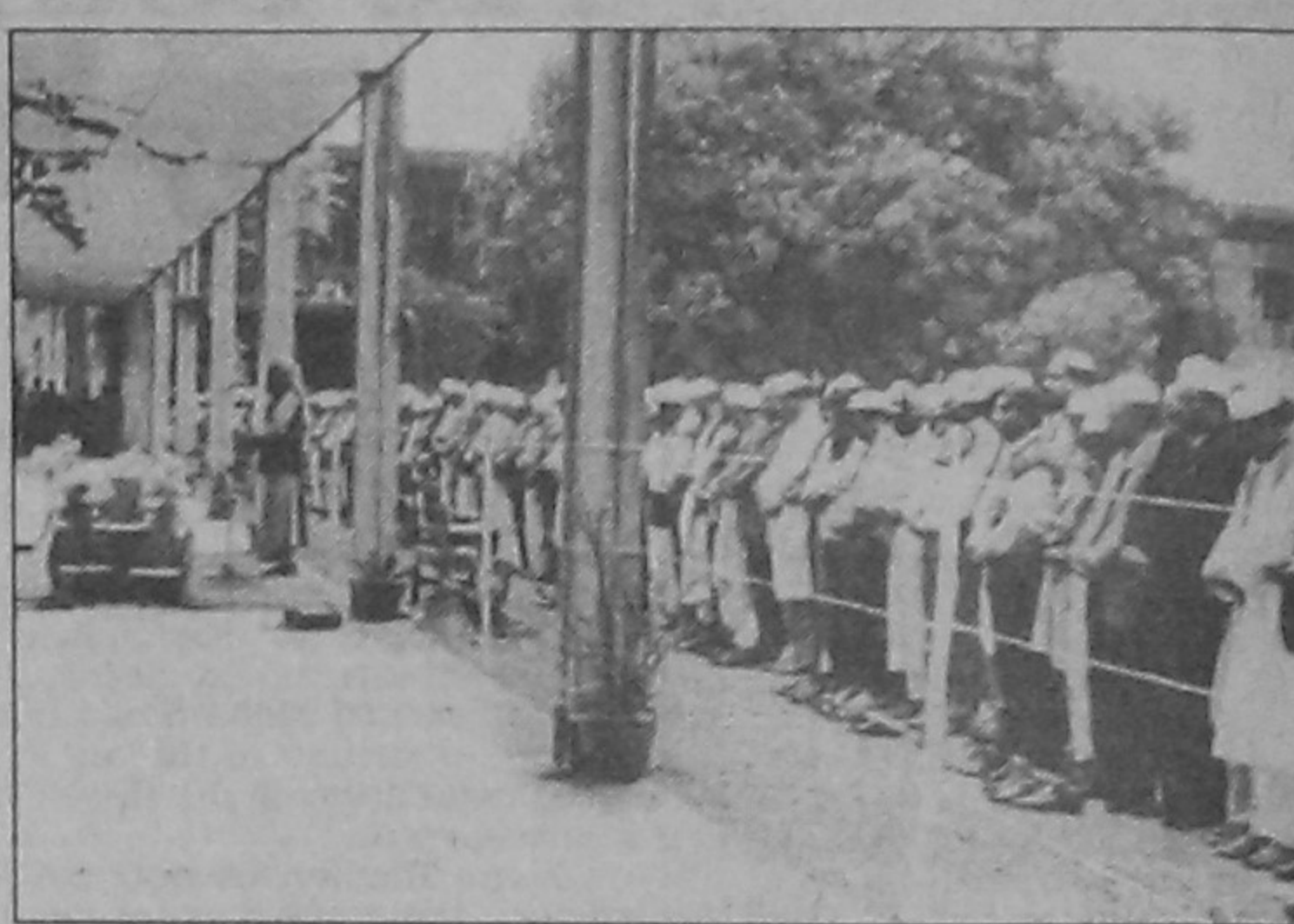
JHALAKATI, Feb 13: A view exchange meeting between the district administration and local elite, aiming to restore law and order in the town, was held on Saturday, reports UNB.

