

## National

Three get life term in Jessore

JESSORE, Feb 19: A court here has sentenced three people to life term rigorous imprisonment in a murder case, reports UNB.

The District and Sessions 1 and Special Tribunal Court also fined Shafiqul Islam, Abdul Khaled and his son Nasir Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer another three years RI.

According to the prosecution, the three convicted hailing from village Bittachara in Sarsa thana were kidnapped by a co-villager Rowshan Ali, 16, son of Shahjahan and stabbed him to death on December 21, 1996.

After examining records and witnesses, Judge Abdus Salam Sikdar delivered the judgement on Monday.

**Robbery case: 3 youths held in Munshiganj**

MUNSHIGANJ, Feb 19: Three youths were arrested from a village in Louhajang thana early Tuesday in a robbery case, reports UNB.

Acting on the confessional statement of an alleged bandit caught earlier, police detained Mahibub Alam, Muhammad Farooque and Sohel Mia.

They also recovered one gun, one SLR and three bullets from their possessions.

Police said they arrested them in connection with a robbery committed in a house at Mouchhamanda village on January 30 that left a youth killed.

**Office bearers of Rangpur Bar Assoc**



President Secretary

**From Our Correspondent**

RANGPUR, Feb 19: Sarwarul Alam Dudu, Nazrul Islam Mondal and Abdul Gani have been elected president, vice president and secretary respectively of Rangpur Bar Association.

The biennial election of the association was held here recently. Other office bearers are Badru Islam Chunnu and Abdur Rahman joint secretaries, Amal Kumar Chakrabarti treasurer, Rafet Ali- religion and social welfare secretary, Abdul Baten Mia- sports and cultural secretary.

The executive members are Ashutosh Kumar Sarker, Muzafur Islam Liton, Golam Mowla, Ainun Nahar Papri, Jahidur Rahman Dulala, Abdul Malek, ASM Mahmudul Karim Liton, Halida Akhtar and Afzala Islam.

A total of 281 voters out of 299 cast votes. A five-member election commission headed by Advocate Abdus Salam conducted the election.

**Man killed in clash in Natore**

**From Our Correspondent**

NATORE, Feb 19: A man was killed and five were injured in a clash at Thakra village under Gurudaspur thana recently.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rauf, 30, of the village. The injured were admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital.

Witnesses said farm labourers locked in a clash over distribution of shares of wages. They together worked in a paddy field.

A case was filed in this connection.

**Two cops suspended**

JESSORE, Feb 19: Two policemen of Jessore Court were suspended for negligence of duty on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Jessore Police Super issued order of suspension of Havilder Ismail Hossain and constable Malek following an under-trial accused, Akhter Hossain, slipped out of their hands from the Court *Hajat*.

Akhter Hossain, an accused in a dacoity case, was brought to the court.

**Urea price up in Naogaon, Narail**

NAOGAON, Feb 19: With IRRI-Boro cultivation gaining momentum, price of urea has shot up in the district dampening the enthusiasm of farmers, especially the sharecroppers, reports UNB.

Market sources said urea fertiliser was now selling at Tk 300-310 per bag against Tk 280-290 two weeks ago.

Villagers attributed the price hike of fertiliser to illegal hoarding of the agri-input by a section of dishonest traders and dealers.

They also accused the authorities concerned of not taking necessary steps to regulate the fertiliser market.

An earlier report from Narail adds: Price of urea in local markets is showing an upward spiral.

Market sources said a 50kg bag of urea was now selling at Tk 300 last week against its earlier price of Tk 270.

Traders attributed the price hike to short supply of the agri-input and unusual rise in freight charges.

But farmers accused a section of dishonest business people of hoarding fertilisers ahead of the Boro season, pushing its price up.

## 2 storm-hit pvt schools yet to be repaired

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, Feb 19: Two government primary schools in Bhaluka and Gafargaon thana which were destroyed by storm in 1998 are yet to be repaired.

Mukhi Government Primary School of Gafargaon thana and Rangchakra Government Primary School of Bhaluka thana were damaged seriously by tornado two years ago. But the authorities concerned did not take any step to repair the damaged schools.

