

Salt iodising programme fails in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 16: A review meeting here revealed a frustrating performance of the coastal district's salt iodising programme that achieved only five per cent of the target, reports UNB.

Twenty-eight salt producing mills of the district remained far from the target of iodised salt production, officials told the review meeting on Mother and Child Status at Hilltop Circuit House on Sunday.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner ASM Mobaidul Islam pointed out at the meeting that achievement of the programme in 63 other districts is 78 per cent.

He said there were allegations of not using the iodine machines installed to mix iodine with salt and of mixing insufficient potassium iodide. The Divisional Commissioner directed the officials to take

proper action to overcome this frustrating situation.

The meeting was told that 67 per cent people of the country, mostly mothers and children, have been suffering from various complications, like goiter caused by iodine deficiency.

This deficiency causes mental or physical disorders or even death of children, experts told the meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Pulit Bihari.

The government, with the financial assistance of UNICEF, has taken up the programme to distribute iodine mixing machines and potassium iodide free of cost to 264 salt mills to ensure use of iodised salt in the country.

Another report from Rangpur says: Selling of non-iodised salt continued without restriction in rural bazaars of the district threatening goitre disease

that is highest in the northern districts.

Defying government restriction a section of unscrupulous traders are selling non-iodised and adulterated salt.

Ignorant poor in rural areas prefer to buy low quality salt at lower price. Conscious consumers are sometimes compelled to buy such salt due to non-availability of iodised salt.

Iodised salt is sold at Tk 10 per kg bag while the same quantity of non-iodised salt is Tk 3.

Besides, unscrupulous traders are found selling non-iodised salt in packet of iodised salt.

Local administration raided several markets in the town recently and realised fine from traders amounting to Tk 1,200 for selling non-iodised salt.



A colourful rally was brought out in Sylhet town on Friday on the occasion of a two-day reunion of the ex-students of Sylhet Government Pilot High School. — Star photo

Green Belt Project progressing

BARISAL, Feb 16: The implementation of Coastal Region Green Belt Project in 10 southern districts of the country at a cost of Tk 123.16 crore with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the NORAD has been progressing fast and is expected to be completed within June next, reports BSS.

The districts are Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

According to an official source, the forest and environment ministry took up this project in a bid to restore environment and protect disaster in the coastal districts of the country in 1994-95 fiscal year.

A total of 1,300 kilometers protection embankment, 2,700 kilometers highways, 9.0 kilometers roads and 3,000 kilometers Union Parishad, connecting roads have been brought under this project with different varieties of saplings.

Besides, 2.80 crore saplings of fruit bearing and wooden trees along with high yielding varieties of coconut saplings have been

distributed among the local poor people free of cost for creation of green belt on Union Parishads' roads, around the dwelling houses, educational institutions, religious establishments, cyclone shelters and government office premises in the coastal districts.

The six-year long programme beginning with the 1994-95 fiscal raised and planted high yielding varieties of coconut trees on 1,400 kilometers.

Of the total, 1,300 kilometers of embankment have been brought under nutshell, palm and date tree plantation under the project.

The projects also aim at developing and increasing the forest resources and sources of income of the coastal people.

The government has already taken up a decision to release 50 per cent share of the total scheme among the members of the public for growing mass interest. Of the rest 50 per cent share, 15 per cent will be distributed among land owners, 20 per cent share for forest department and rest 15 per cent to non-government organisations (NGOs).



Water level has fallen sharply in the River Old Brahmaputra. As a result the ferry movement has been threatened. Photo shows many stranded loaded trucks at Jamalpur-Sherpur ferry ghat. — Star photo

Phensidyl seized: Three women held in Satkhira

Three women were arrested and 177 bottles of Indian phensidyl syrup recovered in separate drives in Satkhira recently, reports agencies.

Police arrested two alleged female smugglers along with 75 bottles of phensidyl from Narkeltola area.

The two arrested women — Farida and Firoja — were sent to jail Hajat. A case was filed.

In a separate drive, police recovered 50 bottles of Indian phensidyl syrup from a passenger minibus near Narkeltola area in the town and arrested one alleged smuggler.

Police sources said, acting on tip-off, Sadar Thana police raided a Khulna-bound passenger mini bus near Narkeltola area in the town and recovered

50 bottles of phensidyl syrup hidden in a pillow cover. Police arrested a woman, Rahima Begum, of village Srirampur under Sadar Thana in this connection.

A case was filed with Sadar Thana.

In another drive, BDR personnel seized 52 bottles of phensidyl syrup.