Police Super Mohammad Moniruzzaman presided over the meeting held at his conference room. District Awami League president Adv Shahjahan Ashraf, local press club president Shamsul Islam Chand and joint convenor of district BNP Drt Ahmed, JCCI president Sarder Shah Alam and vice-principal of Islamia Senior Madrasa Mawlana Abdul Khaleque, among others, addressed the meeting.

Brilliant student killed

BARGUNA, Feb 13: Armed bandits killed a brilliant student when he resisted them at Natun Bazaar in the town early Saturday, reports UNB.

Police said the robbers stormed into the house of Sundaribala Karmakar at about 3:30 am and stabbed Nuruzzaman Khan, 28, when he prevented them from committing robbery. He died on way to hospital. Nuruzzaman, who stood first class ninth in the masters final year examination of Botany from Patuakhali Government University College last year, rushed to the neighbouring house hearing the screaming of Sundaribala. A case was filed.



Namaj-e-janaza of late vice chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Mohammad Hossain was held on the university campus on February 5. Hossain was killed in a road accident on February 4. — Star photo

Hemp cultivators convicted

KURIGRAM, Feb 13: A court here on Thursday convicted four people, including a woman, and sentenced them to one-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) for cultivating hemp on the court-yards of their houses, reports UNB.

The convicts — Khabiruddin, Bashiruddin, Zobeda Khatun and Sayedul Haque of Sonamuri village in Fulbari thana — were also fined Tk 1,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more. According to prosecution, police being informed by locals raided the village and seized nine hemp trees from the houses of the convicted people on December 31, 1997. Later a case was filed with Fulbari thana. After examining witnesses and records, the Assistant Sessions Judge handed down the verdicts.

Mustard output exceeds target

KUSHTIA, Feb 13: Mustard production in 10 districts of Khulna division is likely to exceed the target due mainly to favourable weather and timely supply of necessary inputs to local farmers, reports UNB.

This year the supply of necessary seeds, fertilisers and pesticides by BADC and Agriculture Extension Department was satisfactory and this might lead to a bumper output. Some 1.5 lakh mts of mustard are expected to be produced in one lakh hectares of land in Kushiya, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jessore, Narail, Magura and Jhenidah districts this year.

Poverty alleviation scheme

GAZIPUR, Feb 13: State Minister for Rural Development and Cooperatives Advocate Mohammad Rahamat Ali on Saturday said the government undertook a pilot project here to turn rural households into farmhouses in line with the efforts for poverty alleviation, reports BSS.

'With the implementation of the project every houses would be turned into self sufficient economic units eradicating poverty from the country,' he said while speaking at a meeting of the project here. The state minister asked the officials and field workers to put in their all efforts for the success of the project as they joined the meeting at the deputy commissioner's office. Later he addressed a public rally here, also attended by Ashanullah Master, MP and district Awami League president AKM Mozammel Huq.

Phensidyl seized

BENAPOLE, Feb 13: BDR jawans recovered 3,000 bottles of Indian phensidyl from a frontier bazar on Thursday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, the BDR men raided the Alifdanga bazar and recovered the drug worth of Tk 2.5 lakh. None was arrested.

Language Day in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Feb 13: A seven-day programme has been chalked out in a meeting, held at the conference room of the Deputy Commissioner on Wednesday, to celebrate the International Mother Language Day here in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner M Rafiqul Islam presided over the Meeting. The meeting was attended by political leaders, government officials, teachers, lawyers, journalists and representatives of different socio-cultural organizations. The week-long programme from February 20 includes rally of school students, probhat feri, reception to language movement heroes, discussion, cultural functions and blood donation. An organising committee, headed by Deputy Commissioner M Rafiqul Islam, and some sub-committees have been formed to make the week-long programme a success.

Agri-credit disbursed

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Feb 13: Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank and Sonali Bank have sanctioned, under Agricultural Credit Programme, Taka 26.31 crore for disbursement as loan among the farmers of five thanas here for the current fiscal year, official sources said, reports BSS.

Of the sanctioned amount, Taka 8.35 crore has already been disbursed among the farmers. The loan is being disbursed for cultivation of Aus, Boro wheat, banana, maize and vegetables, pisciculture, cattle rearing and other poverty alleviation programmes.