In the storm the tinshed of the Rangchakra Primary School was blown down totally. Grabbing this situation,

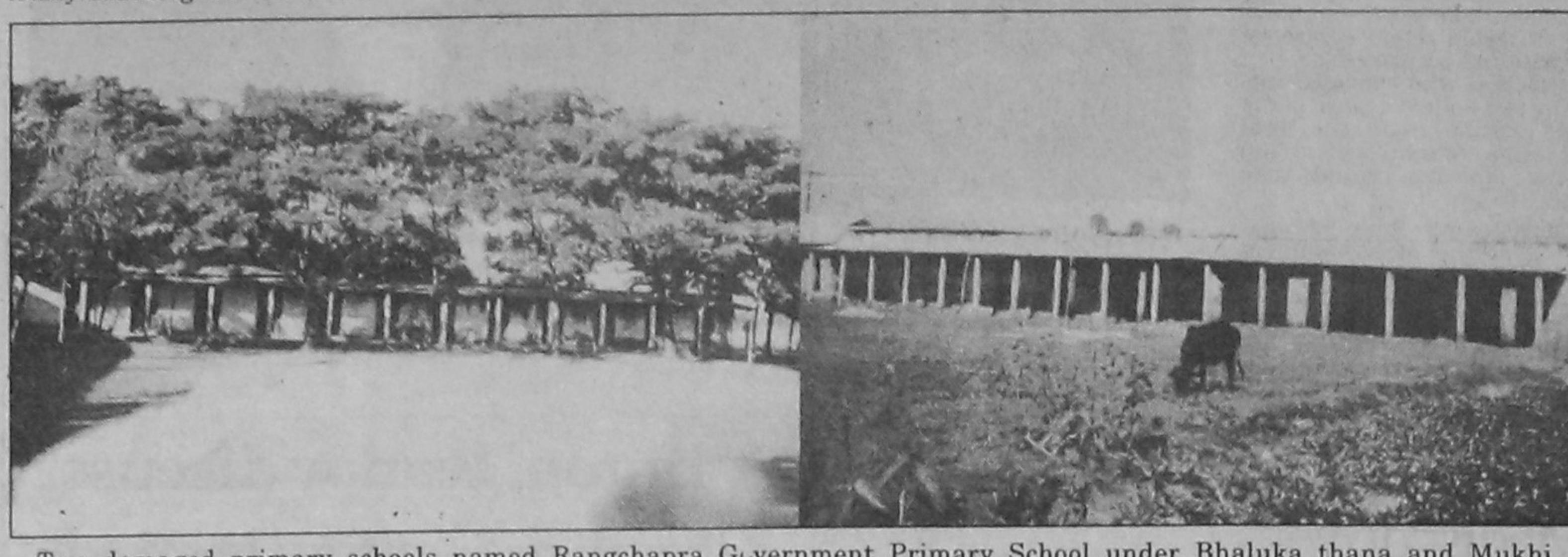
the miscreants took away some materials and benches of the school. The school committee built a temporary shed by the destroyed materials to conduct the school which is totally inadequate to meet the regular situation. In the rainy season, the students can not run their studies there as rain water drops from the roof of the temporary arranged class rooms. Students and teachers also said that after slight rainfall, rain water enters into the school and hamper the total activities of education.

Due to lack of benches, students have to take their lesson standing. It is also alleged that some local youths built a room in the school premises and claiming the room as their association office. But the authorities concerned did not take any step after being informed several times.

The students of the Mukhi Government Primary School are taking their lesson in the shedless school. Because the tinshed of the school was blown away by severe storm in 1998 which is yet to be repaired or

reconstructed. Following this situation, the academic activities of the school is being hampered seriously. Due to rain and scorching heat in the summer the students can not sit in their class rooms. Sometimes, the students sit under the trees of the school compound.

Local people urged the authority concerned to take necessary steps as early as possible for repair and reconstruction of the schools in the neglected remote places of the two thanas.



Two damaged primary schools named Rangchakra Government Primary School under Bhaluka thana and Mukhi Government Primary School under Gafargaon thana in Mymensingh district

—Star photo

## Arsenic panic grips Jhenidah

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Feb 19: Severe arsenic panic grips the district as the contamination has been detected recently in waters of 159 tubewells.