Sources said, the BDR personnel of 12 battalion of Bakal checkpoint in the district seized 52 bottles of phensidyl from a Satkhira bound motorbike coming from Bhomra near Bakal checkpoint.

The rider of the motorbike, however, managed to escape.

They seized the motorbike and filed a case with Sadar Thana in this connection.

Pro, anti-CHT accord groups' clash: 1 dies

KHAGRACHHARI, Feb 16: A fierce gunfight between pro and anti-CHT peace accord groups at Noonchhari village in Dighinala Thana recently left a tribesman dead and three others injured, reports UNB.

The convict, identified as Sirajul Islam, was sentenced to life imprisonment in a murder case by a local court in 1993.

He was tried in absentia.

Sirajul stabbed a villager, Rukanuddin, when police with the help of local people raided the village to arrest him.

A report from Bagerhat says: Forest guards arrested eight pirates from near the Sundarbans last week.

Officials said forest guards of Shorokhola, Jeley Pally and Dublar Char in a joint raid conducted in the evening nabbed the pirates, including its leader, when they were preparing to commit dacoity and illegal hunting of animals in the Sundarbans.

Six other pirates who were on board an engine boat in the gang managed to escape.

The guards also recovered a

79 held on various charges from dists

At least 79 people were arrested on various charges in several districts recently, report agencies.

Police arrested an absconding convict from Chhandhara village in Fulpur Thana of Myemensingh district.

The convict, identified as Sirajul Islam, was sentenced to life imprisonment in a murder case by a local court in 1993.

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Six other pirates who were on board an engine boat in the gang managed to escape.

The guards also recovered a

gun, ammunition, 3 sharp weapons from the pirates and seized the trawler.

Those arrested are Sohrab Howlader, Nasir Howlader, Abul Akhand, Khalil Howlader, Bacchu Mia of Bhandaria, Nanna Mia of Mathbaria and Sheikh Ali Ahmed of Rampal.

A case was filed with Shorokhola police against them.

In Satkhira, Assasuni Thana police in several drivers arrested 65 people, including 41 warrants and four inter-district dacoits, and recovered four illegal firearms with six live cartridges during the last month.

The officer-in-charge of Assasuni police station Abdul Mannan informed that the police personnel of the Thana are patrolling every evening in different areas of the Thana to resist all kinds of anti-social and terrorist activities.

In Jhalakathi, two youths were arrested along with 39 forged notes of Tk 100 denomination from old bus terminal area in the town on Friday.

Police said Enayet Hossain

Hawladar, 22, and Selim Hawladar, 20, of Zagua village in Kotwali Thana of Barisal district were nabbed when they gave a counterfeit note to a shopkeeper.

Later, 38 more forged notes were recovered from their possessions. A case was filed.

Kotwali Thana police of Jessore arrested two men along with 54 bottles of phensidyl syrup recently.

The arrested were identified as Abdur Rashid, son of Omar Ali of village Matepara under Chougacha and Ronil, son of Hossain Gazi of the district.

A case was filed in this connection.

In Chittagong, one more youth was arrested last week in connection with the February 2 bomb attack on the Deputy Commissioner's car.

The arrested was identified as Liton, 22.

Another youth, Abul Kalam, was earlier arrested in this connection. He was learnt to have disclosed the names of seven leaders of BNP and Jatya Party who were involved in the incident.

AED cultivation schemes

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) has taken up various cultivation schemes in Khagrachhari, Madaripur and Netrakona districts, reports agency.

A total of 6,600 hectares of land have been brought under Boro cultivation in Khagrachhari district with a production target of 6,600 tons.

According to an official source, of the total cultivation area, 650 hectares will be cultivated under Sadar Thana, 800 hectares under Panchhari Thana, 1,100 hectares under Dighinala Thana, 800 hectares under Mahalchhari Thana, 1,000 hectares under Matrang Thana, 750 hectares under Manikchhari Thana, 950 hectares under Ramgarh Thana and 550 hectares under Laxmichhari Thana in the current year.

Boro on 1,488 hectares of land have already been cultivated, the source added.

On the other hand, 8190 hectares will be brought under cultivation of different varieties of crops during the current Rabi season.

According to AED official sources, of the total land, wheat will be cultivated on 150 hectares with a production target of 1,200 tons, potato on 650

hectares with a production target of 1,500 tons, maize on 500 hectares with a production target of 555 tons, mustard on 2,900 hectares with a production target of 350 tons, sugarcane on 290 hectares with a production target of 150 tons and winter vegetables on 3700 hectares with a production target of 4,768 tons.

In Madaripur, the AED has taken up an extensive water melon cultivation programme in the district in the current season.