Inspector General of Police distributing prizes recently at the Annual Sports Meet of Chandpur Police. — Star photo

Khas land distributed among landless farmers

PATUAKHALI, Feb 13: State Minister for Textile A K M Jahangir said the present government is undertaking different programmes for the welfare of the landless people of the country, reports BSS.

'At present, the rural economy of the country stands on a strong foundation due to different pragmatic efforts undertaken by the government,' he said while speaking at a function at Galachipa Thana Auditorium of the district.

The function was organised on the occasion of handing over documents of government's Khas land to 40 landless farmers of the thana.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of the district Anindra Chandra Karmakar and local Awami League leaders spoke on the occasion.

Later, the minister visited ongoing *Ashrayan* project in Charandall and Kalagachhiya. He also handed over widow allowances among the women.

UNB from Bagerhat adds: Some 90 landless families of the district have been rehabilitated on 2,829.27 acres of khas land in the district since 1984-85 fiscal.

There are still nearly 4,366.39 acres of khas land in different areas of the district where the government has a plan to rehabilitate more landless people, official sources said.

When contacted the Additional District Commissioner (Revenue) said the government has a plan to set up 'Adarsha Grams' in different parts of the district, including sadar thana Mongla thanas.

Rabi farming scheme in Panchagarh

PANCHAGARH, Feb 13: A total of 38,140 hectares of land have been brought under Rabi crops cultivation in five thanas of the district in the current season, reports BSS.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, the crop-wise break up is boro paddy, 14,940 hectares, wheat 15,200 hectares, potato 2,850 hectares, mustard 800 hectares, onion 500 hectares and winter vegetables 3,850 hectares.

Officials expected production of more than 1.55 lakh tons of winter crops in the district if the programme could be implemented successfully.

A total of 250 demonstration plots have been set up to acquaint the farmers with the modern methods of cultivation. BADC has taken necessary measures to distribute seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and other agricultural inputs among the farmers for the successful implementation of the programme.

Another report from Laxmipur says: Over 49,500 hectares of land will be brought under Rabi crop cultivation this season with an estimated output target of 1.63,730 mts.

Officials said Agriculture office here is going to set a record by bringing 78 per cent of the district's 120,627 hectares crop lands under cultivation.

They said Boro paddy would be cultivated on 20,220 hectares of land, wheat on 1,500 hectares, potato on 300 hectares, sweet potato on 800 hectares, mustard on 3,000 hectares, groundnut on 5,500 hectares, maize on 300 hectares and various pulses on 4,300 hectares.

Besides, soyabean will be cultivated on 2,555 hectares.

Shortage of teachers hampers pry edn

JESSORE, Feb 13: Lack of teachers and irregularities have brought the government's primary education programme in the district to its knees, reports UNB.

Official sources said posts of 156 teachers, including 62 headmasters, are lying vacant in 662 government primary schools in eight thanas of the district.

They said there are only 2,991 posts of teachers, including 661 of headmasters, for teaching about 190,970 students of the schools.

Even though the number of primary school students continues to rise following introduction of compulsory primary education and food-for-education programmes, no new post of teacher has been created.

Meanwhile, one month of the new academic year has elapsed but many students have not yet got their textbooks, the sources said.

BSS from Jhenidah adds: The distribution of textbooks, free of cost among the primary school students of the district, began recently.

In Jhenidah district, books will be distributed among

chilli on 5,000 hectares, onion on 5,000 hectares, sugarcane on 250 hectares, garlic on 300 hectares and vegetables on 3,900 hectares.

Agriculture officials said the farm output might surpass the target this season if the existing fair weather continues.

But farmers alleged that price hike of fertilizers, pesticides and other agri-inputs might hamper the production target.

They said BADC has also stopped supplying spray machines and pesticides among farmers, worsening their sufferings.

Fake cigarette factory unearthed

KUSHTIA, Feb 13: Police have unearthed a fake cigarette factory at a house at Jamalpur village in Daulatpur thana, reports UNB.

Source said on information, Bheramara and Daulatpur police jointly raided the house owned by Khalil and recovered huge quantity of 'Scissors' brand fake cigarettes on February 1.