According to local Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) sources, out of 51,733 tubewells in the district 802 were tested and arsenic beyond permissible level in waters of 159 tubewells was found.

According to the engineer, Kaliganj, Shailakupa and Harinakundu thanas are most affected areas.

Kumar said DPHE officials are advising people not use water from affected tubewells. They are also motivating people to use surface water.

This correspondent during his visit to village Parbaspur under Shailakupa thana found 13 members of four families, who are affected by arsenic re-

lated diseases. They developed the diseases four months back. However, they are now recovering.

UNB from Magura says: Public Health Engineering Department installed four deep tubewells in the municipality area under 18 Town Water Supply Project for arsenic free water.

When contacted Basanta Kumar, executive engineer of Jhenidah DPHE, said they are motivating people to test tube-well waters from DPHE.

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BSF from Barisal adds: A day-long workshop on arsenic mitigation was held Sher-e-Bangla Medical College, Dr Abdur Rahman divisional health director.

The function was addressed by Dr Abutabudin Ahmed, Civil Surgeon, Dr Goni Mollah, BMA central leader, Dr AZM Iftekhar Hosain, deputy programme manager (arsenic).

A total of 60 people including doctors, teachers, journalists, public health officials and lawyers, took part in the workshop.

Family Welfare Department, the workshop was presided over by Dr Nawab Hossain, President of Barisal district unit of BMA.

Dr Kainalendu Biswas, vice-principal of the college, was the chief guest and Dr Arma Ranjan Dey, director, Sher-e-Bangla Medical College, Dr Abdur Rahman divisional health director.

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The tubewells have been sunk in Vaina Crossing, Shishu Park, Parmanduali Primary School ground and Natun Bazar areas at a cost of Tk 50 lakh.

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Syeda Zebunnisa Haque MP, former minister AMA Muhit and Anisul Haque, member of Planning Commission, addressing the inaugural session of the two-day reunion of ex-students of Sylhet Government Pilot High School in Sylhet last week.

—Star photo

## Jessore date molasses loses past glory

From Atiur Rahman

JESSORE, Feb 19: Date molasses of Jessore is very famous in the country. This traditional reputation goes on from time immemorial.

Date molasses is locally called 'Gur'.

The process of its production is simple, though traditional.

The period from Kartik to mid-Falgun, which falls in the winter season, is proper time for extraction of juice from date trees.

According to regular practice, much before the winter, extractors, locally called 'Gachhi' trim date trees and start extraction right from mid-Kartik.

The date cake of Jessore is equally popular across the country.

Its quality in production, fragrance and taste is unique. It excels any product of sweets of the country.

Date cake looks like hard nut, apparently dry. But if cracked it melts with palatable and milky smell.

In fact, date trees in the area are natural gifts. Thousands of rural people depend on date juice during the season.

But unfortunately date molasses production has largely declined in the district recently following indiscriminate felling of date trees.

Hundreds and thousands of old and new date trees are being cut down for use in brick fields and kilns.

Recalling the past glory of Chougaoncha molasses, a senior member of Mridha family in the tone of lamentation said that those days would never come again. It is gone for good affecting rural economy. He added that the whole backdrop had been changed. People are no more content with any country-made products based on traditional method.

Date molasses may enter the world market if efforts are made to set up research centre at Jessore to produce quality cake or molasses by applying modern methods.

It can be possible only when the government comes out to patronise such projects.

During the peak season and employed for this purpose. This season offers them work to earn living.

Similarly women of landless families are employed to boil the juice and prepare molasses. Thus they also earn a lot.

In the winter unemployed poor and landless group get a chance to earn something.

Chowgachha, Jhinkergachha and Kaliganj thanas of greater Jessore district are still famous for date juice and molasses.

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Previously Mridha family of Chougaoncha monopolised the markets during hey-day of the season and thus Chougaoncha occupied a vital place in this business. But now the date molasses market is virtually dull and dead. The crowd of buyers and sellers are gone and none from outside come here in search of molasses.

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