Meanwhile, AED has brought 50 acres of land under the cultivation in the district.

A total of 150 farmers will be provided with seedlings of water melon and fertilizer for cultivation of one bigha each.

In Netrakona, the AED has taken up a plan for ground-nut farming in ten upazilas in the current Rabi season.

An official source said under the ground-nut farming plan, 500 hectares have been brought under the cultivation.

The production target of the ground-nut has been fixed at 950 tons, the sources said.

The field workers of the AED are rendering field-level service for making the cultivation programme a success, the official source added.



Nur Haider

Rescue of abducted youth demanded

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Feb 16: A helpless father has urged the local administration to take effective measures to rescue his son who was abducted six and a half months ago from Feni town.

The father, Aminul Haq, at a press conference held at Feni Press Club last week, said police so far have not arrested any accused.

Nur Haider, a student of Sonagazi Government College, was kidnapped on July 21, 1999. A case was filed with Sadar Thana accusing 16 people.

The father said the people, who are accused in the case, are now creating pressure on him to withdraw the case.

Science Week, Agri Fair conclude

National Science and Technology Week and Agriculture Fair concluded recently in four districts, report agencies.

A three-day National Science and Technology Week concluded recently at the Brahmondi KKM Government High School premises in Narsingdi district.

Science and Technology Minister Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad Nooruddin Khan opened the Science and Technology Week with a call to the students to devote their energy to study science, particularly the developments in modern science and technology.

President of the District Observance Committee of 23rd National Science and Technology Week and Deputy Commissioner of Narsingdi, Rafiqul Islam presided over the inaugural function.

Among others, President of Narsingdi District Awami League Advocate Asaduzzaman, Police Super, Mokhesur Rahman and Member-Secretary of the Observance Committee Nurul Islam addressed the meeting.

An exhibition has been arranged in connection with the Science Week at Brahmondi KKM Government High School

compound. Different schools and science clubs have set up about 20 stalls in the exhibition.

In Kishoreganj, the 23rd National Science and Technology Week concluded at Gurudyal Government College.

AMM Farhad, Deputy Commissioner, Kishoreganj, presided over the inaugural function on Monday while Dr Alauddin Ahmed MP was present as the chief guest.

The chief guest, in his speech, discussed the importance and role of science and technology in the development of a modern country.

A three-day agriculture fair organised by Assasuni Thana Agriculture Office was inaugurated here at the Thana Parishad Square recently.

The fair was presided over by Thana Agriculture Officer Iftekar Alam.

Dr Mukhesur Rahman, MP, inaugurated the fair as the chief guest.

It was addressed, among others, by TNO AKM Mostafa Kamal, OC Abdul Mannan, Sadar Union Parishad Chairman Selim Reza and Nurul Alam.

In Mankganj, a three-day Agriculture Fair concluded at the Daulatpur Thana Parishad premises recently.

Agriculture Extension Department organised the fair.

A total of 10 stalls were set up in the fair. Various agricultural products were exhibited in the fair.

The farmers of the area have been benefited much by the arrangements made in the fair to acquaint them with modern method of cultivation, use of fertilizer and insecticides.

Development Board and sold 3.23 crore KWH power, fetching Tk 8.12 crore from the subscribers during the 1998-99 fiscal year.

Natore PBS-2 purchased 3.85 crore KWH power from Power

well, 885 charitable installations, 337 street lights and 30 for low lift pumps.

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Success stories of 2 Natore electrification assocs

From Anwar Ali

NATORE, Feb 16: Two rural electrification associations here under Rural Electrification Board (REB) have been doing commendable jobs for changing the fate of rural people in 10 thanas of Natore and Rajshahi districts.

Natore Palli Bidyut Samity-1 launched its rural electrification programme in 591 villages of Shingra, Bagatpara (partial) and Sadar thanas in Natore and Puthia, Bagmara thanas of Rajshahi, with a power distribution network of 1,892 kilometers area on March 1, 1981. The Samity has so far provided 46,096 subscribers with electricity. Besides, requisite infrastructures have been made to serve 8,851 more different kinds of subscribers during 1999-2000 fiscal.

System loss with regard to electricity is a much talked about matter. The Samity has reduced 1.25 (one point two) per

cent system loss in this current fiscal year from 16.22 per cent in 1997-98. The Samity also earned Tk 13,75,574.

The main problem of the Samity is huge arrear bills amounting to Tk 2,40,52,800 which remained still unpaid by the consumers.

All these reports have been placed in the 17th Annual General Meeting held recently with the board president of the Samity Liaqat Ali in the chair.