The people arrested from the house were identified as Lata alias Hasina, Rehana of Sauria thana of Manikganj district, Abu Taleb, Hanif, Matin of Rangpur and Samul Islam alias Sumon of Lalmonirhat district.

Police sources said three fake brand cigarettes were being manufactured at this factory owned by Nuruzzaman of Jairampur village in the same thana.

nearly 1,50,000 students of 407 government primary schools and 195 registered primary schools in Sadar, Shailakupa, Kaliganj, Harinakunda, Moheshpur and Kotchandpur thanas.

The books are being distributed among the students of class two to five, the students of class one will get their textbooks later.

Earlier, the authorities of all schools in this areas have collected the old books from the students.

About fifty per cent old and fifty per cent new books will be distributed among the students, and the students of class one will get only new books. The distribution will be completed by March next, sources said.

Another report from Meherpur says: The government has taken up a programme to distribute 65,750 sets of textbooks free of cost among primary school students of the district.

Thana-wise break-up of the distribution is: Sadar thana-35,750 sets and Gangni thana-30,000 sets.

The book distribution programme has already begun.

Roadside markets create traffic jam

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA, Feb 13: Village markets alongside roads and highways here are causing hindrance to smooth vehicular movement.

This is because traders occupy most parts of the roads.

According to local people, traders of Challisha bazaar, Lakmigonj bazaar, Rail crossing bazaar and Dugia bazaar under sadar thana, Ovipashas bazaar, Goatala bazaar, Taligali bazaar under Alpara thana, Gothora bazaar,

Bawsham bazaar, Hat gobindapur bazaar, Bardal bazaar, Langura bazaar and Pachgonj bazaar under Kalmakanda thana, Barhatta bazaar, Atipur bazaar under Barhatta thana, Shaymgonj bazaar, Hironpur bazaar, Aitpur bazaar, Purbadhala bazaar under Purbadhala thana occupy most parts of roads and highways causing hindrance to smooth traffic movement.

Abul Kalam, 34, of village Hironpur under Pubadhala

thana said that for want of space, sellers in Hironpur weekly bazaar are compelled to occupy parts of public roads. He said if the authorities concerned shift the present place, the problem will be solved.

When contacted, the local administration officials failed to give satisfactory answer.

Local people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures to solve the problem.



Traders keep bamboo in roadside places along a road in Challisha Bazaar under Netrakona Sadar thana, causing inconveniences to people, especially pedestrians. — Star photo

Lack of proper plantation hits bamboo production

MADARIPUR, Feb 13: Bamboo production in all the four thanas of district has declined sharply due to indiscriminate uprooting of the clusters, reports BSS.

Construction of thatched houses and production in bamboo-based cottage industry are being seriously hampered for shortage of bamboo in the district.

Madaripur district was once famous for bamboo production. Thousands of clusters on a vast tract of land in the district are gradually decaying for lack of proper maintenance and systematic plantation, resulting in price hike of bamboo in local markets, villagers said.

Many cluster owners are ignorant about scientific plantation of bamboo and reluctant to take necessary measures to save

the clusters. The owners of the clusters said rampant use of the roots as firewood in cooking and manufacturing of bricks has made the situation worse.