Natore Palli Bidyut Samity-2, a more dynamic Samity, has made infrastructural facilities to provide 51,233 subscribers with electricity in 472 villages of Gurudaspur, Bokailgram, Lalpur, Bagatpara (partial) thanas of Natore, Bagha and Charchat thanas of Rajshahi setting up 1,729 Kilometres power distribution line.

The Samity has so far provided 48,296 subscribers with electricity including 1,071 in-

dustrial, 5,659 trade and commerce and 1,202 in irrigation sector since its inception on January 10, 1980.

Besides, the Samity constructed 100 km more power distribution lines in 1999-2000 fiscal year for 2,937 new subscribers in 35 villages under the samity's command area.

Natore Palli Bidyut Samity-2 has earned Tk 8.12 crore as revenue from its operation and non-operation sectors up to December '99.

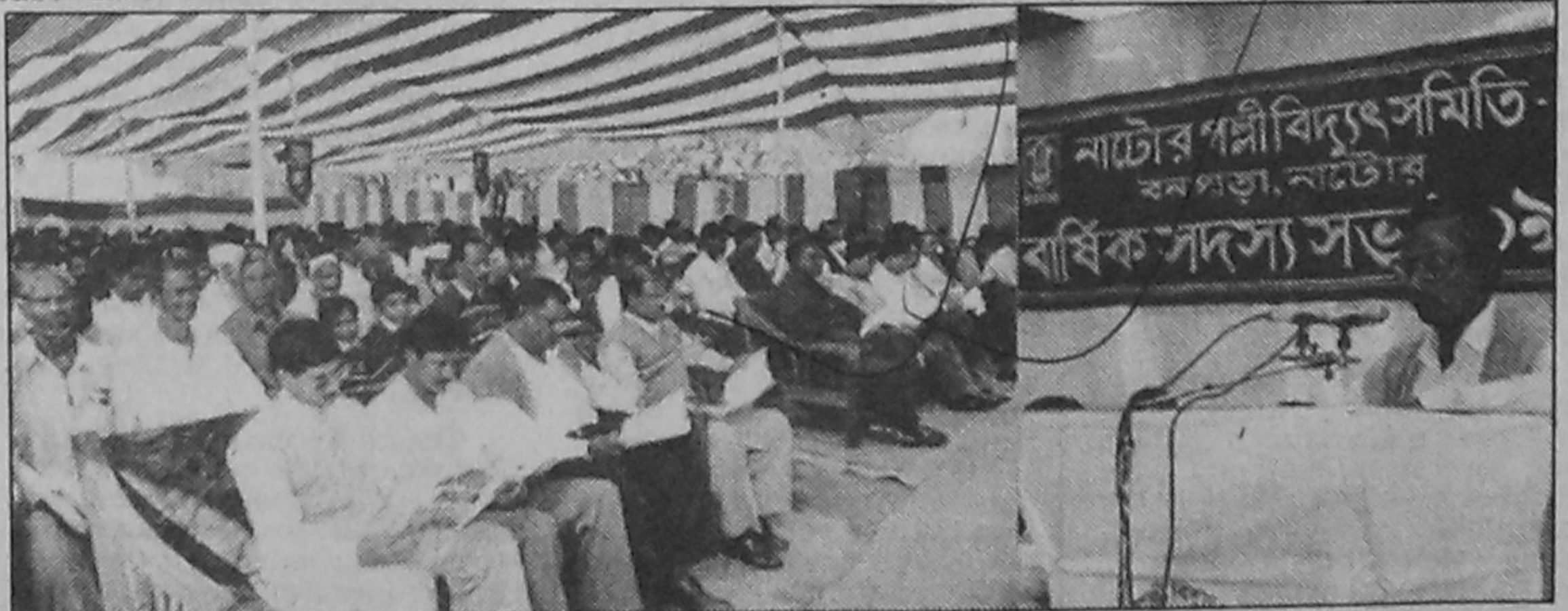
Since its inception in 1980 Natore PBS-2 constructed a total of 6,79 kilometers power, distribution network. Construction of 100 km more distribution network at a cost of Tk six crore is nearing completion to cover 35 more villages. It will facilitate additional 2,937 subscribers with electricity within the first quarter of 2000.

But of the total 48,296 subscribers, 39,142 are residential, 5,659 business establishments, 1,067 industrial units, 208 deep tubewells, 9,611 shallow tube-

wells, 885 charitable installations, 337 street lights and 30 for low lift pumps.

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Development Board and sold 3.23 crore KWH power, fetching Tk 8.12 crore from the subscribers during the 1998-99 fiscal year.