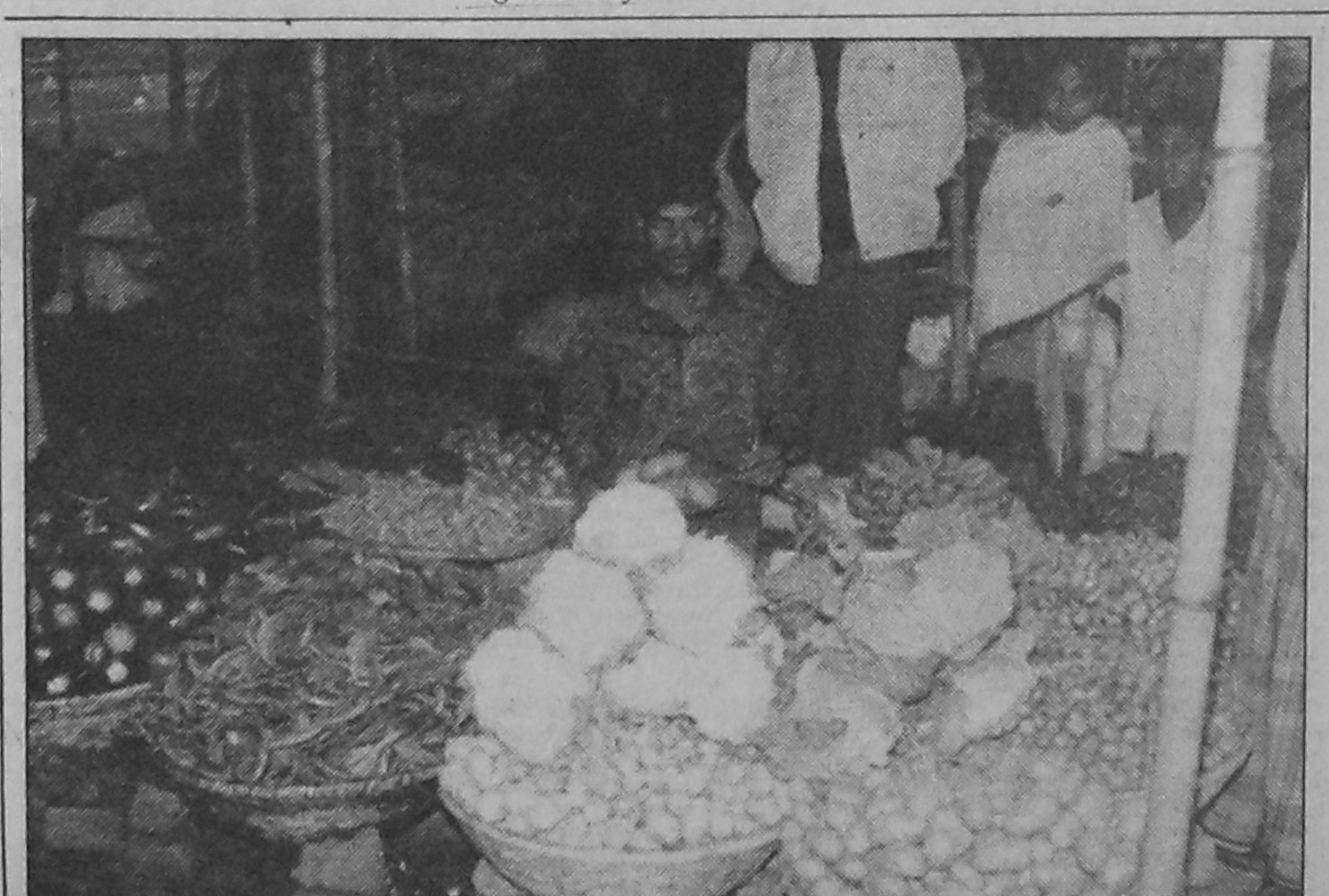
According to agriculture experts, a bamboo plant can produce at least 20 new sprouts a year if it gets proper care and rearing. At present, a bamboo plant is yielding only two to three new sprouts. Local people urged the relevant authorities to take necessary measures immediately to boost bamboo production in the district to meet the growing need.

UNB from Kishoreganj adds: Scores of bamboo clumps are being damaged in the district for want of proper nursing and plantation leading to inadequate supply of bamboo for construction of houses and cottage industry.

Proper nursing enables a bamboo to sprout at least 45 tender plants in a year but at present 6 to 10 plants are growing in the areas owing to indiscriminate felling of bamboo before attaining maturity.

Bamboo clumps are also diminished due to damage of tender bamboo plants by unknown disease. Burning of bamboo in rural areas is also a reason for decline in the supply. Besides, bamboo is used as firewood in brick-field.

More than 85 per cent dwelling houses in rural areas are thatched made of bamboo. Some 15,000 families in the district depend on bamboo. Most of them are in hardship as the production has declined in the absence of proper planting and nursing.



Winter vegetables have flooded Jamalpur markets this season. Prices of the vegetables are also within buying capacity of common consumers. — Star photo