Mosharrar Hossain, president of Natore Palli Bidyut Samity-2 addressing recently the annual general meeting of the Samity in Natore. — Star photo

News snaps

Deep tubewells inoperative

THAKURGAON, Feb 16: Power connection to 341 deep tubewells have been disconnected in Panchagar, Dinajpur and Thakurgaon district affecting Boro cultivation, reports UNB. Besides, 108 deep tubewells have been rendered inoperative as power connection was disrupted following burst of transformers and theft of wire. Large areas under Boro cultivation in the three districts have dried up in the absence of irrigation worrying the farmers. Local Palli Bidyut Samity cut off power supply to the deep tubewells for non-payment of outstanding bills amounting to Tk 2.85 crore.

Allowance for widows

BANDARBAN, Feb 16: The government has allocated a total of Taka 5 lakh 20 thousand as widow allowance for distribution among widows in seven thanas of the hill district, reports BSS. District Social Welfare Department sources said, the widow allowance will be distributed to 1,305 widows in seven thanas from the last week of the current month. Each widow will get Taka 100 per month.

11 phensidyl bottles seized

TANGAIL, Feb 16: Police recovered 11 bottles of phensidyl syrup and arrested one woman here recently, reports BSS. Sadar Thana police arrested Suria Begum, 35, from Adalatpara area of the town. A case was filed with Sadar Thana in this connection.

School bldgs to be built

CHUADANGA, Feb 16: The Ministry of Education will develop three non-government high schools in Chuadanga at a cost of Taka 30 lakh, reports BSS.

The facilities department of the ministry has taken up a programme to construct a building consisting of two class rooms in each of the three schools. The schools are Alamdanga Boys' High School in Alamdanga, Damurhuda Boys' High School in Damurhuda and Jibannagar Girls' High School in Jibannagar Thana. The construction works will be started soon.



Ln Sultana Shahida Islam MJF District Governor of District 315A-1 Bangladesh laying the foundation stone of Daripattan Mother and Child Health General Hospital at Golapganj in Sylhet recently. Habibur Rahman, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet, Ln Engr Rashed Maksud Khan MJF District Governor, Dist 315 B-1, Bangladesh, Ln Zuber Ahmed Khan, Cabinet Secretary, District 315A-1, Bangladesh are also seen.

BSCIC training course

SATKHIRA, Feb 16: A two-week training course on 'Industry Initiative' organised by Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) concluded here at a simple function in the Zilla parishad auditorium recently, reports BSS.

The function was presided over by Regional Director of BSCIC, Khulna Division Mohammad Alimuzzaman. Syed Kamal Bokht MP attended the concluding function as the chief guest while Deputy Commissioner of the district Saiful Alam as special guest. It was addressed, among others, by Vice President of Satkhira Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Sheikh Azhar Ali, Principal of BSCIC Training Institute Fazul Karim and Deputy Manager of BSCIC Abdus Sattar. About 35 participants took part training course.

Five get life term

JESSORE, Feb 16: A court here Monday condemned five people to life term in jail in a murder case, reports UNB.

The court also fined them Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer six months more rigorous imprisonment. However, one of the convicts, Noor Hossain, died last year. The other convicts were identified as Abdal Master alias Abdel Master, Shahjahan, Abdul Mannan, Abdur Razzak and Shamsur Rahman. According to prosecution, the convicts kidnapped one Akbar Ali from the judge court area in broad day light and stabbed him to death on its premises on October 27, 1993. Later on the day, a case was filed with Kotwali Thana and police after investigation submitted charge-sheets against them. After examining the records and witnesses, senior special tribunal judge Abdul Hye pronounced the verdict.



Second hand warm clothes, prices of which are high, still on sale during the fog end of the ongoing winter season, on various footpaths of Sirajganj town. — Star photo

Bamboo, straw prices up

KUSHTIA, Feb 16: Prices of house construction materials like bamboo, straw and jute stick continued to surge in the district worsening the sufferings of rural people, reports UNB.

Many poor villagers, who have lost their homesteads in recurring floods and cyclones, could not yet rebuild their houses. Over 7 lakh people in the district out of its 15 lakh population fell prey to floods and cyclones in last few years, officials said. Official documents showed that some 1.6 lakh kutcha houses were either damaged partially or completely in last two years, forcing hundreds of families to take shelter somewhere else. Despite their tremendous efforts, the affected families could not reconstruct their houses, as they did not get any grant from the government for house construction.

3,607 tons of wheat sanctioned

BARISAL, Feb 16: A total of 3,607 tons of wheat have been sanctioned for the implementation of 962 projects in ten thanas, including five pourasabhas, of the district under Food-For-Works Programme during the current dry season, reports BSS.